

Explaining Faith Promise

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- [0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfreda, Georgia. This is the next message in our series in the book of 2 Corinthians, entitled, We Faint Not.
- Amen. Take your Bible, if you would, and turn it to 2 Corinthians chapter 8. 2 Corinthians chapter 8. We have now come to a passage of Scripture that every missionary and everybody who's involved in faith promise missions knows a whole lot about, maybe doesn't know as much about as they think.
- And we're going to take the next few services, next two or three weeks, and go over some truths that I hope will be a great blessing to you. If you're writing the title down, why don't you write this down?
- Grace giving. Grace giving. Take your Bible, if you would, and look at 2 Corinthians chapter 8. And let me give you the title, and then we're going to read the first five verses.
- But I'll start in chapter 7 in a second. But to get the title, look at chapter 8, verse 1. The Bible says, Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia.
- [1 : 09] Semicolon. Look what he said. We do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia. And he's about to start talking to them about giving. He's about to start talking to them about the way they're going to give a special offering to meet the needs of a church in another place, another city, and how they're going to meet those needs.
- And this is where we get faith promise. So write down grace given, and we will learn some principles about New Testament biblical giving. We'll learn some principles about grace giving.
- Look if you would at chapter 7, verse 16. And we'll read from there down to verse 5 for tonight. The Bible says, I rejoice, therefore, that I have confidence in you in all things.
- Now stop just a second. Notice this. The apostle Paul, who has had all kinds of problems, and has been fussing at this church about all sorts of things. And 1 Corinthians has been a rough book.
- And apparently there was another letter written to them. And Titus has made a trip to them. And now Titus came back home. And when Titus and Paul met together, and when Paul and Titus meet, Paul is excited to find out that the Corinthian church has gotten right with God.
- [2 : 21] We saw that last Sunday morning. They're excited. They're serving God. And they're right with Him. And he said, I knew all along you were going to do right. I had confidence in you. Well, that verse is the last part of chapter 7.
- But it's the start of chapter 8 also. And he's saying, Hey, I've fixed to talk to you about money. And I'm going to talk to you, and I'm going to tell you now, I've got confidence in you. I have confidence in you in all things.
- Chapter 8, verse 1. The Bible says, Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God, bestowed on the churches of Macedonia, how that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded under the riches of their liberality.

For to their power I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves, praying us with much entreaty that we should receive the gift and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord and unto us by the will of God. Father, I pray that you would help the word, your word, the words of this chapter come alive to us.

[3 : 32] I pray, God, that you would help us to be stronger givers. I pray you'd help us to have your grace flow through us as we learn to love others and meet others' needs and give to others.

And I'll give you great praise and honor and glory for all that you do. In Jesus' precious name, amen. If you have your ink pen, I want you to go with me down to verse 4 so you'll know the purpose in these two chapters.

Verse 4, underline, it says in verse 4, it says the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. Ministering to the saints. Now look this way just a second before we get started out.

You know what's going on? Back in Jerusalem, a church was started that was not a missionary church. They were a very ethnocentric, self-centered, selfish church.

They only liked people that were their color, their talk, their walk, their way, their kind of people. That's the kind of people they liked. They were kind of like churches in the southeast of the United States of America. Say amen right there.

[4 : 34] And they didn't really care about other people. They weren't really that concerned about reaching out and they filled Jerusalem with the doctrine. But don't forget, those are the guys that had heard the great commission given to them.

They heard Matthew 28, 19 and 20, which Brother Kenny mentioned to you just a minute ago. The book of Acts starts off in Acts 1, 8 and says, after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you, you shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth.

And I left out the most important word, both. He said, you'll do it all at the same time. You'll be working in your hometown and you'll be working all around the world all at the same time. They knew that, but they didn't do it.

They were a closed group of people. They really didn't hardly break out of the mold. Oh, Philip did. He was appointed a deacon in the church. Some men appointed him as a deacon and he becomes an evangelist and he breaks out and goes over and starts witnessing to some Samaritans, some half breeds, some people that don't measure up to Jewish standards, some people that are hated by Jewish standards.

God begins to save them. Then he leaves that guy and goes over and he talks to the Ethiopian eunuch and the Ethiopian eunuch gets saved. But he's a very unusual character.

[5 : 46] You don't find many like him in the entire Bible. He cared about people like he was supposed to long before everybody else was doing it. And then you find the story. We still haven't got to the start of the Corinthian churches, the Macedonian church, which is still not there.

And you find one day, Peter's up on the rooftop of his house and Peter's waiting on the supper to be ready. Peter's taking a nap, waiting on them to get his supper ready. And he goes to sleep.

And you know the story, the big sheet gets let down and there's unclean animals in there. And the angel says to Peter, stand up and kill and eat. And Peter said, I have never, and I will not be eating that kind of stuff.

That's not who I am. And the Lord does that three times with him. And on the third time, the doorbell rang downstairs and somebody said, a guy came from Cornelius's house and he wants to talk to you.

And he said, Cornelius has sent for you to come tell him the gospel. And Peter says, ah, that's what God was trying to tell me in the dream, that I ought to go talk to these Gentiles. So Peter packs up and goes with a guy to Cornelius's house and he gets into Cornelius's house and he even tells Cornelius when he gets there, you do know it's a strange thing that I'm here.

[6 : 58] I am a Jew and we don't like your kind. And he said, it's against the rules for us to even eat in your house. But the Lord sent this sheet down and the Lord sent you to my house.

And I mean, well, what can I say? Sit down and I'll give you guys the gospel. And he gives them the gospel and God saves them. And it's a wild thing. They get saved and they're accepting Christ and they're excited about the Lord.

And Peter's like astonished what's God doing working with these Gentile dogs the way they would racially insult somebody else and they got saved. And so Peter ends up, many that get baptized in the Holy Ghost, they get baptized and Peter comes back to the church and the church deacons meet with him.

And they said, what in the world have you done? Those people aren't us. What are you doing with them people? And Peter said, I'll be honest with you, I wasn't all that keen on it myself, but God got involved in the thing and I didn't have a lot I could do about it.

God kind of put me in a corner and I had to. And that's the story of that early church. And by the time, by the time you get to this story here and by the time you get to Acts chapter 11, in Acts chapter 11, the Jerusalem church is a shriveling up, dying church.

[8 : 13] Like many of our churches. Because we've been too ethnocentric. That means we lack our own people and nobody else. We've been too closed in, too self-centered, too selfish.

That church was dying. They wouldn't ever spread and carry the gospel. In Acts chapter 1 and verse 8, he said, you shall be witnesses. They wouldn't do it. So in Acts chapter 8 and verse 1, the apostle Paul comes and brings persecution on the church.

And by the way, they took off running and escaping out of the city. Everybody leaves but the apostles. Acts chapter 8 and verse 4. Everybody leaves but the apostles. And the apostles stay in town and all these Christians are scurrying out of town like rats leaving a sinking ship.

And they are only talking to other Jews about Jesus. They were only telling other Jews what God had done in Jerusalem. If they weren't Jewish, they didn't want to tell them.

You can imagine they're walking up to them and looking over and looking, you look Jewish, I'll talk to you. You don't look Jewish, I won't talk to you. And they're picking who they'll talk to. And one day, in Acts chapter 11, this one guy, I don't know what got into him, he got excited and he slipped up and he told a Gentile guy about Jesus.

[9 : 21] And the Gentile was like, are you kidding me? Are you telling me that God loves me? Are you telling me that Jesus died for me? Are you telling me I can be saved? Are you telling me that I can be born again?

My sins can be forgiven and I can be accepted by God and I can go to heaven when I die. Are you telling me that? And the guy said, yeah, I am. And all of a sudden, a revival started spreading among these Gentile guys.

And these Gentile guys got so excited, news gets all the way back to Jerusalem. The Jerusalem church hears about it and the Jerusalem church says, we need to send somebody over to find out what's going on.

And they chose, by the grace of God, they chose the right man and his name's Barnabas, the son of consolation. And Barnabas shows up over in, Barnabas shows up over in Antioch and that area and Barnabas starts discipling them.

He was grabbing discipleship lessons and Bibles and everywhere he turned, there was so many people and he didn't have time to sleep and he didn't have time to take a break and he was just shot because there was so much work to do.

[10 : 21] And he said, guys, time out. I need a break. I'm going to run and get a buddy. I got and I'm going to bring him back. And so he runs all the way over to Saul of Tarshish and he finds Saul of Tarshish, the guy that will later be called Paul.

And the Bible doesn't say one word about Saul getting called to the ministry. The Bible doesn't say one word about the Holy Spirit speaking to Saul. All the Bible tells us is the Barnabas showed up and said, I need your help. Pack a bag and let's get.

And so Paul packs a bag and goes over to Antioch and he begins working with him and helping him. And they did exactly what Mr. Oh, brother Kenny told you about tonight.

They got a church going. They had five leaders in it. The first one being Barnabas Acts chapter 13, one through four. Barnabas is the guy that's mentioned first. Saul is the guy that's mentioned last.

And three people mentioned in between and various nationalities in that church, not ethnocentric. That beginning church began to shrivel and die. And all those Christians that come in from all over the world, they were proselytes and they come to Jerusalem because of the day of Pentecost and they gotten saved and they didn't go out.

[11 : 23] They didn't go back to their homes. They stayed there. That's why in Acts chapter 6 they had to get these deacons to take care of all these people, these widows that didn't have enough food. And so all this had been happening and now there's not enough money in Jerusalem.

And Paul's concerned about it. And so Paul goes out and visits churches. In Acts chapter 11, the last part of the chapter, I'm thinking around verse 29. Paul and Barnabas and those guys are getting this offering together and they're going to take it back down to Jerusalem and they're going to put it in the hands of those people.

And one of the churches that's going to give are these churches of Macedonia. This Corinth church is going to give an offering. And so the offering is about ministering to the saints.

The offering is about doing something for other Christians. The Bible says in Galatians chapter 6 and verse 10, the Bible says do good to all men, but especially to those of the household of faith.

I think I'm saying that by memory. Thank you. Faith, the household of faith. And so they were doing something good in the household of faith. Now here's what I want you to know.

[12 : 32] We do faith promise here. You give money to missions. Second Corinthians 8 and 9 are the chapters that are always used, but they're really not about faith promise missions. They're really just about somebody giving an offering by faith, making a promise about money that we're going to give to take care of some Christians back over in the city of Jerusalem.

And they do, it does work for us. So I'm going to take three weeks probably before we get through chapters 8 and 9. And I want to learn a little bit about giving. And I don't talk about giving, but you can relax because here's the key verse.

I believe to these two chapters, open your Bibles to Acts chapter, Acts chapter 9 and verse 7, which we have gone over in every missions conference. Here's the key verse so you can relax.

Everybody gets tight. Everybody gets upset and everybody gets concerned whenever giving is mentioned. Whenever money is mentioned, we kind of get, we kind of tense up. There comes a preacher wanting money.

Well, look what the Bible says in 2 Corinthians chapter 9 and verse 7. We've gone over it before. We'll go over it again and then we're going to try to get these first five verses. Ready? Look what the verse says. Would you read that verse with me out loud?

[13 : 40] Everybody read it out loud with me. Are you ready? The Bible says, Every man, according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not, or of, for God loveth.

Okay, we could stay here all night, but I don't really want to because I want to get five verses, but watch this. This was an offering that they were going to give back to the saints in Jerusalem.

But when they were taking up that offering, Paul makes it very clear in chapter 9 and verse 7. It's going to be clear all through these two chapters. He made it very clear that you're going to give an offering and God loves what kind of giver?

Cheerful. All over the world where I help missionaries. There are missionaries that they won't even take up an offering. They won't pass the plate because they don't want to get the people all tense and uptight so they put a box in the back of the room and they're afraid to ever talk about money because they're afraid they're going to offend people.

You don't have to be afraid if you teach it like the Bible teaches it. What kind of giver does God like? What kind of giver does God like? Cheerful. And by the way, who determines how much that man's going to give?

[14 : 45] Sure, the Bible teaches about a tithe and that's for another day. And sure, the Bible teaches about giving all through the Bible. I'm going to give you a lot of those verses, but when it comes down to it, it's a decision between you and God.

So how do you know that? Look at chapter 9, verse 7, right there in front of you in your Bible. It says, according as a man, according as a man purposes where? In his heart.

According as a man purposes in his heart. I sit down and I say, this is how much I want to get to missions. You know, I really believe every Christian ought to start out tithing and tithing is like 10% of your income, but I always tell you tithing is like teething and you ought to have quit that a long time ago.

Huh? We're not really, we're not really minimum givers. We're not really minimum doers. This is New Testament, not Old Testament. If a guy did it in the Old Testament because it was law, he was supposed to do it.

And I live in the New Testament where I get to do what I want to do. I ought to want to do more than any man ever had to do. But let me just say this real quickly. There's not in the Bible this whole concept of if you don't tithe, God's going to break your legs.

[15 : 50] That's concepts really not in the Bible, not New Testament church. God's not going to break your legs. You've been taught all your life. If you don't tithe, you'll tithe at the church or you'll tithe at the hospital. You'll tithe at the church or you'll tithe at the body shop.

You've been told all your life that God's going to get money out of you one way or the other. Can I just tell you this? I read a verse that said that God loves a cheerful giver. And God said, let him give as he purposes in his heart.

Can you say that with me? As he purposes in his heart. And then there are two big words he uses about our giving. There are two big words he uses about our giving. He said, I want you to give not grudgingly.

Not grudgingly. Sad to say, Christians become old and bitter saints. They become people that are just a little bit angry. They're jealous about the money. They're tight about the money.

They're defensive about the money. They become grudging givers. And God doesn't want grudging givers. Amen? Not grudgingly. Could I just say to you, none of you want any gift.

[16 : 55] I told you this at Missions Conference probably every year since we've been here. Nobody wants somebody to give them a gift that's doing it grudgingly. Hey, baby, I want to give you a Christmas gift. I have to give it to you because it's Christmas and if I don't, I'm a bad husband.

So here, take it. I have to give it to you. Can you imagine your Christmas service or your Christmas at your house? Y'all all gather around the Christmas tree and you got all the gifts out and you call the kids in and say, sit down and take these stupid gifts.

It's going to take me six months to pay for it. You're going to tear them up anyway. They're all junk from China anyway but I have to give them to you. Boy, you want to talk about a wonderful Christmas spirit that's going to be wonderful at your house.

And some of you already got that. It's just hidden. But you brought it to church too. And when it came to serving God, it became a grudging thing. And so when brother John Pearson stands up here on a Sunday morning and opens the Bible and reads a verse about money, you're like, I can't believe it.

That guy, all he ever talks about is money. Well, that's really because that's what we gave him as a job. Amen. It's not because he just wants to talk about money. He just soon preached a message. Tell me to sit down.

[18 : 02] But that's the job. But you see here, we're not not begrudging about money because we ought to give to God because we love God. How many of you know you're going to go to heaven when you die? How many of you know you've been made a new creature?

How many of you know that the love of Christ constrains you? How many of you know that if one died for all, then all ought to live for one? That's what the Bible said in the last part of 2 Corinthians that we just got through going through.

So he says, let every man, every man according as he, every man according as he purposes in his heart so that he give not grudgingly nor of necessity.

Now that's a real hard one for me. For years, I used necessity to raise missions money. I did it. And I, I made some people give out of necessity.

The Bible says not of necessity. Can I just tell you every time I look and I think, man, we could have a building someday and we could have our own land and we could have, we could have an auditorium that looked like an auditorium and it had a roof, a ceiling, you know, a ceiling.

[19 : 06] I know we got a roof, but we don't have a ceiling. I just got through preaching at Brother Tony's auditorium and I walked in the back door of the auditorium. I started down the aisle and I was just going, God, forgive me for lusting. God, forgive me for lusting.

I stood in the platform and I preached and it sounded like I was preaching in a church. I could hear him when they said amen and I thought this ain't like a warehouse. Amen. And so I'd like to bring up necessity, but here's what God says.

I don't want my people giving out of, I don't want my people giving out of, I want my people giving because they want to give. Look at the verse and we got to hurry.

Look at the verse for every man according as he purposes. That means I ought to stop, sit down and say, God, how do you want me to manage the money you put in my hands? First thing I need to realize is everything I got belongs to him to begin with.

Somewhere along the way, you got the idea that as long as you paid God 10%, you could keep 90. You know, you kind of think of God like those guys in the mafia movies and they come by and they say, as long as you pay 10% protection money, you'll be all right.

[20 : 08] You don't pay, we're going to break your leg and you turn God into that guy. Actually, actually 10% doesn't belong. And I hear this all the time. 10% belongs to God. You owe the tithe.

I'm like, come on, get a break. 100% belongs to God. 100% belongs to God. He said, God said this. He said, if I were hungry, I wouldn't ask you guys for anything to eat.

I own the cattle on a thousand hills. And another place, he said, I own the hills too. And another place, he said, all the silver's mine and all the gold's mine. And another place, he said, all the souls are mine.

I mean, he's like God, you know, it's really weird. I mean, he's like God or something. Every man, as he purposeth in his heart, he ought to stop and say, God, how do you want me to manage what you've given me in time and in talent and treasure?

So read the verse for me. Every man, according as he purposeth in his heart so that he can give not grudgingly or of necessity for God loveth a giver.

[21 : 12] And I used to, in Peru, I used to explain to him what cheerful meant. It's actually, the Greek word behind the word cheerful is hilarious. It's the idea that you are just like having a stinking blast.

It's like you are doing belly laughs. It's like you feel like Santa Claus when the giving's going on. By the way, it is that way if in some of your homes come Christmas or anniversary, you've prepared that special gift for that special person.

You know, I've got a real problem in my house. I really do have a major problem in my house. Anytime I find something I think Betty wants, is Betty, see Betty, Betty, Betty has Christmas prepared for this year for almost everybody in the family already.

And she probably has it prepared for next year too. She's like a pack rat. I mean, she's always finding stuff and storing it. When I go out and I find something I think Betty wants, man, I'm like, that's it, that's it, that's the gift, that's the gift.

Wow, I can't wait to give it to her. That's going to be her Christmas giving. Then I walk in house and I say, you ain't going to believe what I got you for Christmas. Here, go ahead and open it. I'll have to get you something else to come Christmas because I like giving to her.

[22 : 17] And she evidently don't like giving to us because she stores it all. Amen. Cheerful giving. It's what we do with our kids. Now go back to Acts chapter, to 2 Corinthians chapter 8 verse 1 and work your way through it with me for about 10 more minutes.

Look at verse 1. Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia. I really want you to understand grace just for a second. I want you to underline that. Everything good I do, he does through me.

There's not, let me say this, I'm a born again creature. I am a new creature. Old things are passed away. I am accepted in the beloved. I'm holy and I'm a saint and all the good stuff you can imagine that God has ever said about me is all true.

But can I just tell you everything good about me is all him. I am what I am by the grace of God. And by the way, when I give, let me just explain something to you.

People ask me sometimes, how do you know when God wants you to give something? I say anytime it ever crosses your mind to give somebody something, unless it's got an ulterior motive, it must be God. Let me explain to you how my feelings are. if there's two cookies on the plate and there's three people in the room, I know who's supposed to get at least one of them.

[23 : 29] Me. And on honesty, I could eat a cookie with one bite. And so there's really only two bites on the plate. That's my nature.

I mean, I'm saved and born again, but I still, I mean, I like to take care of number one. And whenever it crosses my mind, you ought to give that cookie to somebody else. I'm like, who's talking here? That ain't me.

And it ain't you either. It ain't you either. What we do, we do by the grace of God. What's about to happen in this chapter is these people are going to go crazy like givers.

They're going to give an offering that they could never afford to give. They're going to want to give when they can't afford to give. Why in the world would people who can't afford to give want to give? Because God did something in grace in them.

Chapter 8, verse 1, look at it. Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia.

[24 : 28] How that in great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded under the riches of their liberality. Look at verse 2 with me. They were in a great trial of affliction.

Afflictions. Think about that word a second. I would dare say none of us have any idea of what financial affliction really is. And by the way, if you said you did, I'd just say, could I take you to Africa?

Could I take you to South America? Could I take you to the Andes Mountains? Could I take you to those kids that I've seen walking around in Burkina Faso that haven't had a bath, don't have running water, don't have electricity, don't have clothes?

Could I show you they really know what it's like? They got extended bellies because of malnutrition and no food. They probably know what affliction is. We have extended bellies, but not of malnutrition, but overnutrition.

He said, in a great trial, not a trial, a great trial. They weren't just having a trial. You may be going through a trial right now, but it's probably not a great trial of affliction.

[25 : 39] The abundance of their joy, those are conflicting words. Affliction and joy, trial and joy. Paul walked into a church where everybody was poor, where their shoes had holes in them, their pants had holes in them, where they didn't have money, where they didn't know how they were going to eat, where they were really dealing with financial stress, and Paul walked in and said, these people ought to be whining and crying, but I am shocked.

There is great joy here. That's what it says, isn't it? Look at the verse. He said, how in a great trial, a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty.

What kind of poverty? Most of my life, I have not had to pay income tax. I'm part of that 47. I've always been just under the poverty level just because salaries and pastor and missionary and overseas and all that.

But I've never, and the fact is, for years as a pastor, when I started in the ministry, I was always under the poverty level. But can I just tell you, under the poverty level, I had everything. I had a car, had a house, ate good food, I drank Coca-Cola, ate ice cream.

I had a good life. On the poverty level in America, you can live like a king compared to most places in the world. Fact is, you can't find a guy in America who knows poverty like so many other places around the world.

[27 : 02] This church had a great trial of affliction and deep poverty, but it abounded unto the riches of their liberality. Riches of their liberality. Not the riches of how much they could give, but their heart of giving.

Liberality talks about your giving. They had a giving heart. It wasn't how much they had, it was how much they wanted to give. You say, I'm not sure that's what that's talking about. Well, if you'll read with me, I think I can prove it to you, verse 3.

It says, For to their power I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves. Put a circle around the word willing. You see what he said was? He said, Man, these guys wanted to give.

These guys wanted to give. These guys were hungry to be givers. Look what he said they did. They gave all they were able to give to their power.

He said, I testify. I can be a witness to this, to their power, and beyond their power they were willing. These guys wanted to do more than they could possibly afford to do.

[28 : 05] Apparently, what happens in the story is the apostle Paul shows up in the church and he's telling them about the church in Jerusalem and the people that sent them the gospel and he said, Man, the church has sent you the gospel.

Man, they're hurting down there. The people are in great need. There's been this great trial that came over. We need to take an offering for them. And it seems like to me that in 2 Corinthians 8, what happened is Paul looked around after he got up and started talking.

He was like, No way. They got holes in their shoes. They don't have any money. I can see these guys are all poor. Everybody here, they didn't even come up on a burrow and if they did, he was a three-legged burrow. I mean, these guys ain't got nothing.

They can't give. And so Paul apparently said to them, I understand y'all can't give. I see it's beyond you. And these Christians said, Excuse me, sir.

We want to give. And Paul said, No, I don't think you really do. You're awful poor. And you say, No, they didn't really say that. Check it out if you would in verse 4. 2 Corinthians 8, verse 4.

[29 : 05] Praying us. That's an old-fashioned way of saying begging us, asking us. Praying us. It's like they say in court sometimes, I pray the court. Praying us with much entreaty.

That means begging us with a whole lot of begging. Begging us with a lot of words that say what we want to get done. That we should receive the gift. And that we should take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

So Paul shows up and they're like, We want to give. And Paul's like, I don't think y'all can give. And they said, Please let us give. And Paul said, Y'all really can't afford to give. And they said, Don't rob us of a blessing.

Don't keep us from being involved in helping the saints at Jerusalem. Don't do that. Please don't treat us that way. Please don't treat us that way. Please don't do us that way.

You may look at us as poor, but we can give what we got to give. And it might not be much. As a missionary, the first thing you learn is that, well, not in Chile, because they're rich in that country, but in a place like Peru, when I arrived in Peru, they made \$25 a month.

[30 : 11] That was a salary. Or Bolivia, another place like that. Or a place in Africa where they don't make even that. Or like I was talking to Jim Roberts and I said, Jim, what's the minimum wage in India?

And Jim said about \$2. I said, Wow, you mean they make \$2 an hour? He said, No, I mean they make \$2 a day. That's pretty low pay. They work all hour and couldn't buy your lunch when they get paid.

They know some poverty. And sometimes as a missionary, it's kind of hard. You're like, these guys are so poor, we could never let them give. Until you read 2 Corinthians chapter 8 and find out there was a group of people who were in great trial of affliction and deep poverty and begging to be allowed to be givers.

I don't have time to get to verse 5, but just let me say this to you. It ought to be in our heart that we want to give. We ought to want to give because we love Jesus. We ought to want to give because we love what he's doing. We ought to love. And the apostle, and this chapter, and the gospel message is committed.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 15, the apostle Paul said, There are some that haven't heard the gospel. I speak this to your shame. Corinthian church. This Corinthian church was like the wicked, perverted church.

[31 : 26] This is the church where a guy's sleeping with his daddy's, a guy's sleeping with his daddy's wife. This is the church where they're all divided and fighting Paul. This is the church where everybody's, they're divided up and some belong to the Peter Club and some belong to the Paul Club and some belong to the Apollos Club and some are real spiritual and say we belong to the Jesus Club.

This is the church that's got the charismatic chaos going on all the time. And Paul writes and says, there are people that don't know about Jesus. I speak that to your shame. I would have written and said, hey, there's people that don't know Jesus and the Philippians.

I speak that to their shame. Well, Paul said it to this church. And then this passage about giving is not found in Philippians and it's not found in Ephesians. It's not found in Galatians. It's found in the Corinthian church.

So our church definitely is above this church. We could give. It ought to be in our heart. And it's built on everything you've been watching happen. You've found out that everything you're going through right now is a light affliction.

A moment, a moment, whatever that is, just a minute of problems you're having right now. Just a small period of time you're in problems because we don't walk by sight.

[32 : 32] We walk by faith and we know God has something better for us. And our bodies may end up dying, but God has something greater for us prepared. We want to give. The love of Christ constrains us. We're ambassadors for Christ.

Second Corinthians chapter five. We have the gospel we can share. Second Corinthians chapter five. And so second Corinthians chapter eight, they're like, Paul, man, we are in this. Paul said, I knew you were.

I have great confidence in you. We ought to be givers because all Jesus has done and we love him. And I believe with all my heart, you are, you have proven it and you want to be, you have, you give so much to missions.

You give above what you've promised in faith, promise you give to others, you've paid to take care of all these needs here. And I just want you to know this before you go home. It hadn't been you doing the giving. It's been the grace of God working in your life.

I hate to say this, but when a preacher said, boy, y'all the most generous people in the world, there's no such thing as generous people. Really, really generous people are just people full of grace that God put in them.

[33 : 37] Paul starts this chapter off and he says, let me tell you about the grace of God and how he took a bunch of really poor people and gave a really good offering because God works through us.

Father, I pray you bring glory to your name and honors your name. I pray God that you'd show your power in our lives. I pray that you would bring glory to yourself. God, I pray you'd help us over the next few weeks to learn grace giving, to learn to give way above and beyond what we've ever given before and to give out of our hearts because we're in deep love with you and I'll give you praise and honor and glory for it all.

You have been listening to Austin Gardner, pastor of Vision Baptist Church. For contact information, location, service times, or more audio and video recordings, log on to www.visionbaptist.com.