

“Growing Through Giving”
2 Corinthians 8:7-9

Introduction:

1. Let's Turn In Our Bibles This Morning:
 - To 2 Corinthians 8:
 - Where Paul Has Changed Topics:
 - From The First 7 Chapters Of This Letter!
 - The Topic Of Christian Giving!
 - One Of The Reasons:
 - Why He Brings Up This Topic:
 - Was Because Of The Incredible Generosity:
 - Of The Churches In Macedonia!
 - Even Though They Were Experiencing Extreme Poverty & Even Persecution:
 - They Wanted To Contribute To The Collection:
 - That Paul Was Taking Up:
 - For Those Who Were In Need In The Church Of Jerusalem!
 2. And So - Now That There Was Reconciliation:
 - Between Paul & The Corinthian Church:
 - He Could Encourage Them:
 - To Give As Well!
 - And Not Just Their Money:
 - But Their Own Selves!
 - As We Saw Back In 8:5:
 - “And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God!”
 - What We Learned Is This:
 - Giving For The Christian:
 - Is A Sign Of God's Grace At Work:
 - In Their Hearts!
 3. And So - In The Verses We Will Look At This Morning:
 - Paul Continues To Encourage Them:
 - And Us - To Give!
 - 8:7-9 - “Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. / I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love. / For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich!”
 - The First Thing We See From 8:7 Is That:
- 1. *Giving Reveals Our Growth In God's Grace!***
- In 8:7 - Paul Describes The Corinthian Church As:
 - “Abounding In Every Thing!”
 - How Could He Say This About Them:
 - After All They Did To Him?
 - It Seems That Paul Is Describing:
 - The Nature Of Their Church:
 - ***Now*** - Based On The Report From Titus:
 - On How They Responded To Paul's Letter!
 - Their Present Condition:
 - Was Now Renewed Spiritual Growth:
 - And Renewed Spiritual Fruit!
 - And So He Could Write:
 - 8:7 - “Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also!”
 - We Can Learn From This That:
 - When There Is Reconciliation:
 - In Our Christian Lives:
 - There Can Be Renewed Spiritual Growth As Well!
 - Because - Before - There Was No Way Paul:

- Could Say This About Them!
 - They Had Stopped Growing!
 - Sin Will Always Stunt Spiritual Growth!
- But Now - We Can See:
- The Marks Of Spiritual Growth!
 - Of Which - Paul Points Out Five!
 - Five Fruits That Had Been Revived & Were Now Flourishing & Abounding & Growing!
 - And Each Mark / Fruit Is Another Evidence Of God's Grace At Work In Their Lives!
 - They Were Growing In:
- Their Trust!
 - "In Faith!"
 - This Is Not Referring To:
 - The Content Of Their Faith:
 - And What They Believed As Christians!
 - Instead - Paul Is Talking About:
 - The Confidence Of Their Faith:
 - And How They Believed As Christians!
 - And Christian Faith:
 - Was Always Meant To Grow!
 - Faith Is Part Of The Fruit Of The Spirit In Galatians 5!
 - Their Personal Faith & Trust:
 - In The Lord Was Growing Again!
 - And Abounding!
 - And This Was Important:
 - Because - Sin & Strife In A Christians Life Will Always Destroy Assurance & Faith!
 - **IE:** Sin Is Like A Wrecking Ball! The Foundation Of Doctrine Can Be Sound, But The Personal, Lively Faith In That Doctrine Can Be Missing!
 - But Now - Because Of Their:
 - Godly Sorrow Which Led Them To Repentance & Confession Of Their Sin:
 - They Could Grow Again!
 - In Personal Faith & Assurance!
 - But Their Growth Didn't Stop There!
 - They Were Also Growing In:
- Their Testimony!
 - 8:7 - "And Utterance" - Or "In Word!"
 - This Is Best Seen As Describing:
 - The Growth Of Their Word Of Witness & Testimony!
 - And This Too Was Important:
 - Because - Sin & Strife In A Christians Life Will Always Destroy Our Testimony!
 - **IE:** How Many Times Does The Sin Of A Pastor Or A Church Make The News - Even Though That Same Sin Is Prevalent & Sometimes Even Accepted In The World!
 - But Now - Because Of Their:
 - Restoration With Paul & The Lord:
 - They Could Grow Again!
 - Their Words Of Teaching & Testimony For The Lord Started To Spread Again - And Was Influencing Their Own City & Their Own Communities For Christ!
 - But Their Growth Didn't Stop There!
 - They Were Also Growing In:
- Their Teachability!
 - 8:7 - "And Knowledge!"
 - They Were Growing Again:
 - In Their Understanding Of God's Word & God's Will For Their Lives!
 - This Is Another Important Mark Of Spiritual Growth!
 - In Fact - Other Times - We Are Told To Grow In This Way!
 - 2 Peter 1:5-6 - "Add To Your Faith Virtue; And To Virtue Knowledge!"
 - 2 Peter 3:18 - "But Grow In Grace, And In The Knowledge Of Our Lord And Savior Jesus Christ!"
 - And So This Is Important:
 - Because - Sin & Strife In A Christians Life Will Always Destroy A Teachable Spirit!
 - And Instead Of Wanting To Do Things God's Way - You Will Want To Do Things

Your Own Way!

- But Now - Because Of Their:
 - Reconciliation - They Could Grow Again!
 - They Were Once Again Open To The Truths Of God's Word!
 - And Willing To Acknowledge & Apply His Word In Their Lives!
 - But Their Growth Continued!
 - They Were Also Growing In:
 - Their Tone!
 - 8:7 - "And In All Diligence!"
 - When The Corinthian Church Was Reassured Of Their Forgiveness From Paul & The Lord:
 - It Changed The Tone Of Their Existence!
 - They Were Once Again "All-In" For The Lord!
 - They Had A Renewed Passion & Zeal:
 - For The Lord & His Will & Work!
 - They Didn't Want Anything Else To Get In The Way Of Their Growth!
 - And This Is Important For Us As Well!
 - Because - Sin & Strife In A Christians Life Will Always Destroy Our Focus & Fervency!
 - But Once There Is Restoration:
 - You Can Say With Paul - Philippians 3:13-14 - "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, / I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus!"
 - But Their Growth Didn't Even Stop With This!
 - They Further Grew In:
 - Their Tenderness!
 - 8:7 - "And In Your Love To Us!"
 - Their Love For Paul Grew:
 - Even Though He Was The One Who Caused Them Pain For A Time:
 - Through His Letter Of Confrontation!
 - And The Love They Had For Paul:
 - Was Growing Into The Kind Of Love:
 - That Paul Had Taught Then In His First Letter - 1 Corinthians 13!
 - 13:4-8 - "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, / Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; / Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; / Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. / Charity never faileth!"
- These 5 Things Are All Marks:
 - Of Renewed Spiritual Growth!
 - Faith / Word / Knowledge / Diligence / Love!
 - Is There Growth In Your Life In These Areas?
 - If Not - Is There Unconfessed Sin Or Unresolved Strife In Your Life That Is Preventing This Fruit From Abounding & Flourishing?
 - If So - Then Repent & Return To The Lord:
 - So You Can Start Growing Again:
 - In Your Life As A Christian!
 - And When God's Grace Displays Itself Again In These Ways - His Grace Will Become:
- The Motive For Spiritual Growth:
 - In One More Way!
 - In Your Giving!
 - 8:7 - "Therefore, *as* ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, *see that* ye abound in this grace also!"
 - Paul Turns Back To The Grace Of Giving!
 - Giving Of Yourself & Of Your Resources In A Generous Way!
 - Because - Giving Is A Living Expression:
 - Of All Of These Other Spiritual Fruits!
 - When Your Faith In The Lord Is Renewed!
 - When Your Testimony For The Lord Is Renewed!
 - When Your Knowledge About The Lord Is Renewed!
 - When Your Diligence For The Lord Is Renewed!

- When Your Love For The Lord & Others Is Renewed!
- You Can Then Express That Renewal:
 - Through Generous Giving!
- In Fact - Most Of The Time:
 - The Reason Why Christians Don't Give:
 - Is **Not** Because There Is A Lack:
 - Of Resources!
 - But More Because There Is A Lack:
 - Of This Spiritual Fruit!
 - Growing Christians Are Giving Christians!
- Are You Growing & Abounding:
 - In This Grace Of Giving In Your Own Life?
 - Remember - Its Not The Amount:
 - Of Your Giving That God Is Primarily After!
 - It's The Heart Of Your Giving!
 - In Fact - This Is Why Paul Writes:
 - In 8:8 - "I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love!"
 - He Is Not Commanding Them To Give A Certain Amount!
 - But Encouraging Them To Give According To Their Growth!
 - And He Was Writing To Them:
 - Because Of The Example:
 - Of The Macedonian Christians!
 - Their "Forwardness" And Fervency In Giving!
 - But He Was Also Writing To Them:
 - In Order To Examine:
 - Or "Prove" The "Sincerity" & Genuineness Of Their Love & Spiritual Fruit!
 - Was Their Renewed Growth:
 - Real? And Would It Last?
 - And This Could Be Seen By Their Giving!
- Because Christian Giving Reveals Our Growth In God's Grace!
 - And Growing Christians:
 - Are Giving Christians!
 - But Then - Paul Gives Us Another Great Reason For Giving - In 8:9:

2. ***Giving Reveals Our Gratitude For God's Grace!***

- The Grace Of Our Lord Jesus Christ!
 - 8:9 - "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich!"
 - If You Are A True Child Of God:
 - You Have Personally Experienced The Goodness & The Grace Of Christ:
 - In Our Life!
 - You "Know" His Grace!
 - You "Know" His Grace:
 - Not Just By Instruction:
 - But By Conviction:
 - And Personal Experience!
 - And You "Know" That:
 - The Grace Of God To You:
 - Was / Is A Giving Grace!
 - And In This Verse We Are Reminded Of:
 - The Direction Of Christ's Grace!
 - "Yet For Your Sakes!"
 - What A Humbling Thought!
 - Especially When You Remember The Sin & The Strife That Exist In Your Heart & Life Even After You Are Saved!
 - Like The Corinthian Church!
 - When You Remember That:
 - "It Was For Me He Cried, For Me He Died, For Me He Shed His Blood Upon The Tree! It Was For Me He Came, For Me His Shame; For Me, O Praise His Name, It Was For Me!"

- In Fact - We Also See:
- The Depth Of Christ's Grace!
 - "Though He Was Rich – He Became Poor!"
 - Or - Being Rich - He Became Poor!
 - Even Though Jesus Christ Retained His Claim On His Divine Nature & Resources, Yet He Left Those Resources, Veiled His Glory, In Order To Reveal His Grace To You & To Me!
 - And - "He Became Poor!"
 - He Became Poor - In His Possessions!
 - Though He Still Had A Home In Heaven:
 - Yet For Your Sake:
 - He Had No Home On Earth!
 - What Grace!
 - Luke 9:58 - "And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head!"
 - He Became Poor - In His Position!
 - Though He Was Still Sovereign:
 - Yet For Your Sake:
 - He Became A Servant!
 - What Grace!
 - Echo Of Philippians 2:5-8 - "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: / Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: / But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: / And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross!"
 - He Became Poor - In His Perception!
 - Though He Was Still Majestic In His Glory:
 - Yet For Your Sake:
 - He Became Meek & Lowly!
 - What Grace!
 - Matthew 11:28-29 - "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. / Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls!"
 - He Became Poor - In His Purpose!
 - Though He Was Life Itself:
 - Yet For Your Sake:
 - He Came To Die - "Even The Death Of The Cross!"
 - What Grace!
- Jesus Had All!
 - Yet He Left All:
 - "For Your Sake!"
 - And For:
- The Demonstration Of Christ's Grace!
 - "That Ye Through His Poverty Might Be Rich!"
 - By Means Of:
 - The Homelessness Of Christ On Earth!
 - His Humility & Humiliation!
 - As Well As His Hurts!
 - When You Trust In Jesus:
 - You Become "Rich!"
 - And Your Wealth Reflects:
 - The Wealth Of Christ Himself!
 - Which Is Far Greater / Far Better / Longer Lasting Than The Wealth Of This World!
 - **IE:** Mark Zuckerberg - Just Last Thursday - Lost Nearly \$16 Billion In Stock Wealth!
 - Easy Come! Easy Go!
 - But For Every True Christian:
 - The Resources Of Christ:
 - Are Now Your Resources!
 - 1 Corinthians 3:21 - "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours!"

- The Life Of Christ:
 - Is Now Your Life!
- The Home Of Christ:
 - Is Now Your Home!
- And The Glory Of Christ:
 - Will Be Your Glory!
- And So - The Things We Are Blessed To Have:
 - In This Life & In This World:
 - We Don't Have To Hold On To So Tightly!
- Even As James Tells Us:
 - In James 2:5 - "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"
 - Through The Poverty Of Christ:
 - By Faith In Him - You Are An Heir Of His Kingdom!
 - And That's True Wealth!
- And How Should We Respond:
 - To The Grace-Filled Generous Giving Of:
 - Our Lord Jesus Christ?
 - With Gratitude!
 - And With Giving!

Conclusion:

1. Because We Are Eternally Grateful:
 - For The Grace Of Our Lord Jesus Christ!
 - Who - "Though He Was Rich!"
 - He Gave Himself:
 - For You & For Me!
2. Why Leave A Heavenly Mansion?
 - Why Chose A Simple Stall?
 - Why Wander Poor And Homeless,
 - The King And Lord Of All?
 - "It Was For Me He Cried, For Me He Died, For Me He Shed His Blood Upon The Tree! It Was For Me He Came, For Me His Shame; For Me, O Praise His Name, It Was For Me!"
3. And Now - Since We Have Received:
 - The Grace The Lord:
 - We Need To Reflect:
 - The Grace Of The Lord:
 - In How We Give!
 - Giving Will Reveal:
 - Our Growth In God's Grace!
 - And Giving Will Reveal:
 - Our Gratitude For God's Grace!
 - Because:
 - Growing Christians:
 - Are Giving Christians!
 - And Grateful Christians:
 - Are Giving Christians!

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