

2 Cor. 9:6-11a (LD 50) "Bread for Sharing"

For the Children: Why do you ask for sandwich or a piece of toast? Because you are hungry? When we ask God for our "daily bread" there should be better reasons than that. We ask because we want to be able to say "Thank You" to Him when He gives us the things we need. We also want to learn to trust Him more to supply us with the things we need. And we want to receive His gifts to us, so that we have enough to share with others. Because we want others to learn to trust Him and praise and thank Him too. **Questions:** Do you think about the fact that all good gifts come to you from the Lord, or do you think of food, clothing, shelter etc. as coming from other people or shops? How can you tell that God's giving to us is extremely generous? How does knowing this help us to be generous in giving to others?

Introduction:

First Point: God Gives Abundantly

- 1) All Our Physical Needs: LD 50 takes "daily bread" as representative of all our physical needs. Even a loaf of bread has a lot more behind it: the production of several ingredients, the collecting and processing and packaging etc. V. 10 reminds us that God provides both the seed to the sower and the finished product, the bread for food. The same is true of all other needs (Mt. 6:25f). The Lord even provides for the wicked and for other living creatures.
- 2) A Matter of Trust: This requires that we recognize God as the ultimate Source of all good gifts - and trust Him to provide all we need. Neither our work, nor worry, nor gifts can do us any good unless He blesses our use of the gifts. See Ps. 127. Praying the 4th request with a desire to learn these truths as we receive His gifts, makes the request spiritual rather than mercenary.
- 3) A Matter of Grace: God's giving to us is gracious (v. 8). Sinners deserve neither material nor spiritual blessings. The Lord gives to the wicked out of "common grace," though these gifts will condemn them if they do not learn to thank God for them. But with His people, the Lord gives a right attitude along with the material gifts: a desire to use these things for His glory; a thankful attitude; and a desire to use our resources for our neighbour's good. Then He graciously rewards us for that spiritual use of material things (Mt. 25:31f).
- 4) Abundant and Sufficient: The text contains around 15 words that emphasize the super-abundance of God's giving to us. This liberality enables us to give to others without fear of impoverishing ourselves. Giving actually makes us richer – spiritually richer.

Second Point: So We Can Give Abundantly

- 1) Liberal Giving: The Lord enriches us so we can give liberally. That point is also emphasized in the text (especially vss. 6, 8 and 11). Liberal giving was already commanded in the OT (Dt. 15:7-1). Not that we are to give simply because we have been ordered to do so. Nor to view our giving as earning favour with God. He creates in us a sincere desire to give generously, as an aspect of righteousness. He graciously rewards this for Christ's sake.
- 2) Cheerful Giving: Generosity is created in us by the Lord, as an expression of gratitude and a desire to reflect Christ's Nature and work. It therefore involves "cheerful giving," by definition. No other kind of giving is acceptable to God. Giving that is done from a mere sense of obligation, or grudgingly, is not acceptable (v. 7).
- 3) More Reason for Generosity: We are in a better position to see the reasons for generosity more clearly than the OT saints. For we know more of the super-abundance of God's giving in Christ; we have more reason to trust that the Lord will provide for us when we give to others; we have more reason to be thankful; and more reason to want to do good works.

Conclusion: