

2 Corinthians Ch9v6-15 - Generous Grace, Generous Giving: Part 3

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Date: 08 February 2026

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[0:00] So, 2 Corinthians chapter 9.

Sorry, I'm just waiting on some water, so I'll just wait for them to get that, and then we'll read together.

So why don't you say hello to your neighbour while you're waiting, and say hello. Thank you. Remember this, whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

[1:57] And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

As it is written, they have freely scattered their gifts to the poor, their righteousness endures for ever.

Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.

You will be enriched in every way, so that you can be generous on every occasion. And through us, your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people, but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.

[2:59] Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.

And in their prayers for you, their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift.

Well, let's pray together. Father, thank you for your love to us.

Thank you for giving to us your word. A word which speaks to us in our time and in our generation and to this local church.

We pray for your Holy Spirit, not just to understand these words, but how they apply to us. And that by your Spirit, we would live them out for your glory and for all praise and thanksgiving to you.

[4:23] So help us now, we ask. Amen. Well, over the last few weeks, we've been looking at this whole subject of giving financially.

How we give our hard-earned, precious money. Now, before we get into the text, I want to just highlight a disclaimer.

As we think about money and you're maybe thinking, oh, he's after my hard-earned cash. I want you to know that I don't, said this last week, I don't have any access personally to the church's funds or bank account.

And I don't set how much the church gives to me in support of the work that I do. That is something that the members decide, and the members decide how the finances are used in support of the ministries of this church.

In fact, if you want to know more about how the church gives and where it goes to, there's this little flyer, Carigoline Baptist Church Money Matters. It's slightly out of date, but you can get a copy of that on your way out.

[5:41] Just so you know, we want to be transparent. Now, with that disclaimer out the way, in chapters 8 and 9, we've been thinking about how giving flows out of grace.

Giving flows out of grace. In other words, the only way that we will become generous givers is by first experiencing God's generous grace.

Which also means that if we're not generous givers, then we have not yet been changed by God's grace.

We say, yes, God has entered into my life. His grace is at work in my life. But if we're not generous, then it's because we put barriers around our wallets.

And we have not allowed grace to touch our bank accounts. Let's look at how giving flows out of grace. Look at how the text starts.

[6:46] Let's go back to chapter 8, verse 1. Chapter 8, verse 1. Follow the thread the whole way through these two chapters.

And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given to the Macedonian churches.

Well, what did the grace of God do in their lives? Verse 2. In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.

Grace enables those with extreme poverty to be rich generously. Therefore, look at the end of verse 7.

See that you also excel in this grace of giving. Because, verse 9.

[7:50] You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

But more than that, chapter 9, verse 8. And God is able to bless you abundantly.

Literally, God is able to make all grace abound to you. We are so blessed.

Why? Well, look at the end of verse 14. Because of the surpassing grace God has given you.

Do you see the thread all the way through these two chapters? Grace, or sorry, giving flows out of grace. And grace simply means gift.

[8:54] It's God's overflowing kindness and goodness to undeserving people like us. Grace is the gift that keeps on giving.

You may remember the old story about the magic porridge pot. You remember that? You old enough to remember the magic porridge pot? There was a special little pot, and all you had to say was, Cook, little pot.

Cook. And the porridge would begin to make. But you had to tell it to stop. If you didn't tell it to stop with the right words, it would just keep overflowing.

And so the little boy or girl, I can't remember, said, Cook, little pot, cook. And the pot just kept overflowing with porridge. And it flowed out of the house and down into the streets.

And people were being drowned practically in porridge. Well, here is the abundance of God's grace. It just keeps on giving.

[9:59] It doesn't stop. Verse 15. Thanks be to God for this indescribable gift.

There are no words to describe God's amazing goodness to us. Well, we want to delve a little bit deeper into thinking of this amazing grace that has been given to us.

Two things we're going to see this morning. First, the abundant grace that we have received.

Chapter 9, verse 8.

And God is able to bless you abundantly. Literally, God is able to make all grace abound to you.

God's generosity has no boundaries. There's no limits. There is no use by date. There is no end to the supply of grace.

[11:01] It never runs out. And it never dries up. It's like the Niagara Falls. It just continually cascades over us. You see, God is the source of all grace.

Abundant grace. And it is available 24-7. Do you see there, verse 8? God's grace is able to abound to you.

So that in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

That is the abundance of God's grace. We're given three examples of that grace. First, sowing.

Look at verse 6. Remember this. Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly.

[12:04] And whoever sows generously will also reap generously. It's the principle from the farmer, isn't it? The more you sow, the more you get your seed out, the more you're going to reap.

And the same is true when it comes to giving. The more we give, the more we gain. But let's be careful here.

This isn't about prosperity. It's all about generosity. It's not like the exuberant pastor in his white suit and his gold rings telling the people, well, the more money you give in the collection today, the greater your salary is going to become.

No, those are lies. The application is this. The more money you give, the more you will find you are able to give.

It's not promising greater wealth in our pockets, but a heart that wells up with greater generosity. So the more that we participate in giving, the more we will want to be able to give.

[13:22] And the more that we want to be able to give, the more you will have from God to be able to give. Literally, God will bless us in a way that we are able to release more, not to keep it in our pockets.

This is the abundant grace of God. Then there's scattering. Do you see it there in verse 9?

Having talked about the abundant grace of God, verse 9, It's talking about out of their righteousness, they freely scatter their gifts.

Well, because of God's abundant grace to us, we have received a righteousness from God.

Remember it? Back in chapter 5, verse 21.

Let's remind ourselves of those words. Chapter 5, verse 21. God made Christ, who had no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Christ we might become the righteousness of God.

[15:03] Let's go back to chapter 9. So because of this righteousness, because of what we have received from Christ, we, out of the overflow of God's blessings and goodness to us, we scatter our gifts to the poor, the needy, and the helpless.

Again, we might picture the farmer of ancient times. There he is with his basket out in front of him. He doesn't just take a pinch of one or two grains and drop them.

No, he takes a fistful of grain and spreads and scatters liberally, one after the other. So in response, we have received abundantly, and as we receive, we scatter the grace, the gift that God has given to us.

Now again, we have to be careful. We're not giving to earn our righteousness, to earn our acceptance. We don't scatter the gifts to earn grace.

No, we give graciously and generously because we have received graciously and generously. This is the abundant grace of God.

[16:20] So there's the sowing, there's the scattering, and there's the supplying. I hope you can see these words all come from the text. I'm not just going for alliteration just for the sake of it.

They just happen to fall nicely today. Verse 10. Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.

Who owns what you have? The money in your account, your possessions.

Who owns them? Well, God owns them. Because they all come from him. He is the supplier of all things.

Suppose I were to invite you to lunch after the service, and on the table was an assortment of breads. Krusty bread, sourdough bread, French bread, seeded bread, any kind of bread.

[17:28] And there we are, we're eating till we're full. Well, I could take credit for it all, but I am not the supplier. Verse 10.

Now he, God who supplies seed to the sower and God who provides bread for food, will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.

In other words, just as God supplies physical food, so he will supply all that is needed to grow our righteousness.

A kind of righteous life that is generous, a life that is gracious in all that we do. Because God not only supplies grace that we might be treated as righteous in God's sight, but he also continues to

pour out his grace in our life to supply all that we need so that we become righteous, that we live out a righteous kind of life in generosity and in giving.

You see, this is the abundant grace of God. It's like the magic porridge pot. Cook, little pot, cook.

[18:54] Grace, keep going, keep giving, keep overflowing. And it does.

The sowing, the scattering, the supplying is all down to God's rich generosity.

When we were young, when we were young, my parents had a vegetable garden out the back and one of the things they grew was sprouting broccoli.

I don't know if you like broccoli. Well, we had to like broccoli. That was just the way that it was. Now, the thing about sprouting broccoli is the more you pick it, the more you harvest it, the more the broccoli begins to sprout.

So if you leave it alone and don't pick it, you won't get any broccoli. And parents didn't believe in not picking. They just kept harvesting it. And the more they picked, the more we had.

For three months of the year, every day we had broccoli. Now, that's the point of abundant grace.

The more we receive, the more we harvest it, the more we take it in, the more we give, the more we are able to have to give.

[20:15] As we experience his goodness, it just keeps on growing. As one writer put it, we will always be rich enough to be generously rich.

So the abundant grace. But there's another kind of grace, a surpassing grace. Look at verse 14.

We had a look at it there just a moment ago. Let's read verse 14. And in their prayers for you, their hearts will go out to you because of the surpassing grace God has given you.

Grace is immense. His favour to us is incredible. When you think you have reached your limit, there's more. It goes above and beyond our needs.

It's like we're dropped into the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. If we're Christians, we are in a sea. We are in an ocean. We swim in surpassing grace.

[21:28] But why does he give this grace to us? Well, there are three clear reasons from these few verses. First, God gives grace so that glory goes to God.

God gives grace so that glory goes to God. Look at verse 11. You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion and through us, your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

Verse 12. This service, this grace of giving that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people, but it is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.

Do you see the flow of thought? We have grace, giving, and glory. We receive the grace of God.

We in turn give generously to others, which leads to all giving thanks and praise and glory to God.

You see, giving is the mark or the sign that we are Christians. Verse 13. Because of this service, this grace of giving by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God, they will glorify God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ.

[23:12] In other words, the gospel of Christ is so powerful, it can change the most tight-fisted of someone, all of us, to be the most generous of all.

And as a result, people give praise and thanks for God for what he has done in their life. You see, it's not about me in what I give or what you give.

It's all about God who has given all that I need and all that I have and has changed and transformed my life so that I will want to be able to give.

all the glory and all the honour goes to God who has given us grace all sufficient.

So not only glory to God from our receiving, but needs are met. That's the second reason we have surpassing grace.

[24:16] Verse 12, this service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people, but is also overflowing in thanks to God.

Yes, God gets the glory, but our giving also meets the needs of others. That's the case for the church in Corinth. They had much to give and they had the opportunity to give to help the needs of the church in Jerusalem who are in a desperate situation.

And this is how God works. He supplies us with our needs and we can give to others. God has given to you so that you can help someone in need.

We're a conduit, a means of God's grace to one another. Needs are met. And then the third reason why we have surpassing grace is that we will be encouraged by others.

Verse 14. And in their prayers for you, their hearts will go out to you because of the surpassing grace God has given you.

[25:33] You see, when we give, we bless those in need. And in return, as they receive, it doesn't just mean thanksgiving and praise to God, it doesn't just mean needs are met.

It means that they will overflow in their praise to God for you. They will thank God for you. They will pray for you. Their hearts will go out to you.

This is the results of giving. It encourages gospel relationships and gospel partnerships. Their prayers for you and their hearts will go out to you.

So as we experience the surpassing grace of God, it will lead to encouragements through prayer, needs being met, and ultimately thanks and praise to God.

So the abundant grace of God and the surpassing grace of God. How do we respond to these two magnificent works in our life?

[26:44] Well, we're going to be very practical here, I hope. There we go. We've got four practical applications for how we should think about our own giving.

Now, our own giving is between ourselves and God, it's not me to say how much you give or you to tell me how much I give. That is between you and the Lord.

But nonetheless, scripture does give us some practical application. So first, intentionally, not haphazardly, go back to 1 Corinthians.

1 Corinthians chapter 16. 1 Corinthians chapter 16 verse 1.

So Paul again is writing to the church about a collection that needs to be made to help the church in Jerusalem. Now, about the collection for the Lord's people, do what I told the Galatian churches to do.

[28:05] On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come, no collections will have to be made.

You see, he's telling them to be prepared, to give, plan to give, budget to give. And if you're like me, unless we're intentional, unless we plan and prepare, it's not going to happen.

I can have all the will in the world, but if I don't prepare and plan, nothing's going to change. for us as a church, we have direct debit, there's a QR code on the box, you can click on that, and you can plan and prepare.

But that's between you and the Lord as to how much and when, intentionally, not haphazardly.

Second, proportionately, not carelessly.

Let's go back to 2 Corinthians chapter 8. 2 Corinthians chapter 8, verse 11. So the context is still the same, it's about this collection for the church in Jerusalem, and as we apply it to ourselves, we say proportionately, not carelessly.

[29:39] Verse 11. Now finish the work so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it according to your means.

For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.

So we can't give what we don't have. Every one of us is different. Some of us will have more, some will have less. We give as we are able to give.

We aren't giving to please others, but to glorify God. And that will be different for each one of us. It must be proportionate to what we receive.

So second, proportionately, not carelessly. Third, generously, not grudgingly. chapter 9, verse 5.

[30:40] Look at chapter 9, verse 5. So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised.

Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given. Now, often when we think about generosity and about giving, we think in terms of tithing.

In the Old Testament and under the Old Covenant, there was a tithe of 10%. Well, actually, if you were to read through the Old Testament, you'll know there are three different types of tithes.

And I added up to 23.5% of all that you had in your possessions and what you grew and everything else was all given. 23.5%.

And then if you happen to live under Roman rule, well, they wanted 50% of all that you had. You think your taxes are bad.

[31:49] 50%. And 23% on top of that. They knew what it was to give. But we're not living under the Old Covenant, we're living under the New Covenant.

And the only command in the New Testament, it doesn't say anything about tithing, but it does say generosity. That is the only command when it comes to giving.

Be generous. And it's up to you what that percentage is. Have a look with me if you can just jump forward to 1 Timothy. If you don't know where it is, that's right, I'll read it to you.

1 Timothy 6, 17 and 18. 1 Timothy 6, verse 17 and 18. So here's what the New Testament says to us.

6, verse 17, command those who are rich. Well, what is he to command them? Verse 18.

Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds and to be generous and willing to share.

[33:10] Nothing about tithing, simply generosity. And not grudgingly.

We're not to be stingy. It means to be generous.

And then fourth and last, cheerfully. Isn't it a great thing to give? Yes, it is. Cheerfully, not reluctantly.

2 Corinthians 9, verse 7. Let me read it. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Giving is a gift from God and it is a joy to receive. How much our face lights up when we receive and how much that joy is reflected as we give.

It's a pleasure. God has given us wonderful gifts that we might share them with those in need. so giving flows out of the grace of God and God's grace is abundant and surpassing.

[34:25] Like the magic porridge pot, like the broccoli that kept sprouting, God's grace will flow continually so that we can give continuously.

Let's pray. our Father God, we can say thank you for this indescribable gift, for your grace to us in saving us, your grace to us in providing us with all that we have and more than we need.

Father God, help us that we would be generous people. We thank you for all that you have done and all that you have provided for in this church, for the kindness of each person.

We praise you for such giving. To you be all the glory. Amen. as we surrender, as we surrender, as we give.

In response to God's grace, we offer our life in service to him. Let's stand as we sing together.

Thank you.

[36:17] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[38:47] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Amen. Amen.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. And also, people had asked about giving towards CUI.

[41:22] There is a box on the table for that. Thank you.