

GIVING BEYOND

2 Corinthians 8:1-5 |

“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 unto 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 intreaty that we would 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.”

INTRODUCTION

In Acts 16:9, we read the famous story of the Macedonian call in which we see Paul receiving a vision of a man saying, “Come over to Macedonia, and help us.” Thankfully the Apostle Paul was obedient to the vision and endeavored to go and preach the gospel there. Through a series of events, many were saved and churches were established in that region. In 2 Corinthians 8, we read about Paul using these very believers as an example of how a believer should give. And though at one time the Macedonians were the ones in need of help, they had now become those who were equipped to help those in need.

Proverbs 3:27 |

“Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, *when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.*”

- We learned in prior lessons that God is the one that gives us the power to gain wealth.
- Wealth is given to us not so we can frivolously spend it upon our own desires but rather that the work of God can be funded.

2 Corinthians 8:12 |

“For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.”

- Every believer has a certain capacity to give. However, the Bible teaches us that we can give beyond our power. We see this exemplified in the lives of the Macedonians.
- Giving beyond our power allows us to see the hand of God in a special way. It causes our faith to increase and enables our resources to stretch far beyond its value.

Ephesians 3:20 |

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us...”

GIVING BEYOND OUR CAPACITY

1. BEGINS WITH SUBTRACTION

John 6:9|

“There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?”

- This young boy was willing to subtract what he had and place it into the hands of God.
- Because of this, the Lord performed a great miracle. He was able to give beyond his power by simply parting with what he had for a greater need.
- It may almost sound like an oxymoron, “subtract what I have to give beyond my power?” Logically this does not make sense, however, in the realm of God’s economy it is the entrance point to giving beyond our capacity.

2 Corinthians 8:2|

“How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.”

- Their poverty became the means of their generosity.
- We see this displayed in the life of Christ.

2 Corinthians 8:9 |

“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for *your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*”

- In order to give beyond our capacity we must be willing to subtract from that which God can use to increase in the ministry.

Proverbs 11:24 |

“*There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth;* and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.”

2. CONTINUES WITH ADDITION

Galatians 6:10 |

“*As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men,* especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

- Paul admonished those in Galatia to look for opportunities to do good to those who are of the household of faith. In fact, three verses prior he states:

“Let him that is taught in the word *communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.*”

- To communicate means to give financially. So in context, Paul was exhorting the Galatian believers to seek for opportunities to give financially.
- This matter of giving doesn't stop when we tithe! In fact, as we grow in grace and in knowledge we are to seek for more opportunities to give. We are to add our giving to the work of God.
- Giving beyond our capacity begins when we seek to add opportunities to give.

Philippians 4:15-16 |

“Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.”

- Philippi was a city found within the region of Macedonia. Once again we see the Macedonians being recognized for their generosity.
- Prior, we observed the willingness to subtract from themselves in order to give generously. Now we see that they sought for opportunities to give.

- Even when the Apostle Paul was in Thessalonica, the believers in Macedonia communicated with him looking for opportunities to give to his necessities.
- Giving beyond our capacity comes as we add opportunities to give. If an opportunity arises for us to give, we ought to **add** that to our list of giving!

3. BECOMES MULTIPLICATION

Matthew 13:31-32|

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: ***but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.***”

- In this parable we see that when the seed of the word God is sown, it has mass potential of great proportion.
- The principle of “sowing seeds” is often used throughout the word of God to show that when we use what “little” we may have, God can transform it into something big. In fact, the mustard seed, though being the least of all seeds, became the greatest even to the point of become a tree itself!

- The bible uses a word to communicate such an effect – “**ABOUND.**”
- To abound means to occur in large quantities and amount.

Philippians 4:16-17 |

“For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may *abound to your account.*”

- When those in Philippi supplied the needs of the Apostle Paul, they not only received fruit, but they received fruit that *abounded* to their account.
- Our resources, when given to the Lord’s work, abound the work of God as well as our fruit.

Proverbs 28:20 |

“A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.

2 Corinthians 9:8 |

“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:”

4. CONCLUDES IN DIVISION

Joshua 22:8 |

“And he spake unto them, saying, Return with much riches unto your tents, and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment: ***divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren.***”

- Spoils in the Bible where the goods that a soldier received for winning a war. The spoils were often so abundant, it was courtesy to divide the spoils amongst the army.
- Obedience to God’s commands always comes with ***spoils***. However spoils in the Christian life often come in abundance and therefore must be divided with others.
- When we seek to give financially to the cause of Christ, God will enable us to give beyond our power by so that the end result produces spoils for the team.

John 4:36 |

“And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that ***both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.***”

