

Joy-Giving/Joy-Receiving

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 28 October 2018

Preacher: Jim Masters

[0:00] Please take your Bibles and go to 2 Corinthians 8.

2 Corinthians 8. In that black Bible in the chair in front of you, if you misplaced your Bible and need to use one, that black Bible in the chair in front of you, you can pull that out, go towards the back, find page 143.

143. 2 Corinthians 8. We're gonna study the first 15 verses this morning.

2 Corinthians 8, verses 1 through 15. Let's read. Now brethren, we make known to you the grace of God which has been given by the churches of Macedonia.

That in great test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their simplicity.

[1:12] For I testify that according to their ability and beyond their ability, of their own accord, begging us with much entreaty for the grace of fellowship in the mission of the saints.

And not as we had hoped. But first, they gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. Verse 6. As a result, we urge Titus that as he previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this grace.

But just as you abound in everything, in faith, and in word, and in knowledge, and in all zeal, and in our love for you, in order that you may abound in this grace.

I'm not speaking as a command, but as proving through the zeal of others your sincere love. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, that you, by means of his poverty, may become rich.

And I give opinion in this matter. For this is for your good. Who were the first to begin a year ago, not only to do, but also to desire. So now, finish the doing.

[2:37] And just the readiness to desire, also the completion of it by your ability. Verse 12. For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.

For it's not for the ease of others for your affliction, but by way of equality. At this present time, your abundance for their want, that their abundance also may become for your want, in order that there may be equality.

As it is written, he who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little. There's a difference between equality and sameness.

For example, husband and wife are equal, but they're not the same because each has different roles. Now, just because they have different roles doesn't diminish their equality.

If people are the same, it obliterates the differences that are between them. Their roles, their abilities, their skills, their talents, etc. When there's equality, there is true dynamic exchange.

[3:55] So, example, a husband brings with him certain weaknesses and lacks, which will be met by the strength and abundance of his wife for her joy and his joy too.

She's able to get joy being able to help in those things where he's weak and where he lacks. This is true also of the wealthy and the poor. The wealthy need the poor.

Strong and weak. Those who lead and those who follow. A dynamic exchange takes place. We don't want sameness, but we do want the equality because that will bring about dynamic exchange. Realizing that we all live under the ultimate giver who gives with no need for an exchange. He has no needs.

He has no wants. And yet, in a mind-blowing way, we truly end up bringing him joy so it ends up being an exchange.

[5:12] Why do I say this? Because as we come to this passage, once again, we see this paradox. Boasting your weakness, boasting the Lord.

Last week, we saw a definite contrast. Today, we see an apparent paradox. The Corinthians are definitely not going to really understand what this means, which is why Paul's going to teach them through this.

So the theme for verses 8, 1 through 15 is this. Joy giving, joy receiving. Giving, receiving, receiving, giving.

It's that mutual, dynamic exchange. Joy giving, joy receiving. And you can flip it around.

Joy receiving slash joy giving. It goes together. The Corinthians, they struggled with this. They wanted to get. They wanted to take.

[6 : 15] And they wanted to give so that way they look better. Paul's trying to tell them, he'll tell them, no, you give in order to receive joy. We'll talk about that more. Here's some statements for you.

God, the ultimate giver, has given so that we can follow in this principle, joy giving, joy receiving, joy receiving, joy giving.

God's work of grace results in a relationship of receiving from God and giving to others. He stepped in. He moved first.

Or here's another statement. God's giving grace comes down in Christ and supernaturally changes us instilling in us the joy to give and to receive.

This hinges upon the gospel. It hinges upon God giving himself to us. And it's personal. It's not just giving us stuff.

[7 : 16] He doesn't just give you heaven. He doesn't just give you forgiveness. He doesn't just give you justification. He doesn't just give you away out of hell.

I mean, it goes deeper than that. It's personal. He gives himself. He communicates. Another statement, although I probably should wait because it's a lot there.

Okay, I'll wait. Intermission time. Anybody go to the bathroom or something? Okay.

Five, four, three, two, one. Oh, man, come on. When God gives, he gives himself and he gave himself in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ who became poor being rich so that by means of his poverty we may become rich.

So this gift that was going to go to the church of Jerusalem, it would show the bond between Christians. And we're going to talk more about that.

[8 : 30] They're unified under the gospel of grace. And if the Corinthians obeyed this, they'd display the gospel and affirm Paul's authority.

Once again, here it comes. That they would embrace the fact that Paul was their pastor. So this is, this is by way of information. Excuse me, in 1 Corinthians, it's talked about, 1 Corinthians chapter 16, the Corinthian church desired to participate in a collection to the church in Jerusalem.

They were struggling. There was a famine that hit that area and the church there in Jerusalem was struggling. So Paul was going to visit them. So here's this collection. Paul was going to go to Corinth.

It got disrupted. So he did an emergency visit. Remember, it was a painful visit that he did. And then he canceled this planned visit. They got really upset about it. So now it's been about a year since the church in Corinth taught about giving to that church in Jerusalem.

So Titus' mission, try again for the sake of the gospel at work in them. Bring it up. So now was the time for them to act, to live out the gospel of grace.

[9 : 45] And then he brings up the Macedonian churches. We'll talk about that in a second. They were examples of the grace of giving. That the gift of salvation was working in them because it flowed out of Christ's work.

All Christians are in a relationship of giving and receiving because of the gospel. Thus, giving should be free and spontaneous, not from compulsion.

That doesn't mean you don't plan, nor does it mean you don't persuade, but the persuasion is the grace of Christ. Not you should be giving because of blah, blah, blah, or some moral obligation that you have.

No, we give ourselves so that what we end up receiving is joy. We give so we end up receiving joy. And so does the other person and it flips around.

So let's talk about this. Let's unpack this passage, these 15 verses in chapter 8. First, the key ingredient is God's grace. That's verse 1.

[10:55] Now brethren, we make known to you and reveal to you the grace of God which has been given by the churches of Macedonia. Now understand, the Macedonian churches were not examples of generosity, but of the grace of God at work in them.

Do not take away this passage today and think that the Macedonian church isn't a great example of generosity. No, they're an example of God's grace.

Of God, His grace had worked in them and changed them. We're going to talk about to what extent and blah, blah, blah. God's grace had worked in very practical ways in giving to their brethren in Jerusalem.

Grace means simply God's favor or His unmerited favor which is in Christ and it's a gift we receive from Christ but it's a gift we receive again and again and again because we're constantly in favor with God through Christ.

So, we keep drinking Christ and He keeps satisfying us again and again and again and again. so this gift will be an act of grace an act of giving because it's an outflow of the gospel.

[12:18] God's giving grace came down in Christ and supernaturally changed them. That's what it does. So, the key ingredient here is God's grace.

Second, what does God's grace produce? Verse 2, that in a great test of affliction their abundance of joy. What did it do?

It caused abundant joy in them. They believe believe the gospel so deeply, so passionately, so vividly, so eagerly.

But do you notice something? In a great test of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty.

Do you notice that? But their affliction increased and their poverty didn't go away.

[13:26] Do you see how joy is here and then it's, if you look at it, think of it as like a sandwich or a hamburger, the beef is the joy. One side of the bun, a couple of you licked your lips when I just said that.

That was weird. That was creepy. Okay. One, one side of the bun is affliction. The other side is poverty. It's sandwiched in the middle.

Yet grace so deeply affected them that they overflowed with great joy. That's what God's grace does.

God's grace arrived within their affliction yet in the midst of much testing of affliction. They had abundant joy. I translated that for you from the Greek.

The great ordeal is literally testing. The test of affliction. In our afflictions, we're tested, right? God tests us in our afflictions.

[14:32] So, their affliction, much tested of affliction, they had abundant joy and then this joy cooperated with their deep poverty to abound, he says, overflowed in the wealth of their, New American Standard, liberality, I translate for you simplicity.

We'll talk about that in a second. Great wealth in Christ was present within their poverty. See, their joy was not based on freedom from affliction or freedom from poverty but on God's grace which worked in them uniting them to Jesus and to the brethren down there in Jerusalem which led to their grace giving.

If our joy in Christ is strong enough and if our satisfaction in Christ goes deep enough then afflictions won't daunt us.

Poverty won't daunt us. Trials won't daunt us. We will overflow with joy in ministry towards one another all because of the grace of God.

that's what he's saying. I quoted this a couple weeks ago. This is from John Piper. I think he says it a whole lot better than I do.

[16:06] God's grace in Christ should satisfy our souls more than the absence of afflictions and more than the abundance of wealth. That's what happened with the Macedonian churches.

and this is what Paul was challenging Corinth. He was challenging them to get to this place. The wealth of their liberality.

Now I translate it for you simplicity because it's the same word that's used in chapter 1 verse 12. It's got a little bit of a different ending on it but it's the same root word. simplicity or purity or transparency openness.

So get the idea. Do I have it up here? Yeah. God's gracious work acts in us to such a degree that we are open to receiving and giving and any hidden self-seeking motives are abolished.

See when God's grace comes in you're like this yeah. when God's grace is not at work in you you're like oh. Why do we hoard things?

[17:22] Why do we hide things? Why do we want to keep it for ourselves? That's why you don't do a message on giving. I got a lot of flack when I first came here.

They said you should do a message on giving. I said I'm not going to do a message on giving. If the scripture speaks about giving I will. I'm not going to do that. Why? Because then you're under compulsion. Because what's going to be your normal automatic knee-jerk reaction when we start talking about giving when it's not done in the grace of God?

You're going to pull in right high. That's our normal reaction. But see when God's grace comes in you're like this yeah. Yeah. That's what you do.

That's what they're doing. That's what Macedonian churches are doing. Their transparency or openness or simplicity expressed itself in giving to the Jerusalem church.

And this giving is not an act of generosity but it's communication. God communicated his grace in Christ.

[18:28] God's work of grace results in a relationship of receiving from God and giving to others and it went way beyond their ability.

The riches of their simplicity was found in open communication with God and others by free acts of giving and receiving all because of Christ. what did they receive?

Why did they give? For their own joy. They received joy when they gave out of poverty and affliction.

That's what they received. Now the next question is to what extent all they hungered for it. Look at verse 3 and 4. for I testify stop there I'm telling you this I know this for a fact I'm testifying this to you I saw with their own two eyes that according to their ability and beyond their ability of their own accord begging us with much entreaty look at this these massive churches were grieving to do this not only were they willing but they went beyond their ability according to their power and beyond their power which is the very display of God's work in them in Christ power in their weakness oh they wanted it bad they wanted it bad that's how bad they wanted joy they wanted joy so bad they wanted to give they wanted to give so bad so they can have joy that's the way they thought and Paul confirmed God's work of grace in them so they gave spontaneously and freely to Jerusalem church and then look at begging entreating eager zeal Paul didn't need to appeal to them they petitioned him they begged him and notice how I translate this for you your new American sentence says to favor friends that's just the word grace charis not charis huff not her the charis the Greek word grace for the grace of participation for the grace of fellowship in the support that's the word diakonos where you get the word mission or ministry or service of the saints so for the grace of fellowship in the mission of the saints that's what they wanted they wanted to share in the reality of the gospel community that's what they wanted the support

[21:25] I don't know why they tried that support it's the mission ministry service that is God's work is it not oh that more local churches would have a hunger to give in this way it doesn't start with you should be giving to the Lord it starts with God's grace in the gospel that's where it starts and by the way we learn from 1 Corinthians chapter 16 that this is a gift for the Jerusalem church which is vital later we'll talk about this later put that put a little pin on that boop and then we'll talk about that later so now we go through this process to grace what do they receive joy to what degree they hunger for it now the next question what must happen first we give ourselves to the Lord we give ourselves to God look at verse 5 not as we hoped but first they gave themselves to the

Lord and to us by the will of God they wanted to participate in the truth of giving and receiving so they first gave themselves to the Lord then to Paul and his associates by God's will so what must happen first we give ourselves to the Lord notice grace is the key ingredient in this whole thing and then we give ourselves to the Lord Lord here I am here I am I'm right here before you they acted in hope faith and hope which came from the afflictions they face they knew God possessed them that's why they gave and they gave themselves to God first again it's free and spontaneous no request from Paul it was instead willed by God God's will creates true freedom in other words because of God's will they voluntarily gave and notice not just they just throw money in there Southern Baptists are notorious throwing well I did my duty I checked off that box Southern Baptists can be notorious for this it's not about just throwing your money down so you did your duty no they're whole person was to give giving is true giving when we give ourselves with God as the unqualified giver who's behind before and within all our giving that's the mentality that's the attitude

that's the focus we give ourselves first to the Lord this is what Paul was trying to get through the heads of the Corinthians they just didn't get it what were they trying to do why did they delay we can talk about that there's so much we can talk about in reference to that maybe they want to give they're withholding or giving stuff but they can give some really big gifts so they look really cool so they got such prestigious honor by the Jerusalem church some people think that you know I don't know whatever the case is Paul is trying to get this through their heads grace and he's trying to show them by way of example in terms of for the the masonian churches they set the example of grace so what must happen first we give ourselves to God what will this principle display genuine love it will show God has worked in you verses six through eight as a result consequently where's Titus that as he had previously made a beginning so he would also complete in you this grace that's how it's translated in the Greek this grace also it's charis is used all over the place in this passage grace grace grace grace finish what was started complete this grace and fellowship of the mission to the saints do the giving from the God worked heart changed life because it will show God truly worked notice what he says in verse seven but just as you abound in everything by the way notice these are graces given to them these are gifts what does he say in faith and in word and in knowledge and in all zeal and in the love we have for you they were rich indeed weren't they the Corinthians were rich by the way Paul's love for them giving would truly express their love for Paul and all these graces he says they're done they're given so that the purpose is so you can abound in these graces and abound in this grace the grace to give which is really an expression of their love all the gifts they had were gifts of grace God owns all the things that you guys have been given so give verse 8 notice he says I'm not speaking as a command I'm not telling you you have to do this but as proving through the zeal earnestness of others the genuineness of your love so in other words he's saying it would be a way to prove their genuine love by the zeal of others the masonians were examples of grace seek this grace in your lives it just shows that [27 : 17] God's worked in you it shows that you love God it shows you love Christ it shows you love his church it shows you love Christians when you just like to give and you give yourself to affirm their love a proof that God had worked in them to share in the affliction of others spontaneous doesn't mean that one cannot be exhorted to give that's what he does here it just depends on the form how you do it notice the gospel is undergirding everything that Paul is saying here the gospel of grace the gospel of grace the gospel of grace which comes to our next question what's the motivation how is grace defined the grace of Christ verse 9 for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus

Christ that though he was rich yet for your sake he became poor their love that they would show was based on God's grace in the Lord Jesus Christ and his act of self giving this is the grace they had received and it's this grace in which they participate with the rest of the saints here is the pattern here is the example Christ's wealth and poverty simultaneous realities in that his wealth was present within his poverty did you see that being rich he became poor so Christ's riches were hidden in his poverty Christ's riches or poverty made Corinth rich rich in the gospel rich in his grace life righteousness salvation this is why you should respond to the gospel because you are poor and you can be rich you can have life righteousness salvation in Christ if you respond to Jesus this morning if you repent and trust in Christ so notice what he says here at the very end as well of verse 9 in order that you by means of his poverty that's the word through by means of his poverty may become rich so Christ had entered into their poverty and his riches were given to them doesn't this sound familiar chapter 5 verse 21 he made him who knew no sin to be sin that we might become the righteousness of God here's the way he did that how did he do this in poverty how did he take poverty on sin what did we receive forgiveness righteousness the righteousness of God Christ's poverty is seen in his human life under sin death judgment condemnation which he took upon himself at the incarnation and he took upon himself where at the cross dying on behalf of sinners that's grace and his riches righteousness life glory comfort and yet we're we're waiting to be made rich at the eschaton the last days when Jesus returns so salvation is the giver communicating himself to sinners in grace as a gift he gave himself friends this is personal God could have just said okay here's forgiveness he made it personal he came and he took on humanity and he lived like us slept like us ate like us went to the bathroom like us subjecting himself to humanity that's he this is personal and once again this is a very touchy subject for the church in Corinth salvation by weakness salvation by sufferings poverty because remember where's Corinth all Corinth had money there was bling bling all over the place right all this trade went through

Corinth it is quite possible most likely possible that the church in Corinth they had money they had lots of money by means of his poverty

Christ this shocked them wait by means of his poverty we're made rich yes one writer put it like this we are nothing but wealthy paupers that was good wealthy paupers you're a wealthy pauper through Christ's incarnation suffering poverty death he gives the riches of life righteousness salvation and just put a comma there if you're writing it down and put himself he gave himself is that not the riches of Christ see this undergirds all our giving and receiving this is this is the motivation and the definition of grace and just again just want to point out where he says verse 9 for you know the grace you see that if we know this grace there's confidence that our love is for real do you know his grace you know his grace by experience the next part of this truly doing matches truly desiring she tosses up the motivation the key ingredient what happens to what extent here truly doing matches truly desiring verse 10 through 12 for he says I give opinion in this it's to your advantage it's for your good which we'll talk more about later because they came up with the idea in the first place you guys were the ones who wanted to do this that's what he's basically saying that's why he says you were the first to begin a year ago not only to do but also to desire verse 11 but now finish the doing finish what you started when you desired it their willing and their working was worked by God in Christ so it must display its effect in their lives in other words will must be matched by do that's what he's selling them and then notice verse 12 for if the readiness is present or there acceptable it is acceptable according to what one has not according to what one does not have he did not urge them to give what they didn't have oh this runs contrary to the prosperity gospel preachers they want you to give what you don't have but probably our creditors would not like what we're saying here either they want you to buy stuff that you don't have or buy with money that you don't have that's why we have credit right he didn't urge them to do this in other words it's the thought that counts the zeal to give is what counts not the amount it's not about how much it's about the passion and truly doing what the passion is there for we're not absolute givers anyways [35:45] God is the absolute giver he's created givers who know his goodness and we share his goodness in the ability that he's given to us so the truly doing matches the truly desiring and then last is what is the goal what's God's goal in this whole thing equal exchange equality not sameness verse 13 to 15 notice he says verse 13 for it's not the ease of others for your affliction what's he saying it's not that there should be ease for the others and affliction for you so much you're given all this stuff and then you're like well now we're suffering no he's saying I'm not telling you to do that seek a measure of grace according to their own situation not to bring affliction upon themselves you give for this purpose he says verse 13 but by way of equality it takes place out of equality we're not to be divided into separate classes of benefactors and beneficiaries patrons and clients that's how one writer puts it no equality is not based on being the same difference is found in a dynamic exchange give receive receive give and he explains this more look at the next part there in verse 14 at this present time or an opportunity your abundance for their wants that their abundance also may become your wants in order that there may be equality what's he saying this their abundance which served the need of the

Jerusalem brethren so that the abundance of the Jerusalem brethren may serve the need of the Corinthians dynamic exchange that's equality that's what he's talking about well then the next question is what did Corinth need did they need something oh yeah I believe they had two wants first Corinth was rich in things but they were poor in soul Jerusalem church it was abundant in spiritual goods in the fact that who were all the promises given to first who were all the covenants given to first it wasn't all of you people it was to the Jews we get in on that by Christ makes one new man right Jews and Gentiles have come together so we owe a lot to our Jewish brethren that's what he's saying they have a lot of spiritual good to do you

Corinth Corinthian church you're rich in things you guys got a lot of bling bling they got a lot of spiritual goods for you plus Jerusalem would give in exchange the opportunity for Corinth to have the joy of faith Corinth lacked joy right whining about this whining about this and complaining about this and complaining about that he had no joy and Jerusalem could give that to here's an opportunity for you Corinth you can have joy in the faith when you give remember that's why you give right that's what's going on that's what happens the result the goal equality so you can have joy and just like the Macedonians we give to express our joy in the gospel

God's work of grace in us equality not sameness thanksgiving and we give to them and they would give you joy dynamic exchange that's equality that's what equality means God's work of grace in

Christ has made us into thanksgivers and our thanksgiving is a return gift no we are in a constant state of receiving from God yet we give him joy in that we are the embodiments of his mercy grace and love for sinners that's an amazing part that we don't even have time to go into but that's an amazing part that we actually give God joy by the way this is why the Corinthians needed Paul they needed him churches need a pastor to remind them of the truth of God's word and how pastors are tangible displays of the gospel in our weakness and this is why pastors need churches to remind them of their own weaknesses and to remind them how God has shown them grace in the midst of ministering to weak people because they're weak blind they're blind needy needy and sometimes even cantankerous people and then he gets the proof of that verse 15 notice verse 15 as is written he who gather much did not have too much he who gather little did not have too little he brings up Exodus chapter 16 verse 18 he's like what what is he bringing this up for God is the source of all human giving remember Exodus chapter 16 that's manna God gave it to the people they didn't do anything so first he's trying to say all that we have comes from God the absolute giver this is why true giving and receiving exists just let you know Corinthians all that money that you guys have it's not yours anyways God gave it to you so that's the first thing but second in this exchange God worked the miracle of equality they're all gathering right but you gather too much you don't have too much you gather little you don't have too little there's a mutual exchange the sons of Israel were not all the same but they were equal in other words we give so that another can benefit from us and when we benefit from them the act of giving and receiving and the motivation is God's gracious work of giving to us in Christ

[42 : 21] Jesus joyful giving joyful receiving last two points which I put up there earlier God the ultimate giver is given so we can follow in this principle joy giving joy receiving God's work of grace results in a relationship of receiving from God and giving to others God's giving grace comes down in Christ and supernaturally changes us instilling in us the joy to give and to receive if you're lacking joy just start giving if you're lacking joy go to the cross the grace of Christ that's where it begins as a key ingredient and you start giving you end up having great great joy let's pray and Father we thank you that you give to us you've given to us

Christ and we receive the joy of forgiveness the joy of comfort the joy of justification but the joy of having you and then you get joy in us as we worship you and praise you that's just