

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

At the end of his discourse on giving, Paul burst forth in thanksgiving and praise: “Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!” (2 Cor 9:15). I praise you today as the God of giving and generosity. You gave the greatest gifts that could be given when you sent your Son to die in my place and your Spirit to live in my heart. Hallelujah for the surpassing grace which abounds to all those in Jesus Christ! Glory to God!

Today in Your Word

Today you told me the third part of Paul’s fourth letter to the church at Corinth (called 2 Corinthians). Having expressed joy over the Corinthians’ godly grief, Paul now addressed the issue of raising funds for the impoverished churches in Judea. Corinth had been the first church to want to give, and they had begun a collection the previous year. The project, however, had been derailed by the divisions and quarrels in the church, and Paul urged them to complete “this act of grace” (2 Cor 8:6). The Macedonian churches (Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea) learned from Paul of the Corinthians’ project, and they gave generously and sacrificially. Paul was now concerned that if some of the Macedonians accompanied him to Corinth, an unfinished collection would be an embarrassment for both Paul and the church. Paul’s comments here contain many principles on giving and good works. *First, the way Paul spoke to the Corinthians about completing their collection teaches me:* (1) Good works are acts of grace, and the desire to do them comes from the working of your Spirit in my life. I should seek to excel in them just like I seek to excel in faith and knowledge. (2) Your will is for me to complete the good works which your Spirit has put in my heart to do, for nothing is accomplished if I don’t finish what I start. Initial enthusiasm is not a substitute for persistence and determination. (3) An unfinished good work can call my love and sincerity into question, and it can also be an embarrassment to the cause of Christ. I must never allow laziness or busyness to keep me from completing your acts of grace. *Second, the reasons Paul gave for having a generous spirit teach me:* (1) The basis for giving is the example of Jesus Christ. He willingly gave up the riches of glory and became poor for my sake, so that by his poverty I might become rich (2 Cor 8:9). (2) Being able to contribute to the needs of the saints is a privilege, for when I give to them, I’m really giving to Jesus. I should be as excited as the Macedonians to take part in such an honor. (3) My willingness to give cheerfully and enthusiastically is more important than the amount I’m able to give. (4) I’m free to give whatever I decide in my heart, but I should remember that “whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully” (2 Cor 9:6). *Finally, the comments Paul made on material blessings teach me:* (1) You give financial resources to me, not so I can focus on pleasing myself, but so that I’m able to give to others. (2) There will be times when I have an abundance and times when I’m in need. When I have an abundance, I should rejoice in the opportunity to give to those in need, and when I’m in need, I should welcome the gifts of others who are blessed by giving to me. (3) The more I’m generous toward others, the more your grace will abound in my life! Praise the Lord!

Reflection

Paul was transparent about how the collection was being taken, and he put several trusted men in place to make sure the money was handled honestly. Do I handle kingdom resources with integrity? Am I conducting my business in a way that is above reproach?

Request

Father, I know how important proper planning and administration are to the success of your ministry. Give me wisdom in my dealings with the church, and help me to maintain the highest standard of financial ethics.

Thanksgiving

Thank you for the outpouring of your grace in my life! Your grace abounds to me, “so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, I may abound in every good work” (2 Cor 9:8)!

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: “[Lord, Thou Lov’st the Cheerful Giver](#)” – Robert Murray.

Meditation Verse: 2 Corinthians 9:11.