

Generous Church 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

Generous Giving

Sometimes we can begin something, but not complete it. The same is true with giving – that is what happened at Corinth. Paul is collecting support for the church in Jerusalem. The church at Corinth said they would give, but hadn't. He writes to encourage them to do so.

He wants them, and us, to excel in giving as they do in other areas of life. He wants them to follow the example of the Macedonians, who gave generously, and sacrificially, despite their own suffering and poverty. They rededicated themselves to God first, and then gave themselves to Paul, and not just financially.

How can we become like them? How does Paul motivate the Corinthians to become like them?

Generous Grace

Firstly, he points them to Jesus. Just as Jesus became poor for us, so we might become rich, so we are to give generously so that others might be enriched spiritually. When we understand Jesus' grace for us we can become cheerful givers. If we give for reasons other than Jesus' grace, we will give reluctantly, or from guilt, or from pride. Only grace can make us cheerful givers.

Secondly, he points them to the harvest of righteousness that comes from generous sowing. In 2 Corinthians 9 he quotes from Psalm 112, which speaks of the man or woman who gives generously. And that person's family grows strong, in the dark seasons of life he doesn't fear, he trusts God and is courageous. We can reap that harvest because, when we give generously, God gives even more generously in return, and our experience of grace multiples.

Practical Generosity

So how can we grow in this grace of generosity? Here are some suggestions. Our giving should be:

1. Regular
2. Proportional
3. Thoughtful
4. Sacrificial
5. Cheerful
6. Local, then global
7. But most importantly, it should be giving ourselves to the Lord.