

2 Corinthians 9

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Tape 8160
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Second Corinthians chapter nine.

Paul is in Philippi where he has met with Titus, who has informed him of the response and the reaction of the Corinthian church to his first epistle, which prompted Paul to quickly send them a second epistle. Paul is planning to come soon to Corinth. He is going to come to Corinth as he is on his way to Jerusalem. He has been taking up offerings in the Gentile churches in order that he might bring these offerings to the church in Jerusalem to help them in their current financial distress. So he is writing to the Corinthians. In chapters eight and nine, he is talking to them about their giving, their giving generously for the needs of the church in Jerusalem. He gives them rules that govern our giving in the New Testament. How we, in these New Testament times, are to give to the Lord. He gives certain rules governing the giving.

So in chapter eight, we studied that portion of Paul's lesson on giving. As we go in to chapter nine, we actually are continuing from the things that Paul said concerning giving in chapter eight.

For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: In other words, you really don't need for me to write to you about these things. It really isn't necessary because you already know the fact that we ought to be giving to the needs of those within the body of Christ. And it's not really necessary for me to write these to you because you already practice this kind of generosity.

²*For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia (that is that you in Achaia or Corinth) was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many.* As I was telling them about you. The zeal that you have for giving has inspired many other people to give. So as he writes to those in Corinth, he's wanting them to be diligent in this area of giving. He said I really don't need to write to you because for a year now, you have indicated your willingness to give, and your desire to give. And as I have shared with others, how generous you are, that has inspired them also.

³*Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready:* Now Paul is saying, now I've been telling everybody about you and what generous givers you are and so I am sending these brethren in advance so that you might ready to give, lest, you know, when we get there and you don't have anything. I'll be embarrassed you know.

⁴*Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me,* When I am coming down, there may be some from Macedonia that will come with me. I've been bragging to them about you.

And lest when they come with me *and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.* That I, you know, you embarrassed me. I would be ashamed because of things that I've been telling them about you, what wonderful people you are, how generous you are. So I've sent these brethren ahead to you to make sure that everything is in order so they are my representatives, so I am sending them for this purpose.

⁵*Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty,* So I've sending them in advance. I'll be coming soon. But I'm sending them in advance in other that they might go ahead and collect. Now Paul had said earlier that he didn't want any collections taken when he was there. In other words, I want you to have it already set. I don't want to take offerings when I am there. I want it already set. So I'm sending these brethren ahead in order that they might go ahead and collect the things that you have donated for the church in Jerusalem, that they might make up your bounty.

whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness. So they are going to be there, they had been sent by me. I have exhorted them to come on down and to take care of these issues before I arrive.

⁶*But this I say, (Now talking about giving, this is one of the principles of giving.) He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.* Now, God

has promised to bless those who give. In Psalm 41:1-2, David said, the Psalm of David, blessed is he that considers the poor. The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive. And he shall be blessed upon the earth. You will not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. So the blessedness of those who consider and give to the poor.

In Proverbs 3:9, he said honor the Lord with your substance and with the first fruits of all of your increase. So shall your barns be filled with plenty. Your presses shall burst out with new wine.

So God's promises to keep a person from trouble, to preserve him if they will give to the poor. God's promises that if you will honor Him with your substance, He will make sure that you have plenty. Your barn is filled and your winepresses will be overflowing.

In Proverbs 11:24-25, he speaks of sort of an interesting kinds of paradox, he that scattereth and yet increaseth, and there is that which withholds more than his meat, but tends to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat and he that waters shall also be watered himself. In other words, the idea is that if your are giving, scattering, then you will increase. If you withhold, then that is going to leave you to poverty.

In Proverbs 19:17, he that has pity on the poor, lends to the Lord. And that which he has given, the Lord will pay him again.

In Proverbs 22:9, he that has a bountiful life shall be blessed because he gives of his bread to the poor.

Then Jesus elucidates the principle. He said, (Luke 6:38) give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall men give into your bosom, for with the same measure that you mete with all, it shall be measured to you again. So the Lord Jesus is saying, here is the principle of giving. You give and it will be given to you again, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall men give in to your bosom. And the measure in which you give will be the measure in which the Lord will return to you.

So there is the principle. It is hard for us to imagine, how that by giving more, I receive more! There are a lot of people who say, well, we really can't afford to give. But I wonder can we really afford not to give? Perhaps the problem with the fact that you are experienced financial difficulties, is that you haven't considered the Lord and giving to Him.

In the prophesy of Haggai (Haggai 1:6), he talked of the dilemma the people were in. You are earning money, but you never have enough. You put your money in bags, but it seems that the bags have holes in them. You go to get the money and you're always short. And he said, why is this? Is it time for you to dwell in field houses and still the temple of the Lord is desolate? And it was because they were laying up for themselves and thinking only of themselves. They sort of felt well, we can't afford to give to the Lord. They were holding back and thus, God held back from them. It was a thing that Haggai rebuked them and told them the reason why they were having their financial distress. They had not put God first.

We are told we are to bring the first fruits unto the Lord, the first fruits unto Him. In Malachi (Malachi 3:8), he asks the question. Will a man rob God? The people responded, where have we robbed God? The Lord responded, in your tithes and offerings. Prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord, and see if I will not pour out unto a blessing which you are not able to contain. And he told them to bring their tithes and offerings into his storehouse that they might have plenty. And he has promised a return. So there is the principle of giving to God and how that God will give back to you in return.

I learned this principle by experience when I was young. I had just graduated from college and I was planning to go back east to do some evangelistic work in Missouri. So my only problem was I didn't have any money. I was paying off all the school expenses, graduation expenses. I needed to make this trip across country to Missouri. I went to a missionary rally. There was this missionary from Puerto Rico, who was telling of the work of God there. I had five dollars in my pocket. That's all I had. The Lord spoke to my heart to give the five dollars. So when they took the offering, I gave the five dollars. That was all I had. That was the widower's mite, but I wasn't married yet. But, it was all I had. That was it. But yet, you know, the Lord promised that you give and it shall be given.

The very next day I received a call from an attorney, from Farmer's insurance agency. A year previously as I was coming home from Bakersfield, I witnessed an accident out on the Golden State freeway. So the attorney asked me, he said, you know, you filled out this claim. Do you remember the accident? Oh yeah, I

surely do. He said, well, the man who came across the highway, who came across the double line over into our lane. I thought I was going to hit him. I remembered it very vividly. I could remember that car. I thought man, I've had it. I threw on my brakes. Here came the car right across. Instead of hitting me, he hit the car in front of me. He bounced off and went into the bridle trail down there in Griffith Park. So I stopped and I gave the lady my card and told her that I saw the accident. I was right behind her. I was figuring that I was going to get hit. So I checked to make sure that she and her little girl were okay. I ran down and checked with the guy. He was getting out his car, cursing and all. I thought well, he's all right. So I went on. I called the police to let them know that there had just been an accident. So I got the forms from Farmer's Insurance and so forth. The attorney said, he is declaring that she came across the line and hit him on his side of the road! I said, on man, that's so far from the truth. Well, all of the other witnesses had left the state. I was the only one around who could bear witness to what actually happened. So the attorney gave me the court date and said can you be there and witness? I said, well, I'm sorry, I'm supposed to go back to Missouri to start meetings back there. He said, well, you are the only one we have. Would you postpone going back to Missouri for a few days if we would pay all of your expenses to go back? I said, well, sure, I don't need to get back right then. But I experienced that truth of the principle of giving. I gave in faith and the Lord honored and took care of all my expenses in getting back to Missouri.

And through the years, over and over, we have realized that God has established a principle and that it does work! Now, that isn't the highest motive for giving and I really don't recommend that as a motive for giving. I'm just declaring to you what God has promised to do. So, he that hath a bountiful life shall be blessed for he giveth of his bread to the poor. Give and it shall be given.

Now Paul then explains how this works, because my logical mind says, hey, wait a minute, what do you mean, the more you give, the more you will receive? That doesn't make sense. The more you give the less you are going to have. That rings a logical bell. The more I give the more that I'm going to have, doesn't logically add up in my mind. But Paul shows how it works. If you sow sparingly, you are going to reap sparingly. If you are say, planting your field with grain, say wheat, and you just go through and you just throw out little grains of wheat in the field, come time for harvest, you will just have little sprouts of wheat all over the place. You won't have much of a harvest, though. But if you go out and are just scattering the wheat everywhere, come harvest time, you are going to have a full harvest. If you sow sparingly you are going to reap sparingly. If you sow bountifully, you are going to reap bountifully. And so it is in giving. If you give sparingly, you reap sparingly. If you reap bountifully, you are going to reap bountifully.

So Paul said, ⁷*Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give;* Here is one of the keys! Back in the previous chapter, Paul emphasized the importance of having a willing heart. In verse twelve, he said, for if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according that a man have and not according as he hath not. If your mind is willing, God will receive what you give, what you have. It isn't required what you don't have. God isn't requiring you to go out and borrow money to give to Him, as some would suggest that you do. That is poor, poor, policy and poor theology. So the willing mind, what we give to God must come from a willing heart.

In Deuteronomy 15:10, God said, thou shalt surely give Him and thine hearts shall not be grieved when you give unto Him, because that for this thing, the Lord thy God shall bless thee and all thy works and in all that you put your hand unto. So he is saying look, you are to give to God, but your heart shall not be grieved when you give. You shouldn't give and begrudge what you have given.

In Exodus 25 (Exodus 25:2), the Lord spoke to Moses, speak to the children of Israel that they bring me an offering of every man that giveth it willingly and with his heart you shall take my offering. But the willing was the primary pre-requisite. It isn't giving as Paul says here, out of pressure.

Every man according as he purposes in his heart, let him give, *not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.* God loves the cheerful giver! Exodus 35:5, take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord. And whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it as an offering of the Lord.

In the time that David was wanting to build a house for the Lord, and we mentioned this, this morning, when the Lord said to David, no, you can't build the house for Me. Your hands are bloody and so forth, then the Lord didn't say you can't prepare all of the materials and have all of the money ready. So what David

did was to take an offering. You know, we can't build a house but boy, we can sure get all of the materials ready. We can collect the money for it. So when the people brought in more than enough, David said (1 Chronicles 29:10-15), but who am I and what is my people that we should be able to offer so willingly after this source? For all things, Lord, have come from You. And of Your own, we have given to You. Lord, we have only given back what is Yours. It all belongs to You! And this is a proper assessment. Whatever I have belongs to the Lord! Whatever I give to Him, belongs to Him anyhow. And so that we should be able to offer to God, so willingly and so in verse fifteen (1 Chronicles 29:15), he said, for we are strangers before Thee and sojourners as were all of our fathers. Our days on the earth are as a shadow and there is none abiding. Oh, Lord, our God, all this store that we have prepared to build Thee a house for Thine Holy name, comes from Your hand. It's all Your own! Lord, it all belongs to You. It comes from You! You are the One who has given and blessed us with it! I know also, My God, You try the heart and You have pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness in my heart, I have willingly offered all of these things and now have I seen with joy Your people, which are present here to offer willingly unto you. The word that comes over and over again, is willingly.

Never, ever, feel pressured to give! It's got to come from a willing heart! That's one of the rules for giving to the Lord! It's got to be the willing heart! It has to be something that you purpose in your heart! I have no right to ask or even suggest to you an amount that you should give. That's something completely between you and the Lord. And I should never seek to pressure you into giving. It's got to be something that comes from your heart. As a man has purposed in his own heart, so let him give, not grudgingly.

Peter tells us (1 Peter 4:9) that we are to use hospitality one to another without grudging. The Lord loves a cheerful giver. He doesn't like grudging givers. He doesn't you bemoaning what you gave. He doesn't want you saying, oh man I gave and I am so upset because I was touched and I gave and I can't afford it. God doesn't want that! He doesn't want any griping over what you have given. God loves a cheerful giver.

You know, it is so embarrassing when someone has given you something and they sort of bemoan the fact that they gave it. They are sort of grudging. When we were in Tucson, there was a sergeant, his name was Fry. Sargent Fry, he was in the Air Force. He invited Kay and I over for a Sunday dinner after church. His wife had prepared a lovely pot roast. It was very delicious and they offered us seconds, which I took! And as I was finishing up on the seconds, he said, when we buy a pot roast, it usually lasts us a whole week, but it surely is not going to last a week this time, you know. And I wanted to spit it out. I mean, you know, it makes you feel horrible. The guy, you know, invited me. I didn't ask to come to dinner at his house. He invited me. I didn't ask for seconds. He offered them. But then he griped because I ate it.

I can understand a little bit how God feels if a person gives and then they start complaining about what they have given to God. I'm sure God says, I didn't ask for it! Keep it! I don't need it! I don't want it! God loves a cheerful giver and so the principle of giving is that it's got to be willing. It's got to come from a willing heart. And it has to be as you have purposed in your heart, so you are to give, not grudgingly, or of necessity, that is someone pressing you and pushing you. For God loves a cheerful giver!

⁸*And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:* If you give to God from a willing heart, as you've purposed in your heart and cheerfully given to God, God will see that you are taken care of. He will cause all grace to abound toward you that you might always have sufficient and you might abound in every good work.

⁹*(As it is written, (And he is quoting from Psalm 112:9.) He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.* He is talking about the righteous man. He has dispersed abroad. He has given to the poor. His righteousness remains forever.

Now Paul is sort of giving a little benediction here, ¹⁰*Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown,* May God bless! May God multiply the seed that you have sown.

and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) May you abound in the Spiritual things as you have purposed in your heart to give to the Lord.

¹¹*Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.* Oh, I

want to see you just, you know, just blessed of the Lord! I want to see your cup overflowing! I want to see God's blessing upon your life. It causes me to be thankful and grateful to see the way God blesses you!

¹²*For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God;* That is your giving for the church there in Jerusalem, not only supplies the wants or the needs of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God. Your giving generously to take care of them in their financial difficulties right now, is going to just cause thanksgiving to go up to God.

When I come in with the offering there in Jerusalem. Here they are hurting, they don't have money to buy food. When we come in and we are able to really buy food and to help them out and all, your giving is going to bring thanksgiving to God from these people who will be the recipients. Those who will receive of your bounty as we take the offering, is just going to bring thanksgiving unto God from many quarters.

¹³*Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God* (When we administer this offering that you have given to them they will glorify God.) *for your professed subjection into the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men;* It will bring thanksgiving and glory to God in the hearts of these people who are desperately in need when they receive of your liberality.

¹⁴*And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you.* They are praying for you! They would love to meet you. They would love to see the exceeding grace of God, that is working there in the church in Corinth because the church is all one big family. And we need to see it as such. When one member suffers, they all suffer. When one is exalted, they all are exalted.

A contingent is going from our church this week to the Sudan, taking several thousand dollars from the church to buy food and medical supplies and so forth while they are there, taking in tons of necessities for those people in Sudan, the church there. They are going through such tremendous persecution and all from the Moslems. Again here is where God has blessed us and so we are able to bless others. They will be praising God and thanking God for Calvary Chapel before the week is over, as they take over the offerings that we have collected for them in the Sudan.

And thus as Paul said to the Corinthians, there in Jerusalem, you know, they will be glorifying God and thanking God because of, you know, your generosity and your grace that God has given. So it will be so in the Sudan as it has been in many parts of the world as we here have been able to send money to the needy body of Christ around the world. We have been able to help so many Christian bodies, there, well, just around the world. We thank God for the opportunity that we have and for the way that He has blessed. We are thankful for the way that God has laid upon your hearts, without pressure, without pushing, without asking how God has given you a heart to give as you have purposed in your heart, giving willingly, God has blessed. And how we rejoice in Him.

You know it's an interesting thing in our board meetings, that we have monthly as we go over the expenses and over the financial records and so forth, there is every month, we stop and we just thank God for the way He has blessed this church! It's just glorious! Because we are able then to take that which God has provided here and the surplus, we are able to disburse abroad and to use throughout the world.

We get requests every week from money from different parts of the world, people that are in need. The Philippines when they had that tremendous volcanic eruption and villages were wiped out, well, they called on us for helping to rebuild the church there and to help feed the people who were not able to plant crops and so forth. The same is true in India and just around the world. And it's just such a glorious thing, we thank God for the way He has blessed here.

So as Paul is writing to the Corinthians, he is assuring them that their liberality is going to cause God to be praised and God to be thanked as he takes their gifts to the body of Christ there in Jerusalem that is suffering so much. And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you. They'll be praying for you. You know, it is a humbling thing to realize that people all over the world are praying for Calvary Chapel. We got a letter from a group in Siberia who somehow had gotten hold of our tapes. There is a fellow who can translate them into the Bible study there and they say that they pray for us every week! I mean, wow, people in Siberia pray for us. They are the ones that need prayer. You know, and yet how little we ever think of praying for the believers in Siberia. How many of you this week have prayed for the

believers in Siberia? Don't raise your hand. But, you know, we forget that there are those of the body of Christ, Sudan, going through tremendous persecution. Their lives are on the line every day. And throughout the African continent, throughout Asia, the persecution that the believers are experiencing in China, and the persecution in India as they go into the villages to share Christ, they are beaten and some of them have been killed. The persecution of the believers in Saudi Arabia and in Iran, we rarely think about them. There are beautiful Christians in Iraq, who are there under Sadaam Hussein's reign. Actually they have more freedom under Sadaam Hussein than they have in Iran under the Islamic reign there. But the believers in Christ who are suffering persecution, and how little we think of them, but when they receive our help, then they are praying for us. They are thinking about us. So Paul is saying, they would love to see you. They are going to be praying for you. They are going to be glorifying God on your behalf and giving thanks to God. So this a part of the fruit that will come from your generosity in helping them.

Then Paul closes off this whole section on giving. ¹⁵*Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.* He closes it off by giving thanks to God for His unspeakable gift. There is really the motive for giving, God's glorious gift to us! That becomes our motive. God, You have given so much to me! You have blessed me! And thanks be to God for His indescribable gift, the gift of His Son! For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. The gift of salvation, the wages of sin is death but the gift of God, eternal life. The gift of eternal life. Thanks be to God! He has given so much! All that I have is His, as David acknowledged. Lord, we've only given back what is really Yours anyhow. That which You've entrusted us with.

So we have concluded the subject of giving for the next twelve years, because it will be that long before we get around to Corinthians again, but it's important that you know it. So make good mental notes of it and we'll remind you again twelve years hence when we return.

Father, we thank You for the privilege, the honor, of being able to give to You. Lord, we realize that You're not in need. You own the cattle on a thousand hills. And Lord, it isn't because You're in need. It's because we're in need! We're in need of showing You our love and our appreciation for all You have given to us and all You've done for us. And so we thank You, Lord, that You do receive the expressions and the tokens of our love and our appreciation for Your goodness and for Your blessings and for the indescribable gift that You've bestowed upon us. And so Lord, we give out of grateful hearts. We give out of thankful hearts. We give out of rejoicing hearts, Lord. And we thank You that You receive those gifts that come from a cheerful giver. May we always, Lord, give cheerfully to You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.