

March 22, 2009

Capital Stewardship Campaign

Sermon Title: The Grace of Giving

Sermon Series: Building a Blessing

Sermon Text: 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

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Sermon-Based Discussion

## INTRODUCTION

Giving is one of those things that we do because it is something we must, it is just, or it is expected. And to make giving more palatable our culture has packaged it so that we can give even as we get. There are walk-a-thons where we can donate money that other people give us for having fun with our friends. It is chic to have (RED) products, special edition, status objects you buy to support the elimination of AIDS in Africa. But this is not the type of giving God desires to develop in His people. God has a more inspiring form of giving in mind for His people.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is your gut reaction when you are approached by fund raisers? What do you hate most about them? Are there any that you are more inclined to give to? What makes them more appealing to you?

## Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

2. Is it harder to give out of your prosperity or to give when in need? Why is that the case? What does this reveal about your reliance on God?
3. What was the motivation for the Macedonians to give and what did they expect to gain from their gift? How is that different from the American culture of giving?
4. What is the basis of Paul's appeal when he asks the Corinthians to fulfill their pledge to give to the Jerusalem Relief Fund? Why was it important for them to give?
5. Is God unrealistic in what He expects us to give?

## GOING DEEPER

In a couple of weeks you will be asked to commit to give to the Capital Stewardship Campaign at BCEC. These are difficult times. Jobs are no longer secure. Investments have significantly dropped in value. The end to this world-wide recession is not in sight. Will you be willing to commit to give? Will you be willing to commit to give sacrificially, to give in a way that has meaning to your life? If so, why are you able to do that? If not, what is holding you back?

## WHAT WILL YOU DO?

God wants us to give. Not because He needs anything from us. But because He knows the great joy that awaits us when we graciously and sacrificially give from a heart of love and trust. Will you commit to praying that God would strengthen your faith and trust in Him? Will you commit to asking God to help you give sacrificially so that you can experience the joy of His salvation?

## CHANGING YOUR MIND

*But just as you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us – see that you also excel in this grace of giving. I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich. (2 Corinthians 8:7-9)*

## 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

<sup>1</sup>And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. <sup>2</sup>Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. <sup>3</sup>For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, <sup>4</sup>they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. <sup>5</sup>And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will. <sup>6</sup>So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. <sup>7</sup>But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

<sup>8</sup>I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. <sup>9</sup>For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

<sup>10</sup>And here is my advice about what is best for you in this matter: Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. <sup>11</sup>Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means.

<sup>12</sup>For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.

<sup>13</sup>Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. <sup>14</sup>At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality.