
2 Corinthians 8:1–15 (NLT) -

Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia.

2 They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity.

3 For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will. 4 They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem.[b]

5 They even did more than we had hoped, for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and to us, just as God wanted them to do. 6 So we have urged Titus, who encouraged your giving in the first place, to return to you and encourage you to finish this ministry of giving.

7 Since you excel in so many ways—in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us—I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving. 8 I am not commanding you to do this. But I am testing how genuine your love is by comparing it with the eagerness of the other churches.

9 You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich.

10 Here is my advice: It would be good for you to finish what you started a year ago. Last year you were the first who wanted to give, and you were the first to begin doing it.

11 Now you should finish what you started. Let the eagerness you showed in the beginning be matched now by your giving. Give in proportion to what you have.

12 Whatever you give is acceptable if you give it eagerly. And give according to what you have, not what you don't have.

13 Of course, I don't mean your giving should make life easy for others and hard for yourselves. I only mean that there should be some equality.

14 Right now you have plenty and can help those who are in need. Later, they will have plenty and can share with you when you need it. In this way, things will be equal.

15 As the Scriptures say,
"Those who gathered a lot had nothing left over,
and those who gathered only a little had enough."

We are created to be conduits, not caches.

Study Guide

This last Sunday we spoke about how we are created to be conduits, not caches. We discussed how we are called to freely pass on what we have been given, not store it up out of anxiety or selfish concern. As you look at your life, what have been some examples of how others have given graciously to you? Why do those examples stand out? What are some examples of moments where you were able to be generous as well? Or, what were some examples where you felt like you couldn't be as generous as you wanted to? Why was that?

Take a moment to read Mark 12:41–44. What stands out to you about what Jesus is saying about giving here? What do you think is the key difference in how the widow viewed the world versus how the others had?

Now, take a moment to look back at the last thing Jesus says before this in Mark 12:38–40. Jesus is pointing out that the Pharisees and other teachers had fallen into the pattern of doing the things that looked right, but missed the point. They were preoccupied with the outward appearance and were missing the heart or worldview that God wanted them to have.

When we try to give without adjusting the way we view the world, we can end up exasperating our anxiety or limping along without being able to embrace the type of gracious, joyful generosity God has for us. How do you think you can remind yourself of the grace of God and allow that to shape the way we see the world? What is a practice or pattern you could adopt this week that would help?