

## Summary

This sermon explores biblical principles of giving, using Paul's letter to the Corinthians about the Macedonian churches as an example. The pastor emphasizes that giving should flow from love and grace rather than obligation or command. He addresses misconceptions about church finances, explaining that churches are funded by congregational giving, not government support. The message highlights how the Macedonian Christians, despite their poverty and affliction, gave joyfully and generously because they first gave themselves to God. The pastor challenges the congregation to examine not how much they can spare, but how much they truly need to live, making giving an expression of love for Jesus rather than a spiritual obligation.

## Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, as we gather together today to discuss Your Word and what it means for our lives, we ask that You would open our hearts and minds to receive what You want to teach us. Help us to be vulnerable and honest with one another, and guide our conversation so that we might grow in our understanding of Your grace and love. We pray that You would speak to each person here according to their needs and circumstances. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## Ice Breaker

What's one subscription service or regular expense that you pay for but could probably live without if you really had to?

## Key Verses

1. 2 Corinthians 8:1-15
2. 2 Corinthians 8:9
3. Mark 12:41-44

## Questions

1. What stood out to you most about the Macedonian Christians' response to their difficult circumstances?
2. How does Paul's approach to encouraging giving differ from what you might typically expect from church leaders?
3. What does it mean that 'they gave themselves first to the Lord' before giving financially?
4. How do you respond to the idea that giving should be 'according to your means' rather than a fixed percentage?
5. What can we learn from Jesus' observation of the widow's offering compared to the wealthy

donors?

6. How might examining 'how much do I really need to live' change our perspective on generosity?
7. In what ways can the church community embody the principle that 'no one has too much and no one has too little'?
8. How can we ensure that giving remains a privilege and expression of love rather than pressure or obligation?

## Life Application

This week, take time to honestly evaluate your current lifestyle and spending. Ask yourself: 'How much do I really need to live?' Consider one area where you might be able to live more simply, and prayerfully think about how that could free up resources - whether time, money, or energy - to invest in God's kingdom work, whether through your local church, helping others in need, or supporting missions.

## Key Takeaways

1. True giving flows from first giving ourselves to God, which naturally leads to generous hearts toward His work
2. Giving should be according to our means, not a fixed percentage that ignores individual circumstances
3. The value of a gift is not measured by its size but by the heart and sacrifice behind it
4. The goal of Christian giving is equality - ensuring no one has too much while others have too little
5. Churches are funded by the generosity of their congregations, not government support, making each person's contribution vital to ministry

## Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for the ultimate example of generosity - that though You were rich, You became poor so that we might become rich in You. Help us to examine our hearts and our lives with honesty and grace. Show us how to be faithful stewards of all You've given us, whether much or little. May our giving - of our resources, time, and talents - flow from genuine love for You and others. Help us to be a community where no one has too much and no one has too little, where we care for one another as You have cared for us. Guide us as we seek to live generously and trust You with our needs. In Your precious name, Amen.