

"My Cup Overflows"

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[0 : 00] Turn with me to 2 Corinthians chapter 9.

We are making good progress through the book of 2 Corinthians. I have loved this book and I've loved studying it with you. The title of this morning's sermon is My Cup Overflows.

I was inspired as I was reading this text of the way in which Psalm 23, which was just read, captures the fullness of the Lord. A cup that runs over as if the goodness of God could not possibly be contained by you.

And it just pours out past your brim, past your limits, goodness more and more. I want you to know that any sermon that's preached must have something that is a burden on the preacher's heart to speak to the congregation about.

A preacher is not the same as a teacher. A sermon is not the same as a lecture. I've been taught from Scripture that if I am getting up here in this pulpit, that I should have a burden on my heart to speak to you.

[1 : 26] That is true today. As I've studied this passage, I've been blessed by it. Probably a half dozen times this morning, I had to preach this text to myself as my heart was feeling troubled about different things that happened in my preparation.

And so this sermon has already blessed me and I hope from that that I will be able to bless you. In light of the way that sermons should have a burden, should have some urgency to them, I'm going to teach you a call and response that we do in the church that I come from.

My pastor there, speaking of the urgency and the need he felt to say something, he would say, I have something to say to you.

And then the congregation would respond asking for him to tell that. And they would say, say on. So this morning, Christ Baptist Church, I have something to say to you.

I will. Amen. I invite you to read this passage with me, starting in verse 6 of chapter 9. But this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly.

[2 : 47] And he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver.

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

As it is written, he has dispersed abroad. He has given to the poor. His righteousness endures forever. Now, may he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness, while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.

For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but is also abounding through many thanksgivings to God.

While through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal sharing with them and all men.

[4 : 25] And by their prayers for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. So I think it shouldn't be hard to see in this passage that there is a theme of excess, or of abundance, or of overflowing goodness.

We read all through this passage many words that are given to make you have a sense that with God is abundant life.

With God is vibrancy and overflowing cups. With God is true prosperity. Look at all the ways this idea is brought up.

Verse 6, we have sowing bountifully and reaping bountifully. Verse 8, we have all grace that abounds towards us.

[5 : 32] We have all sufficiency in all things that we may have an abundance for every good work. We have the quote in verse 9, he has dispersed abroad everywhere.

We have supplying and multiplying in verse 10. We have increase in verse 10 as well. Verse 11, we have that we are enriched in everything for all liberality.

Going on to verse 12, we hear that it is abounding with many thanksgivings. Later on in verse 13, we hear about the liberal sharing to all men.

We hear about the exceeding grace of God and his indescribable gift. That should give you a sense of great heaping mounds and piles of goodness that are filling the lives of the people who are being talked about here.

The theme of this text is abundance or an abundant life. Now, we're going to take a few steps away from the passage for a little while and talk about this abundant life a bit more.

[6 : 55] Because I think this is such a critical idea in scripture. The abundant life is the Christian life. Where the Lord is, life is.

When you are close with him, there is true, real vibrance. We know that not all living is as alive as other living.

Some people, they go through their days. They wander from thing to thing. They fill the void with just enough to get them through to the next day.

But there's no vibrancy. There's no depth to the life. So too, in an even greater way, we learn in the scripture that the greatest, the most true, the most vibrant life is to be found in walking closely with the Lord.

I love what Jesus says in John 10.10. He says, Over and over you read through the gospels and you hear about eternal life, everlasting life.

[8 : 12] This is the true life that is so alive that death can never conquer it. That's what Jesus has come to bring. That's what the gospel gives you.

It makes you alive again in the truest way. Just because you breathe doesn't mean you're alive. It is whether or not you know the Lord and walk with your creator.

This is true life. Jesus says also in John 17 verses 1 through 3, When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour has come.

Glorify your son that your son may glorify you. Since you have given him authority over all flesh, what does he do with that authority?

To give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life. What is life? This is eternal life.

[9 : 12] That they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. This is true life. You may think that the good life is that what you see on social media or in Hollywood.

Or maybe you know people who have a close family, many friends, a nice house. They go on great vacations. You may think that that is what true life is.

Like, oh, that is the life. And I want that. I'm telling you, you are wrong. And it pales in comparison to the joy of knowing Jesus Christ and the Father who sent him.

This is true life. This is true life. You know, I have quite a lot of experience with fake life.

Where I was breathing. Where I was breathing. I was moving. I was moving. But something inside me was dead. I was a sinner.

[10 : 18] I was a sinner. And I was horribly depressed. I felt like life was meaningless. I struggled to just get through one day.

I'd get out of work and I would stay home and I would play video games for hours until I was so exhausted I couldn't play anymore. Because I was trying to find enough joy to make my life feel like it was actually alive.

To make my life feel like it was worth living. And it never satisfied. But there is something that does satisfy this true abundant life in Jesus.

It's completely different. It is so full of meaning and purpose and prosperity. Not primarily financial prosperity that we're taught to love.

But the prosperity, the richness of being close with the Savior. You should want this. This should be the deepest desire of your heart.

[11 : 26] Like I would do anything to get this abundant life. Walking closely with God is what you were made for.

You were made to be satisfied in Him alone. So want this desperately. When we are apart from God, it is like a plant put in the wrong soil.

In time it wilts. But you ever see those places like the Botanical Garden in Worcester? Where they're so well tended that they are just overflowing with life.

That is the believer who's walking close with the Lord. The things that make life feel most like life is being close to the Lord.

And all of the things that we enjoy in this life. The really deep things like family, friends, love, relationship, virtue, meaning.

[12 : 38] Those aren't best found in other people. Those are best found in God. When you talk to someone and that adds purpose to your life.

Know that when you talk to God, it brings even deeper purpose. Let the good things that God has made in this world make you want even more of it in Him.

Paul says in Philippians 1.21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. That even should I die to gain Jesus, I have true life.

But where does this abundant life come from? What brings it to us? As we read earlier, true life is knowing Jesus.

But how do we come to know Him? That is by believing His gospel. By repenting and trusting in Him. True life was purchased for dead sinners on the cross of Jesus.

[13 : 48] We had abundant life at one point. Rewind all the way to Genesis. Look in the garden. And you see true life there.

God over and over declares, it's good. This is the good life. He declares, it's good. He declares, it's good. And then He says, at the finish of it all, it's very good.

We had that. And yet we sinned. God spoke to Adam and He even warned them saying, You shall not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

For in the day you eat of it, you shall surely die. That means the good life is over as soon as sin enters into the picture.

That sin is your way of disqualifying yourself from abundant life. And purchasing for yourself death instead. They ate.

[14 : 48] They sinned. They sinned. They sinned. They sinned. They sinned. And while they kept breathing, they lost the true life when they were kicked out of the garden and isolated from closeness with God.

So we, apart from God, are dead people. You might walk around.

You might stare at me right now as I'm preaching to you. But if you have not come to know Jesus Christ, you are dead. You are so far from life that even though you move, you're as good as dead. Especially spiritually. You are dead people walking, filling empty hearts with whatever empty substitutes you can find.

And that could be the end of the story. I mean, death normally is the end of the story. But with Jesus Christ, death isn't the end.

[15 : 55] God sends Jesus Christ, who is life himself, to die in our place. Come behold the wondrous mystery, slain by death, the God of life.

He came to die the death we deserve because of our sin. When we sinned, losing life and purchasing death for ourselves, Jesus comes and he says, I will take the death you purchased and give you the life that belongs to me.

By dying the death we deserve, we can go... When he dies the death we deserve, we can go free.

To real life. He makes peace so we can draw near to God. And then Jesus is raised from the dead. And in that resurrection is the promise that with Jesus Christ, death will never end your relationship with God.

That life, vibrant life, abundant life has triumphed over death. And with him in the gospel, Christians get hold, arms wrapped around that which is truly, truly living.

[17 : 19] If you put your trust in Jesus, you will be made alive again. To walk in newness of life. To have life and to have it abundantly.

To have it abundantly. So, that being said, having come to think about what abundant life is and how it is the purchase of believers through Jesus, let's look at this text and understand two ways in

which Paul talks about how this abundant life works itself out in the people of God. Point number one, my cup overflowed. Paul is going to talk about how we should give abundantly and serve abundantly.

But he also shows that the reason we can give, the reason we can serve abundantly, is because we have our abundance from God.

Because with God, our cup is overflowed and therefore we are equipped to pour over into others.

With God, our cup is overflowed and we lack nothing.

[18:47] See this in the text, verse 8. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you always, having all sufficiency in all things, may have abundance for every good work.

You know what the famous optimist-pessimist problem? Is the cup half empty or half full? Well, that's not a problem with God.

All believers should be optimists because that cup is overflowing. There's no question. You look and there is not empty space in there that God could fill by being more loving.

As loving as God could possibly be to you, he is. When you look at your life, know that everything that is there is put there because he loves you, even if it's hard.

God has provided all of your needs. Complete sufficiency. There is nothing lacking in his provision for you.

[19:59] I mean, Paul himself gets this. Studying the scriptures, coming to know the gospel of Jesus Christ. He learns how to be happy no matter what's going on because he trusts that God is providing everything that is good for him.

Philippians 4, 11-13. He writes from prison under the threat of execution, saying, Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content.

I know how to be brought low and how to abound. In every and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and facing hunger, facing abundance and facing need.

I can do all things through him who strengthens me. God provides all sufficiency for you, believer. Your cup is full.

Trust his word. Romans 8, 32 says, He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

[21:17] It's like if God gave you Jesus, if he sent his own son as a gift of love for you, what other thing would he be unwilling to give you?

You know? What parent cares for their child their whole life, breaking their back, losing sleep to raise their child, but refuses to give them a ride to go visit their friends?

What God would not spare his son for you? You know, what God would give up Jesus so that you could be saved and then say, no, I won't give you a relationship because I don't love you that much. If he hasn't given you something, it's because it's not good for you to have it right now. Because he loves you. And your cup is overflowing.

Matthew 6, 25 through 33. Therefore, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on.

[22:26] Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air. Though they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them, are you not of more value than they are?

And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field. They neither toil nor spin. Yet I tell you, even Solomon was not arrayed like these.

But if God clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you? Oh, you of little faith.

Therefore, do not be anxious, saying, what shall we eat or what shall we drink or what shall we wear? For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need all of them.

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. You see where Paul is getting this idea in verse 8?

[23:35] That you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have abundance for every good work. By faith, you must see that you lack nothing, that you have what you need to be satisfied.

Walk closely with him, and you have abundant life. And this prepares you for good works. Knowing that God has provided for your every need frees you to be able to serve in ways you never could before.

It also means, on the other hand, that when you believe that God is stingy, you are more likely to sin. That's what Satan did to Adam and Eve in the garden.

He made them think that God was withholding good things from them, and that they had to break his rules to get the good stuff. God is abundant to you.

Do not believe the lie that he is withholding good. He is only withholding what is bad for you. Why you sin is because you do not believe that God is generous to you.

[24 : 52] 1 Peter 5, 6-7 says, Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time, he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him because he cares for you.

Have this abundance mindset. Look at verse 9. Paul quotes from the Old Testament to show that God has always been like this.

He has dispersed abroad. He has given to the poor. His righteousness endures forever. Look at God and see someone who loves to see the needy and satisfy their needs.

That is the character of God. Read the Old Testament and see how God provides over and over for his people. You know what he gets for them? A land flowing with milk and honey.

Those words are a picture of a God who provides abundance. Read the New Testament and see how Jesus saves people. See how he heals them and see a God of abundant life.

[26 : 00] Believe that this God fills your cup up to the brim. See by the eyes of faith that you have riches in God and take hold of them.

Verse 10 says that he gives seed to the sower and bread for food. Think of all of the time that humankind has been alive and think of just how many meals have been eaten in that time.

And Paul says, you know who's behind every one of those? The Lord. If you think he is stingy and not abundant, look at the piles of food he has provided for people over all history.

Or verse 14, Paul talks about the grace of God, the exceeding grace of God in the Corinthian church. He's saying other people look at you, they look at the good you're doing, and they praise God because they see his exceeding kindness to make you into a righteous person.

God is generous. Paul even breaks out into doxology at the end. Verse 15, thanks be to God for his indescribable gift.

[27 : 21] This is the riches of God. I tell you, your cup overflows. But Satan wants you to think that God is stingy and you are empty.

So here's some applications for you from point one. Do not serve with an empty cup. If you try to be a good Christian without sitting under the goodness of God, without sitting at the feet of Jesus, you are going to be fighting in your own strength and you are going to grow weary.

I get tired of serving sometimes. And almost universally, it is because I have stopped meditating on the gospel of God and the rich provision that he has for me.

Your own strength, you're going to run out of motivation to do good. It happens. That's how it works. But if you make sure you are filling up your cup by sitting at the feet of Jesus, you will be empowered to serve all the more.

Do not serve with an empty cup. Application two, rejoice in God. What's Paul say? Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift.

[28 : 40] When you look at the riches that God has provided for you, that he has cared for you every day of your life and brought you all the way up to this moment, praise him.

He is gracious to you and generous. Be thankful. Application three, fight the lies of your heart that tell you that God is stingy.

When you are tempted to be discouraged or frustrated, that is your heart telling you that God has not made your life good.

He has not filled up your needs. But he has left you wanting. When I'm driving and I get frustrated because I'm stuck behind someone slow, it's because I believe that this is blocking my way to the good life.

And ultimately, it means I believe that the God who is in charge of everything doesn't love me enough to give me the best life. When in fact, he's actually put that thing there to teach me, to grow me.

[29 : 51] When I go to print out bulletins and my printer is out of ink and then the box that's supposed to have replacement ink is empty, it's not that God just doesn't care about me enough to make things work out nicely for me.

It's that he loves me so much, he's willing to teach me through difficult things. And so I've been trying to tell myself all morning as little frustrations come up and I feel my heart go, what the heck? I've been trying to tell myself, stop it. God is abundant towards you and I encourage you to do the same. Believe that he cares for you.

Refuse the lies that tell you that God is stingy. And that brings us to point number two about the abundant life. My cup overflowing.

The point is this, that the only people who actually enjoy the abundance of God are people who turn around and give abundantly.

[31 : 01] The point is this, that the people who give abundantly like their Savior has given to them, those are the people who actually have vibrant lives of abundance.

I'm not speaking financially here. Some people twist passages like this to say that God is promising that if you give a lot of money, he's going to make you rich. No, God's after better things for you than wealth.

There are wealthy people who are miserable, but there is no one who is walking close with God in the gospel who does not have joy in their heart. He wants better riches for you than the riches of this world.

This, this whole point about cup, your cup overflowing is all about giving because that's what Paul talks about here. Paul is, is trying to encourage the Corinthian church in their task of giving to the saints in Jerusalem.

And so he speaks about the way the abundance of God pours out in abundant giving. So as I go through the way the passage talks about pouring yourself out, consider these things when deciding how much you will give to the church financially.

[32 : 23] And also, consider these things when you are deciding how much you are going to give yourself to loving and serving the people here.

Consider the way the abundance of God calls you to give abundantly. So look at this. Verse 6, give because there is a pattern between what you sow and what you reap.

Verse 6, He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Makes perfect sense.

I mean, my lawn at home sucks. It's a bad lawn. There's dirt patches everywhere. So imagine if I wanted to fix that and I take a handful of seed and I scatter it in one spot.

should I then expect months later that my whole lawn is going to be vibrant? No. That's crazy. He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly.

[33 : 31] If you scatter little seed, expect to get a little harvest. But know that if you give abundantly, abundance is coming your way.

Not the abundance of financial wealth. Maybe God will provide that for you. Maybe he won't. but a better abundance. The abundance of walking closely with God. Know too that not every seed will sprout.

Farmers cast much seed and only a small fraction of it sprouts. And yet they know what they must do if they want a bigger harvest.

Cast more. Don't be discouraged when things don't work out every time. trust that the Lord of the harvest will send fruit.

Think about caring about people. A lot of times we wish we had people there when we were needy. One of the ways to make that happen is to be there when other people are needy.

[34 : 36] That's always the way it works. You find a group of people and they when one person starts caring when others are needy eventually it comes back around. Abundant giving is the way to abundant life.

These things go hand in hand. Give cheerfully. Look at verse 7. We've had it up on the every offering this verse is up there. So keep this in mind.

So let each one of you give as he purposes in his heart. Not grudgingly or of necessity but cheerfully for God loves a cheerful giver. your cup is full.

You have everything you need. Why do you need to be a grudging giver? Why do you need to be pushed to give if you have everything you need?

What are you scared of losing if God has met every last need of yours? So give cheerfully. You may believe that if you give generously you are going to be caught in the bad life.

[35 : 45] Oh if I give this then I won't be able to get that and then I won't be happy or I won't be as happy as I could be. No. God provides your every need.

Do not be afraid that by giving you're going to be left with nothing. He cares for you. Your cup is full. Consider how Jesus emptied himself for your sake and now is highly exalted.

Or consider his words in Acts 20-23. Paul speaks of the words of Jesus saying in all these things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of our Lord Jesus how he himself said it is more blessed to give than to receive.

gain the blessing of giving. Give because he will multiply it. Look at verse 10. Now may he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness.

I'll tell you there are more seeds in existence now than they were 2,000 years ago. Where did they all come from? Do people mine seeds out of mountains so that they can plant more food?

[37 : 09] No. They plant some seeds and then suddenly by the end of harvest they get more seeds back than they put in. God will multiply your labors because he is a God of abundance.

You think that what you do is weak and little and ineffective and so you stop working. But know that your smallest effort he will multiply because he is abundant.

So push for that little extra and you will find that God blesses it to do even more. Give because it brings God glory.

Verses 12 and following for the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God.

When you give generously people are thankful. They thank God and God is lifted up. Your Savior is praised when you give.

[38 : 17] Verse 13 while through the proof of this ministry that is the way in which giving shows that you are one of the abundant life Christians who trust Jesus while through the proof of this ministry they glorify God and so on and so forth.

Praise praise be to God when you give. Do not fall to the lies that say that your life and your money is meant to secure for you luxury and wealth and comfort?

I mean how many people have you heard come up with a get rich quick scheme? I'm going to work this much this ton amount I'm going to buy an apartment building and then I'm going to use the money from that and I'm going to buy another apartment building and all of a sudden I don't have to work anymore and I have the good life.

That's a cheap life. You know what the real life is? Giving your life to the work of the Lord and receiving the abundance of close walk with him.

If you are here and you are hurting and you are struggling and you are discouraged I encourage you to find abundant life in Jesus.

[39 : 41] Throw yourself by faith into the gospel and into following him fill up your cup and then throw yourself into loving and serving the church and you will find abundant life.

Brothers and sisters if you are already serving know that there is a sweet reward of abundant life waiting for you. You are on the right path.

You are sowing bountifully and the bountiful harvest is coming your way. Be encouraged.

Remember the words of Psalm 23.

The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me.

[40 : 42] Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil.

My cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

2 Corinthians chapter 9 verse 15. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift. Let's pray. Lord God, thank you.

Thank you, thank you. Thank you for Jesus. Thank you for your word, which is our comfort. Teach us and guide us and help us to live abundant lives.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Please rise for our closing song.