Love That Gives (From Receiving a Blessing to Being a Blessing)

Love In Action

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Sermon: Love In Action: Love That Gives (From Receiving a Blessing to Being a Blessing)

Sermon Text

2 Corinthians 9:6–11 (KJV)[6] But this *I say*, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. [7] Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. [8] And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work: [9] (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. [10] Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for *your* food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) [11] Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.

Introduction: Blessed to Be a Blessing

In this new series, Love In Action, we are discovering how love serves, gives, forgives, restores, and builds unity between us.

Last week, in *Love That Serves*, Jesus demonstrated that genuine love is willing to serve others. He left the table and took a towel to wash his disciples' feet. We learned that love gets down to serve. In today's message we will learn that love reaches out to give.

Sometimes love requires us to give of our time, resources, money, abilities, or encouragement.

One of the greatest misunderstandings about God's blessings is believing that everything God gives us is intended for us.

We pray for God to bless us, open doors, increase our resources, and provide for our needs. And there's nothing wrong with that. But what if God's purpose in blessing us is not simply to improve our lives, but to use our lives to improve somebody else's?

What if the promotion wasn't just about your position? What if the increase wasn't just about your income? What if God blessed you because He wanted to bless somebody through you?

In Genesis 12:2, God told Abraham: "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:"

Notice the progression: God promised to bless Abraham, but He also expected Abraham to become a blessing.

God's blessings were never intended to stop with Abraham. They were intended to flow through him. And the same is true for us.

In 2 Corinthians 9, Paul encourages the believers to participate in an offering for impoverished Christians in Jerusalem. But Paul isn't simply raising money. He's teaching that generosity is an expression of God's grace and love working through us.

God does not bless us simply to increase what we have, but to increase what we can give.

Paul's teaching reveals three principles of God's Love that move us from receiving a blessing to becoming or being a blessing.

Series and Sermon: Love In Action: Love That Gives (From Receiving a Blessing to Being a Blessing)

(The Principle of Giving, The Posture of Giving, and The Purpose of Giving)

I. The Principle of Giving (Sowing Generously)

2 Corinthians 9:6 (KJV) "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."

What we are willing to release determines what God can multiply through our lives.

We first see a juxtaposition or comparison of giving to sowing and reaping.

Farmers understand that you can't expect a harvest from a field where you've planted nothing. And the amount you sow influences the harvest you can expect.

Paul says those who sow sparingly reap sparingly, while those who sow generously reap generously. But this is not necessarily a formula for getting rich; but a principle on producing blessings for others.

God uses what we willingly give to produce blessings that extend beyond ourselves.

Sometimes the harvest is financial provision. Sometimes it's a changed life, an answered prayer, or someone coming to Christ.

Our responsibility is to sow. God determines the harvest.

Giving Requires a Release (Letting Go): Before a farmer can experience a harvest, he must release the seed. As long as the seed remains in his hand, it cannot produce anything.

A blessing that never leaves your hand can never reach somebody else's life.

Giving Requires a Response (Living Generously): 2 Corinthians 9:6 (KJV) "… and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."

In Mark 12:41–44, Jesus commended a poor widow who gave two small coins because her gift represented extraordinary sacrifice.

God doesn't measure generosity merely by the size of our gift, but by the sacrifice and willingness behind it.

Giving Produces a Return (Looking Forward): Galatians 6:9 declares: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

The seed you release today may become the blessing somebody needs tomorrow.

II. The Posture of Giving (Sharing Cheerfully)

2 Corinthians 9:7–9 "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever."

God is not simply looking for generous hands; He is looking for a generous heart.

Last week we looked at the posture of a servant, let's now look at the posture of a giver.

We now move from the principle of giving to the attitude of a giver.

We should give as we have purposed in our hearts, not grudgingly or out of necessity.

In other words, giving should not be motivated by guilt, pressure, or obligation – "For God loveth a cheerful giver."

The Greek word translation for *cheerful* is *hilaros*, describing gladness and willingness.

God is interested not only in what we give, but in the spirit in which we give it.

Giving Should Be Purposeful (Willing Choice): Simply put, we should purpose, willingly choose to give. We shouldn't wait until someone begs us to help; it should become a lifestyle.

Giving Should Be Pleasant Cheerfully Sharing): God loves a cheerful giver. There's a difference between someone helping you because they have to and someone helping because they genuinely want to.

Giving should be done Prayerful: This is about trusting God. Verse 8 reminds us that God is able to make all grace abound toward us.

Philippians 4:19 declares: "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

We can give generously because our confidence is not merely in what we possess, but in the God who provides.

III. The Purpose of Giving (Supplying Graciously)

2 Corinthians 9:10–11 "Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God."

God increases our capacity to give so that our generosity can increase His glory.

God provides both seed to the sower and bread for food. Bread represents what we need for ourselves. Seed represents what can be planted to produce something more.

God provides for our needs while enabling us to meet the needs of others.

The purpose of giving is not the recognition of the giver, but the glorification of God.

God Supplies Our Provision (Meeting Needs): Deuteronomy 8:18 says: "But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth..."

God Strengthens Our Participation (Multiplying): In John 6, a boy offered five loaves and two fish. It wasn't enough to feed thousands, but when placed in Jesus' hands, it became more than enough. The miracle is not in the offering, but who it is given to.

What seems insignificant in your hands can become significant when surrendered to God's purposes. Never underestimate what God can accomplish through a willing giver.

God Secures His Praise (Magnifying God): When we bless others, we give them a reason to recognize God's goodness.

Matthew 5:16: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

We give so that people can experience God's goodness and give God the glory.

Conclusion: From Blessed to Being a Blessing

God never intended for His blessings to end with us.

He didn't save us simply to enjoy salvation. He saved us to share the gospel.

He didn't give us abilities simply for our advancement. He gave us gifts to strengthen others.

And He didn't provide resources simply for our accumulation. He provided them to accomplish His purposes.

We have been blessed to become a blessing!

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son..."

Love is the motivation. Giving is the manifestation.

God didn't merely tell us He loved us. He demonstrated His love by giving His Son.

Jesus gave His time to the hurting. His compassion to the rejected. His healing to the sick. His forgiveness to sinners.

I don't just want to be blessed. I want to be a blessing!

I don't just want God to open doors for me. I want to help somebody else walk through them.

I don't just want God to lift me up. I want to help lift somebody else!

I don't just want God to change my life. I want God to use my life to change somebody else's!

Because when love is in action, we don't just talk about generosity. We practice generosity!

We don't just talk about being blessed. We become a blessing!

Midweek Study Lesson Plan (Sermon: Love That Serves (From Self-Centered to Servant-Centered))

Lesson Text

- **Primary Text:**
  - **2 Corinthians 9:6–11**
- **Supporting Texts:**
  - **Genesis 12:2–3; 2 Corinthians 8:1–9; Acts 20:35**

Sermon Outline

- **I. The Principle of Giving (Sowing Generously)**
- **II. The Posture of Giving (Sharing Cheerfully)**
- **III. The Purpose of Giving (Supplying Graciously)**

Questions: (What was your main takeaway from this message?)

I. Getting To Know "Me"

1. What are five items you like to keep in your refrigerator at all times?

2. What do you enjoy more in person than online?

II. Into The Bible

1. Read 2 Corinthians 9:8–11 and 1 Chronicles 29:14. What do these scriptures reveal about the order of receiving from God and giving to others?

2. Read 2 Corinthians 9:8, Ephesians 1:3, and 1 John 4:17. Does God expect His children to be blessed? What do these scriptures reveal about the nature and purpose of His blessings?

III. Life Application

1. What do you need in order to be a generous giver? Is this only referring to money?

2. Give an example of a person giving to the church and that giving causing others to glorify God.