

Loss/Gain

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: 11 November 2018

Preacher: Jim Masters

[0:00] Please go to 2 Corinthians or 2 Corinthians. If there's any English people here. 2 Corinthians chapter 9.

We are trucking through 2 Corinthians. We should be done December 16th. I'll do a Christmas message on December 23rd.

I'll do a New Year's message on December 30th. I'll do a Lord's Supper message on January 6th. I think someone might be coming in to preach for me on January 13th.

And then January 20th, God willing, we'll start in the Gospel of Matthew. So that kind of gives you the calendar over the next 2 months, 2 1/2 months.

Then we'll be in the Gospel of Matthew for quite a while. It's the largest Gospel. I have never preached on Matthew, so that'll be fun. 2 Corinthians chapter 9. We're going to do the rest of the chapter starting in verse 6, 6-15.

[1:06] Oh, I'm sorry. If you have a Bible, a black Bible, go to the back page 144. 144. You'll find that. 2 Corinthians chapter 9 starting in verse 6.

Now this. The one who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly. And the one who sows to blessings shall also reap to blessings.

But each one, just as he's determined in the heart, not out of regret or out of compulsion, for God loves a joyful giver.

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed.

As it is written, He scattered abroad, He gave to the poor, His righteousness abides forever. Now the one who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, will supply and multiply your seed, and increase the harvest of your righteousness, and everything being enriched for all simplicity, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God.

[2:25] For the mission of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but it's also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God.

Through the testing by this ministry, they glorify God at the obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ, and at the simplicity of your fellowship to them and to all.

Verse 14. While they, praying on your behalf, long for you, because of the surpassing grace of God in you, thanks be to God for His indescribable gift.

His name was Dennis Diaz de la Cuesta. De la Cuesta. I'd like to say that, because I'm half Hispanic.

De la Cuesta. He graduated from high school with Chris and I, Chris and me, sorry, back in 1990. Believe it or not, I remember this about Dennis.

[3:37] You know, high school students, they dress however or whatever. We had a code, because we went to a Christian school. But Dennis always dressed nice. Remember that? He always dressed nice.

And believe it or not, he was actually learning to be a broker. So he was like 16, 17 years old. He was learning to be a broker. And I can't remember correctly, but I think he was actually buying and selling stocks.

I don't know if you can do that before you're 18, though. I mean, maybe they changed that. I don't know. Nathias, you probably know that. Maybe they are doing that. But it was just amazing. This guy, he was so mature. I mean, that's just how he rolled, okay?

He talked about stocks. It was just his thing. He was like, he was like, you know, people would be talking about football, and Dennis is looking at the stock market.

You know, the stock market is a love and hate relationship with people. Some people love it, some other people just absolutely hate it, right? Buy stocks, sell stocks, you make money. What if I told you, if you want to gain, you actually need to lose or take a loss, then you'll actually gain.
[4:50] You probably think I'm crazy. If you want to add to your portfolio, cut out things. How about your budget?

2019's coming. Cut your budget, it'll actually add. You'll actually prosper in your budget. That doesn't make any sense. It's opposites, right? Once again, we touch on another paradox, or seemingly paradox, here in 2 Corinthians.

A paradox is, boast in your weakness, you boast in the Lord. Oh no, that doesn't have, that's not how it goes. God's not about weakness, He's about strength, right?

No, He's not. When you're weak, suffering, and in pain, that's when strength, that's when grace, that's when comfort, that's when God comes in.

That's when He shows Himself. And so once again, we have another paradox here, in the last part of chapter 9, verses 16 to 15, loss, gain.

[5:59] Loss, gain. gain. This will throw you for a spin, this morning. Loss, gain.

If you want to gain, if you want to add, then cut. If you want to gain, then take a loss. If you want to increase, then decrease what you have.

Or to put it another way, if you want to abound in blessings, and be a joy-giving giver. That's what this chapter, the rest of this chapter is about.

Now, I'll start with this statement, the first part of the statement. When we give to each other, not out of regrets, or compulsion, but willingly, openly, and joyfully, and because God is the great giver to us, there's a next slide to this, but first, I want to camp on this part.

So you have the principle, if you want to add, you cut. If you want to gain, take a loss. Increase, you decrease. Abound in blessings, then be a joy-giving giver.

[7:21] So notice again, how the first statement begins. When we give to each other, and notice the attitudes, not out of regrets, not out of compulsion, but willingly, openly, joyfully, and because God is the great giver to us, God has given us grace in Christ.

God has given us Christ in the gospel. Okay? So that's the first part of the statement. Now the second part. Then, we provide for the needs of others.

We get the opportunity to thank God. We truly show we love Christ. We bind to each other as believers. We give others the opportunity to bless us, and we all give thanks for the gift of Christ.

That's how, that statement, that's how you can sum up what happens here in verses 6-15 of chapter 9.

This is what Paul is trying to get across to the Corinthians, and this is what Paul is trying to get across to us. When we give, and we're going to go through this, okay, I'm just, I'm giving you everything, what I'm about to tell you, good sermons, is how they, they say what they're going to say, they say it to you, and then they tell you what they just said.

[8:49] Okay, that's a sermon, okay? So I'm telling you what I'm about to tell you. I'm not as dumb as I look. Just ask Judy. When we give to each other, it's not out of regrets.

It's not out of compulsion, but it's willingly, openly, joyfully, and because God has been so good to give to us, what happens? We provide for the needs of others. We get the opportunity to thank God. We truly show we love Christ. God's going to work in us. It binds us together, as Christians. We give opportunity for others to bless us.

And then we all give thanks for the gift of Christ. You can put it another way. We receive from God so we can give, not so that we can hoard more for ourselves.

And this is, this is going to be an anti-pollower, get what I mean when I say this. This is going to be an anti-American culture message. Because our American culture is the very opposite of this.

[9:58] You get more to spend more. This is going to be the opposite. When you are given more, you give more.

We don't think this way, we don't think this way, do we? As Americans, we don't. You get bigger and better. This is going to be an anti-American culture type message. This is the principle that Paul gives to us.

And we respond this way as an act of faith in God, who sovereignly gives us all things for his glory, and will always be faithful to provide for all our needs and more.

It stems from an act of faith, faith active in love. So we respond this way, excuse me, because of who God is, and what he's given to us.

He gave grace, sending his son, so we can be made rich in Christ. Now I want to give a disclaimer to this message.

[10:57] This principle, this, that we're going to look at here in chapter 9, has been polluted, corrupted, and I'll even use the strong term, prostituted, by the prosperity gospel preachers, who say you give to them, and God will give you great increase, i.e.

he'll give you more money. That's why the, gospel preachers in Africa, roll around in their Mercedes, well the people have nothing to eat.

That makes a lot of sense. That's not what Paul's saying here, nor is that going to be a thing I'm going to be saying. So, there's my disclaimer.

First, the principle. The loss gain principle, verse 6. Now this, he who sows sparingly, shall also reap sparingly, and he who sows, in the American sense, it says bountifully, but literally, it's to blessings, shall also reap to blessings.

So, in seed time, reap of the harvest, bada bing, bada boom, simply put, the amount one sows, determines the amount one reaps. The measure of giving, determines the measure one receives from giving.

[12:12] Eh? Eh. Well, it actually goes deeper than that. He's corresponding things to the Old Testament.

Specifically, remember, a couple weeks ago, when we looked at chapter 8, verse 15, when he says, he quotes from Exodus chapter 16, as it is written, he who gather much, do not have too much, he who gather little, do not have too little.

Remember that? That's when we were gathering manna. So, the one who gathered much, because they needed much, didn't have too much. The one who gathered little, didn't have too little. Just enough.

Remember, we talked about dynamic exchange, equality, not sameness, equality. One learns, that the harvest from the field, is God's gift, and it's this harvest, that is essential for life, but not just the harvest, the very seed, is given by God.

So, without God's daily goodness, granted to us, we would all die. No matter how much we labor, no matter how much we sow, no matter how clever you are in genius, all you green thumbs out there, I can make that thing grow.

[13:34] No, you don't. God makes that grow. Without God as the giver, we would all die.

I mean, everything comes from the hand of God. Everything comes from His goodness. Everything. The seed and the harvest. Human labor is required, yes.

Human labor is rewarded, yes. But this is only secondary. See, normally we think, oh, this is primary. No, it's not. It's secondary.

God gives all growth. It's not dependent upon us. See, this is what the Corinthians did not understand. They thought there was going to be a kickback to them.

It's all about them. And Paul said, no, it's not all about you. God is actually the one who gives you the very things you're giving to others. Won't you Corinthians get that? As if God can't, by His power, have things grow on their own.

[14:43] Because He actually needs you. Really? You think that? Think about it. All practices of gardening, farming, agriculture, no matter how big or small, and no matter if we recognize it or not, they're acts whereby we participate with God and His goodness.

We're participants. We participate in His goodness. Goodness which goes behind and before all giving because even the very seeds come from God.

He's going to mention that, what, in verse 10? So, we give to add. We give away in order to profit, in order to gain.

Therefore, when we reap, we're not receiving a ways for our labor. On the contrary, it is a matter of trusting God, faith in Him. That's what Paul wants them to understand.

Sowing sparingly or upon blessings is not earning a ways from our labor. No.

[15:57] We participate in God's goodness who gives both the seed and the harvest. The actual thing that you're giving was given to you by God.

So it's not, I'm just, Dad, somebody's going to give back to me. No, the very gift that you're giving that was given to you by God. That's just His grace to you. That's why He says, sow sparingly, reap

sparingly, and He sows upon blessings or to blessings shall also reap to blessings. Blessings, this comes from God. You have a whole different perspective on this. It's a reminder that God the Creator, He is the one who blesses us all with His goodness. Especially those of us who are, especially those of us who are in Christ. Thus, hold that thought. Yes, is what we said.

Yeah. We give so we can give more. Our giving and failure to give is a response to God's goodness, His grace, His blessing.

[17 : 15] It's a response of faith or lack thereof. When we give, and so, and by the way, don't just think about material money.

Think beyond that. Resources, time. Remember, Paul talked about giving ourselves. It's not, there you go. That's not what we're talking about.

That's not what God did. He didn't say, well, here, here's forgiveness. All right. Now leave me alone. God doesn't do that, right? What does He do? He gives Himself. I mean, with the kids, it's like, here's some money.

Now get out of here, kid. You know, that doesn't, the kids are like, oh, thanks, Dad. Oh, that's great. My dad loves me. I know that. No, he's not gonna do that. I mean, what a jerk. I can't believe that. Even though He gave me money. But when the Father's here, the kids are like, oh, wow, thanks, Dad.

Oh, give him a hug. He gives him a hug. Right? That, because He's given Himself. Right? So that's the principle. Lost game principle. With what attitude?

[18 : 20] Verse 7. That each one, just as He determined in the heart, not out of, in the Greek it's ek, not out of regrets, or grudgingly, or out of compulsion, for God loves a joyful giver.

Let each one determine and advance. True giving arises from a spontaneous individual decision not compelled by others willingly, openly, joyfully.

That's the attitude. I mean, God didn't just give Himself, oh, fine. Oh, stupid humans. I've got to give myself. Jesus goes down there.

Oh, whatever. Why do I got to do that? Quiet. Why are you back-talking me, son? You know, it's not happening with the Father and the Son. There's love.

There's a gift. The Father says, here's the gift that I give to you, son. Oh, thank you, Father. I love them. Oh, I'm going to go die for them. Oh, yes. I love them. They give themselves. It's personal.

[19 : 30] That's why it's done willfully, openly, joyfully. And you can't force faith. You can't force this trust. You don't deal with regret or compulsion.

I flipped it for you. It's negative here from the text. I'm flipping it and I'm giving you positive words. Willingly and openly. Okay? Oh, by the way, when we say spontaneity, we do not mean unplanned. Paul meant to have an open, natural, uninhibited manner. There's two meanings to spontaneity. I mean, trust me, it says it in Google. If Google says it's right, it's got to be right.

I mean, everybody knows that. Right? No, but seriously, I mean, spontaneity can mean unplanned. Oh, I'm just going to give it to you. Okay? So that's funny. But it can also mean openness, uninhibited, natural.

That's what Paul means. Which is important because we're going to see that more later. We should have an inward resolve to openly give, not to be closed. And the Corinthians, they're under pressure, or they could be under pressure to give with regret or under compulsion because Titus is there with all the colleagues and they're reading the letter and they're like, you're going to give.

[20 : 52] And the Corinthians, oh, oh, fine, you know, here. Paul's trying to help them to see, no, you don't give out of compulsion or out of regret. Why? Because God loves a joyful giver.

All giving comes from the heart without other recognition. Else, it's not genuine giving. It's done willingly, openly, and joyfully. Why? Because it's a response of trust in God.

You're trusting God in this. God, I'm going to trust you in this. I'm going to minister and serve. I'm going to give myself. I'm going to trust you willingly, openly, joyfully, quoting, basically, Proverbs 22, verse 8.

Because it was response, it's a response of trusting God. That's the attitude. To enter this grace-giving means we participate in God's goodness, which is really just a confession of the gospel.

That's what you're really doing. Next question, what's the overall result? He sums it up here, then he's going to give specifics later on.

[22:06] Verse 8, the overall result, notice how many times he says the word all, or every. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always, having all sufficient in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed.

Five different times he uses the Greek word pas, or pantas. All, every, all, every, all. What's the matter about it here? You got an echo in here?

Why do you keep saying all? Because you're trying to make a point. God's goodness certainly is ultimate and comprehensive, isn't it? Of which the Corinthians were a part of, because they were both givers and receivers in this way, and because of God's grace given to us, we're empowered to give to each other, we're empowered to serve each other.

It's everything, because everything's been given to us. We can now be open and free. Notice the word grace he uses.

The undeserved, unmerited favor of God and his goodness. His gracious goodness, notice it has a purpose, and God's grace is able to make all grace abound to you, that always have an all sufficient in everything, in order that you may have an abundance for every good deed.

[23:34] That's the purpose. In other words, God's grace works in such a way that we participate in his goodness. The only way we'll truly know God's grace in its fullness is when we receive by faith the grace of God given to us in Christ.

That's the only way you'll know. That's why it's vitally important for you to be a Christian as I'm speaking this message to you because that's the undergirding of everything that we're talking about here is the gospel because God's given himself in Christ and you need to repent and trust Christ because he's giving himself to you.

So now it's time you give yourself to him. I give myself to you. You have me. You have me. Notice he says, having all sufficiency.

Maybe some of your versions might have self-sufficient, right? Now we've got to be careful because when we see this word sufficiency our knee-jerk reaction is to plug in our American definition.

Self-sufficient individualism and myself that's right pull myself by my bootstraps and isolate myself so I can live on my own, live off the land, right?

[25:04] That's right. That's not what he's talking about. That's not what he means by sufficiency. What are you guys laughing at me?

Yeah, well. I know. Don't remind me. One's moving next week, this week, praise God.

No, no, I'm just kidding. Poor kid. We'll actually have leftovers in the house. You open the fridge and you're like, what happened to the chicken I was going to eat?

Sorry, dad. I ate it. The boy comes out, the plate's like a mound of food. All the kids are like, I was going to eat that. Anyways. No, on the contrary, we have sufficiency in relationship to God who acted toward us in grace.

So we're free in respect to our neighbors. Not to isolate ourselves, but to serve in grace. When he talks about sufficiency, it's sufficient to serve.

[26:06] Not sufficient to isolate. Not sufficient to withdraw. Not sufficient to, I'm just going to do things on my own and not worry about anybody else. No, it's sufficient to do this. Yeah. Yeah. It's not God sufficient.

God doesn't need you. He don't need you. He gives. He goes like this, yes. That's the attitude of waiting on the paving. And that's the over result of what happens when God doesn't work in us. We're like this, yes. In other words, we are in a faith relationship with God by his grace. He supplies our needs, material needs, emotional needs, spiritual needs, if you want to use a term, psychological needs.

He gives you all that. And he frees us to love and serve each other. True self-sufficiency, then, is not isolating ourselves.

It's giving ourselves with joy to others. If there are Christians in churches who are isolating themselves, then brethren, they're not giving themselves. They have a wrong mentality.

[27:10] Why is this the case? Because as God has given himself to us in grace, in the Lord Jesus Christ, we end up becoming those kind of givers. We're one in Christ because we're part of his body.

God is the giver, so are we. That's why I mentioned earlier, this is about faith that's active in love. We're trusting God. But just because he's talking about self-sufficiency doesn't mean we won't suffer need or want because of the principle of dynamic exchange, of equality.

He's gonna bring this up in a moment with the Jerusalem church. God grants his abundance, though, when and how, according to his ways.

we experience God's ability as we trust him when he wants and how he wants, realizing that we do this constantly. Again and again, he calls us to trust him for our daily needs.

I mean, that's what he mentioned in the worst prayer, right? Give us this day our daily bread. God, again and again and again, we're coming to God.

[28 : 23] God, you provide. God, you provide. As you provide, let me be a part of this. Let me get in on this. I'm gonna participate with your goodness, with your giving, gracing goodness.

I'm gonna get in on this. I'm a part of this. Because he's created new people. We're new creations. Remember chapters 5, verse 17? His new creation is broken into the present time. We're new creatures. So we can, I mean, think about it.

Heaven's gonna be, there's gonna be complete sufficiency in Christ all the time, right? All the time. We get a taste of that now.

Taste of that now in the present time. So we're realizing the fullness is yet to come at the eschaton. It's coming, yes? But we get to get on it now. This is the overall result.

[29 : 19] This is what he's talking about. Now we're gonna go into specifics a little bit later. But first notice, he's gonna give proof. The proof is verses 9 through 11. He quotes from the Old Testament.

Verse 9. As it is written, and we read this this morning, Psalm 112, verse 9. He scattered abroad. He gave to the poor. His righteousness abides forever. Now you might look at this, you might say, well, he scattered the seed, scattering abroad.

It seems like there's just squandering resources. Just kind of, what is all that? It seems like wasting. No. When it talks about his righteousness, it's not talking about the righteousness of God.

His righteousness is the person who's giving. So his righteousness, the person who's giving, that kind of right, his righteousness endures forever. This righteousness signifies abundant goods, God's protection from his enemies, and his blessing, God's blessing upon the righteous.

That's what we saw in the psalm as we read it. The righteous prosper unceasingly. And their righteousness is God's blessing upon them, which abides forever.

[30 : 29] So, the righteous, they're self-sufficient. So their abundance is God's blessing upon them that is ever given and received fresh each day and a trust relationship with God.

That's what the psalm is all about. Righteousness signifies their trust relationship with the Lord in whom all good is found. A person gives out of his righteousness.

That's what he means. This is the proof. This is the whole, this principle, this is the Old Testament. This is Psalm 112. See, we don't gain righteousness by giving.

We give out of the righteousness already granted to us in our trust relationship in Christ. Then we go back to chapter 5, verse 21. Remember? He made him who knew no sin to be sin for us nor that we might become in Christ the righteousness of God.

We're already righteous. And so we give out of this relationship that we have with Christ. We give. We give. He's proving this from the Old Testament. This has been the concept since then.

[31 : 34] And notice, He proves even more. Verse 10. Now the one who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, He will supply and multiply your seed and increase the harvest of your righteousness.

He's actually quoting from another passage in the Old Testament, Isaiah chapter 55, verse 10. And now He's saying, God, the Creator, promises His provision in abundance and He richly supplies all things by His goodness.

The seed and the bread is given by Him. All that we give has come to us as a gift from God. It's all part of His goodness.

So all our work is in vain without God, the Creator. This is what He's trying to say. Think about it. Sowing, tilling, harvesting, winnowing, grinding, preparing, baking, all the food that's in there.

You smell it already. Mmm. That means nothing without God who supplies the very seed to do those things. He started the process.

[32 : 48] He began. And yet, out of this seed, God would cause the produce of the Corinthians righteousness to grow.

That's what I said. He uses the word harvest or fruits. And not just for their own needs, but also for the needs of others in giving. He's gonna give more specifics about this in just a few moments.

We'll look at that in verses 12, 12 to 15. We'll see that in a moment. But notice, verse 11 comes into play. Verse 11 just flows right in and out of verse 10.

That's why I translated this for you from Greek. End of verse 10. And increase the harvest of your righteousness in everything being enriched. Enriched, just like He mentioned in chapter 8, verse 9. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. He made you rich. Him becoming poor. It's metaphorical. It's life and righteousness, not just material goods.

[33 : 55] But the promise is that they'll be enriched. Notice, in the New American standards it says, unto all liberality, right? The Greek word is actually simplicity.

Remember we talked about this before. Chapter 8 was a verse 1, I think. Verse 2. Chapter 1, verse 12 is the same word. The word simplicity.

Remember, to be spontaneous is to be open. So when you talk about simplicity, simple in the sense of being open. It's simple. You're open to God and others.

Simply put, we receive from God so that we can give to others. God gives to us so we can give to each other.

It's simplicity. Unto all simplicity. So there's no hidden motives for personal gain. We have an open hand towards God to receive from Him and then to give to each other.

[34 : 59] Openness. Freely. That's what he means by the word simplicity. And it's giving themselves. Not just throwing money. Or okay, fine.

Since no one else is signing up for this, I'll go ahead and put my name in. Oh, I gotta do this again. No. How are you giving of yourself in that way?

And notice he says the last part of verse 11, which through us, Paul and his associates, is producing thanksgiving to God.

See, it's not just about supplying others' needs. It goes deeper than that. It affects thanksgiving to God.

Worship. It brings worship. He's already beginning this process of the specific results. Worship, he says, it affects thanksgiving through Paul.

[36 : 07] Paul and his associates, the Corinthians, their simplicity works thanks to God. It's about giving thanks to God for everything that He's given to them. So, now, what are specific results?

Specifically, what are those specific results from this loss-gain principle? Well, I already told you a few moments ago, 30 minutes ago, 25, 25, we provide for the needs of others.

We get the opportunity to thank God. We truly show we love Christ. We bind to each other as Christians, as believers. We give others the opportunity to bless us, and we all give thanks for the gift of Christ.

This is what it is, summing up, verses 12 through 15. It's right here. Notice verse 12. For the mission of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints.

Notice, we provide for the needs of others. But it's also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God. You get the opportunity to thank God. So, why did the Corinthians simplicity produce thanks to God?

[37 : 25] Because the mission of this service is it abounds, it overflows through many thanksgivings to God. It doesn't just supply the needs of, as we now know, he's talking about, the needs of the Jerusalem church.

So, it's not a return gift. It's God's gift given through them that works thanksgiving. Part of Paul's mission was to be an agent of God.

And this very mission of service was an aspect of worship. When you give thanks, you're worshipping God. By the way, when he says for the ministry or the mission of this service, that word service, that word is associated with priests, priestly service.

Priests are serving. Interesting why Paul used that word. It's an aspect of worship. So, when we minister to each other, it's an aspect of mission and that we give of ourselves and worship to God so it affects many thanks to him.

We end up thanking God. He ends up giving the praise. We end up thanking him. We end up worshipping God as you provide for the needs of others. this is the specific result.

[38 : 51] Notice what he says here in verse 13 which I translated for you. Through, and it says proof or the testing by this ministry. There was a testing that took place or proving.

A proving of what? that God's done a work in their heart. A testing or proving of God's work in the Corinthians for which the Jerusalem church, notice it says, they glorify God.

They see God in the Corinthians. They see the giver in the gift. That's what it does.

They end up glorifying, wow, it's like, wow, this is so great. This is so encouraging. Wow, they want to give and be a part of that with us. And notice he says, and again, I translated it for you, they glorify God at what?

At the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ. They're glorifying God because, not because they're given a handout, they're glorifying God because they see the Corinthians obeying the gospel.

[40:17] So when we're giving, there's an answer, we're living out the gospel. When we give of our resources, our time to each other as fellow believers, you're living out the gospel.

As you minister to each other, you're giving, you're living the gospel. they would glorify God at the obedience of their confession to the gospel of Christ.

Confessing the gospel shows itself in obedience. And you know what's even more than that? The Jerusalem church would have joy to see not just Christians joining them and confessing Christ, but Gentiles because they were Jews.

Gentiles confessing the same Christ. when people who don't know Christ, they see us serving each other and caring for one another, they're like, wow, this is so odd.

People don't care for each other in that way. They want a kickback. You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours. That's not how the gospel works because God knew we couldn't scratch his back.

[41:40] How you can scratch his back? You got nothing to offer God. He don't need you. He just decided to give. And that's what encouraged them.

These Gentile Christians. And notice the next part. And, verse 13, notice for this liberality, it's the word again, simplicity.

At the simplicity of your, and I don't know why they used the word contribution, the word is koinonia. It's fellowship.

They're, they're so glorifying God at the fact that you were, simplicity, you're openly fellowshiping with them. And to us, he says, well, excuse me, to them, the Jerusalem church, sharing toward them and toward all.

What was significant was God's work in them, openness of their fellowship or sharing in that they were bound together. See, the Jerusalem church shared spiritual benefits.

[42:54] The Corinthians shared material benefits. So, the given results, because they're both confessing Christ. We want to benefit you. We want to benefit you. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

You know, that's what they're doing. And notice, it's not just toward each other, but notice the last part of verse 13, to all. It would bind them not just to Jerusalem church, but to all churches.

Friends, grace giving encouraged the Corinthians to receive from God, not to withdraw. Withdrawal from God shows itself in separating from others, in retreating.

No, you don't retreat, you don't withdraw, you go like this. And notice how the Jerusalem church did that with them. Look at verse 14. While they, praying on your behalf, yearned for you.

They prayed on behalf of the church in Corinth. There's, there's something about knowing that a church is praying for you. Did you know that John Filkey at Redeeming Grace, Redeeming Grace Church in Goodyear prays for us as a church?

[44:10] Do you know that? Do you know Joel Tetrault? Southeast Valley Bible Church? They're like two hours away. They pray for us. Do you know that First Baptist Community Church in Los Gatos?

They're in Northern California. They pray for us. Do you know that? They pray for you as a church. There's churches that Ward and Ann and Daniel have told me about.

They pray for us around the world. There's believers that are praying for you. There's something about knowing that. See, it binds us together. Not some, I shouldn't say that.

I was gonna say stupid. I won't say that. Not some political affiliation. Not the fact you like some football team.

It binds us together as stronger and deeper as the gospel. This is, these are specific results of when there's giving that's taking place.

[45:12] The gospel is here. This challenges us. And the gospel, it creates community. You can't create community through programs. Can't do it. But distance, it was no hindrance to them, to their fellowship.

They were bound together by God and Christ in the gospel. What brought them together was the Lord Jesus Christ. Their hearts were worn for Corinth as difficult as Corinth could be. Longing to see them. I mean, notice, in praying and longing for them, they end up blessing Corinth. See?

Which is why all the attention was diverted away from the Corinthians toward God here at the end of verse 14 and verse 15 because of the surpassing grace of God at working you.

Because it's an amazing work of grace. The attention, diverted away from the Corinthians toward God and His grace so that Paul says, what's the gift?

[46 : 16] God giving Himself in Christ. Christ taking poverty, sin, guilt. God created a new community. amazing, gracious, extreme grace.

Thanks be to God for this indescribable gift. Everyone falls into the background except for God, the great giver.

That's why He mentions this. The gift of Christ. The gift of God Himself. God is the gospel. And it's this gift of grace that should drive us to give thanks this time of year.

It was November, right? Thanksgiving. In a couple weeks, right? He's gonna give thanks. And we are thankful for all the gifts that a great giver has given to us knowing that He actually gives Himself. So go and do likewise. If you want to add, cut. If you want to gain, take a loss.

[47 : 23] Give. Not just this. You give yourself. Thank you, Father. You give yourself. We give ourselves to you.

We give ourselves to each other. And so I encourage you at this time, think and ponder what we've seen here from the message from written by the hand of Paul.

And after a few moments, you can worship in your giving. You can worship by singing to the Lord. We'll sing our last two songs and we'll pray and then you can worship God some more and give yourself more in conversation as we converse and eat together.

But take this time and let the truth of the Word sink deep within your soul, asking the Spirit to penetrate your life and to change you and transform you to be a person like our Father who gives himself like the eternal Son who gave himself.