

📍 January 29, 2019 - Jay Strike  
📍 The Grace of Giving  
📍 2 Corinthians 8:1-15



As Paul is writing his second letter to the church at Corinth he comes to the issue of generously giving to the church in Jerusalem. The church there was suffering greatly from famine and was in need of help from other churches. In this passage, Paul lifts up the abundant generosity of the impoverished church at Philippi as an example. They gave in spite of their own circumstances. Paul sought to give encouragement as he addressed this issue of giving.

Paul lifts up the Corinthians for the fact that they have excelled in their faith, speech, knowledge, diligence and love. These are most certainly references to the Spiritual Gifts within the church of which Paul spoke in his first letter (1 Corinthians 1). Paul then adds, “excel also in this grace,” that is, the grace of giving. God gives gifts to each of us as believers for the development and edification of the church - not just to the local body, but to the greater ministry needs that occur. This grace of giving is meant to encourage and provide while giving credit to God’s love. It involves being good stewards of what God has given and can include the adjustment of one’s lifestyle in order to excel in this gift.

At issue here was not their ability to give, but their availability (or willingness) to give. They were moving forward in the use of their gifts in the church, and for whatever reason, they were falling short in their generosity. Many times, we can make an excuse for not giving because we serve in different ways. Warren Wiersbe shared this,

“We must never argue that the ministry of our spiritual gifts is a substitute for generous giving. ‘I teach a Sunday School class, so I don’t have to give!’ is not an explanation—it’s an excuse. The Christian who remembers that his gifts are *gifts* will be motivated to give to others and not ‘hide’ behind his ministry for the Lord. I have met pastors and missionaries who have argued that, since they devote their whole time in serving the Lord, they are not obligated to give. **Paul argued just the opposite: since you are wonderfully gifted from God, you ought to want to give even more!**” (*Emphasis added*)

Our motivation for giving comes in light of all that we have received! We have received eternal life through the gift that God has given us in His Son. We have received gifts to build up the body of Christ and expand the Kingdom of God here on earth. We have been given much and entrusted with much by the God who owns it all.

Excel at this grace of giving!