

# Grace of Giving

by Stephen Kaung

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*Giving is a spiritual thing that comes from a place of grace, and it is a key part of living a life of spiritual generosity.*

**Duration:** 1:12:33

**Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 8:1-9

**Topics:** "Giving"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the topic of giving and how it is often misunderstood and abused in Christianity. He shares a story about a strong man who could squeeze every bit of juice out of an orange, but a little man claimed he could do it too. The little man turned out to be a deacon of the Baptist Church, highlighting the misconception that giving is solely about begging for money. The speaker emphasizes that giving should be done out of grace and with a willing heart, not out of obligation or fear. He also mentions the principle of giving according to what one has, not beyond their means, and the principle of equality or balance in giving.

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## Transcript

2nd Corinthians chapter 8. I would like to read here and there some verses in chapter 8 and in chapter 9. Chapter 8 verse 1. But we make known to you brethren the grace of God bestowed in the assemblies of Macedonia. Verse 4. Begging of us with much anxiety to give effect to the grace and fellowship of the service which was to be rendered to the saints. Verse 6. So that we beg tithers that according as he had before begun so he would also complete as to you this grace also.

Chapter verse 8. Verse 7. That even as he abound in every way in faith and word and knowledge and all diligence and in love from you to us that ye may abound in this grace also. Verse 9. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that for your sakes he being rich became poor in order that ye by his poverty might be enriched. Verse 16.

For thanks be to God who gave the same diligent zeal for you in the heart of Titus. We know in the original the word thanks is grace. So for grace be to God who gave the same diligent zeal for you in the heart of Titus.

Verse 19. And not only so but is also chosen by the assemblies as our fellow traveler with this grace ministered by us to the glory of the Lord himself and a witness of our readiness. Then chapter 9 verse 8.

That God is able to make every gracious gift.

In the original it is grace. But God is able to make every grace abound towards you that having in every way always all sufficiency ye may abound to every good work. Verse 14.

And in their supplication for you full of ardent desire for you on account of the exceeding grace of God which is upon you. Verse 15. Thanks be to God that is grace be to God for his unspeakable free gift.

Now you will notice of all the verses that we have read there is one word that is common to them all. And that is the word grace. The word grace is used in these chapters 10 times.

7 times in chapter 8 and 3 times in chapter 9. And this is something we'd like to share this afternoon. May we have a word of prayer. Our Father how we praise and thank thee for thy precious word.

We ask thee now to give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation that we may truly know thy word. We ask thee to enlighten the eyes of our hearts that we may know. O Lord we ask thee that as thy word is given may thy Holy Spirit do thy work.

And it is all unto the praise of thy glory. We ask in thy precious name. Amen.

If you want to write one word over the second letter to the Corinthians what word will you use? As a hint if you want to write one word over 1 Corinthians what word will you use? Anybody? No 1 Corinthians over the whole letter. Not just chapter 13. Well if you read the whole letter of 1 Corinthians and you want to use one word to sum up that letter that word is carnality.

But if you read 2 Corinthians and you want to sum it up in one word that word is spirituality. 2 Corinthians speaks to us of spirituality. It tells us what is spiritual life.

It tells us what is spiritual ministry. It tells us what is spiritual authority. It tells us what is spiritual warfare.

It tells us what is spiritual man. And among them it tells us what is spiritual giving. So what we would like to share this afternoon is the grace of giving.

We often shy away from this subject of giving. And I think the reason is first we think that it is a subject that is below our dignity. We think it is so small a thing that it does not worth the mentioning of it.

That is one reason. The second reason is this matter of giving is such a delicate subject. And because it is so delicate it is much better not to touch it.

Probably it will touch some of our weak spots. Probably it will be embarrassing. And that is another reason why we shy away from this subject of giving.

Number three. Because there is so much abuse in Christianity in the matter of giving. We find that it is almost like begging for money.

And it brings such disgrace to God. We feel it is much better if we do not even touch it. But dear brothers and sisters, you will find this second letter to the Corinthians is a letter of spirituality.

And yet Paul uses two chapters, that is about one-sixth of his whole letter on this matter of giving. To Paul giving is a spiritual matter. And not only that but if you read the gospels you will find that our Lord Jesus does not avoid this subject.

If you read the Sermon on the Mount which we all like very much, and there you will find in the Sermon on the Mount our Lord speaks of this matter of money, this matter of finance, this matter of giving, this matter of laying treasure in heaven. Neither our Lord nor the Apostle Paul avoid this subject of giving. Why? Because they have a right attitude towards giving.

And they have a right understanding of giving. So dear brothers and sisters, the Lord has led upon my heart to share with you on this matter of the grace of giving. Giving is a spiritual thing.

It is not just you give something. God does not require you to give anything in that way. But there is a giving which is deeply spiritual.

We often think that if it is spiritual it should be so vague, it should be so abstract, it should be floating in the air, it should never touch your pocket, it should never touch the earth, then it is spiritual. Not so. Anything that is spiritual must be very practical.

If it is spiritual it must be heaven touching the earth. If heaven does not touch earth it is not spiritual at all. So brothers and sisters, let us remember one thing, and that is there is such a thing which is called the grace of giving.

Giving is a grace. The Bible does not connect giving with law. In the Old Testament time you find giving is law.

Why? Because with the children of Israel they have to tithe one tenth of all that God has given to them. They have to tithe every tenth of their sheep and of their herd. They have to tithe all their fruits, all the produce that they produce in the land.

With the children of Israel giving is according to law. If they do not give one tenth according to the law then they violate the law of God. Brothers and sisters, with us today, how often we have a misconception of giving.

We still connect giving with law. Haven't you heard people ask the question, or maybe you are asking the question, whether we should tithe or not? Whether we should give one tenth as the children of Israel did in the old days? Is it not that you hear Christians say, now how much should we give? That is to say, how little can we give, should we give? We are thinking of the minimum of giving. We want to give just enough to meet the requirement of the law and then our conscience can be at peace.

You see, with God's people today, even under the dispensation of grace, our concept of giving is still that old concept of law. What a misunderstanding. And because our understanding of giving is that misconception of law, therefore we do it with fear and trembling.

There is no joy in it. We are under a kind of accusation. We are under a kind of fear and trembling.

We are under a kind of obligation as under the law. Dear brothers and sisters, we misunderstand the whole thing of giving. This is not the giving of the New Testament.

This is not the giving under the gospel, not at all. According to the word of God, you'll find giving today is related to grace. If you read these two chapters, now I hope I can read the whole two chapters with you this afternoon, but it will take so long.

I hope you will read it after you go back. If you read these two chapters on this matter of giving, and remember that these two chapters are listed among the other chapters that deal with spiritual life, spiritual ministry, spiritual warfare, spiritual authority, spiritual man. Now these are the subjects you would like to hear.

But here you'll find this matter of giving is listed among all these other subjects. And if you read these two chapters, you will find that it begins with grace and it concludes with grace. The whole matter of giving begins with grace.

Here you'll find in chapter 8 of 2 Corinthians, that we make known to you, brethren, the grace of God bestowed in the assemblies of Macedonia. The grace of God. And when you come to the end of the ninth chapter, you'll find grace be to God for his unspeakable free gift.

From the very beginning to the very end, it is a matter of grace. So brothers and sisters, before we proceed on, there is one thing I would like very much that this afternoon the Lord will show us that this whole matter of giving is a matter of grace. It is not a matter of law.

The grace of giving. First of all, Paul said, we make known to you, brethren, the grace of God bestowed in the assemblies of Macedonia. Now we know the assemblies of Macedonia.

Why the assemblies of Macedonia? Because Macedonia is a Roman province. And in that province, God has raised up a number of assemblies, a number of churches. For instance, the church at Philippi was in Macedonia.

The church at Thessalonica was in Macedonia. The church in Berea was in Macedonia. So here you'll find, at least in the scripture, we are told that there are a few local assemblies in Macedonia.

Now to the churches of Macedonia, God bestowed upon them his abundant grace. The grace of God bestowed. That is the beginning of everything.

If the grace of God is not bestowed upon you, then there is nothing to begin with. In your whole spiritual life, there is no spiritual life, there is no spiritual ministry, there is no spiritual warfare, there is no spiritual authority, there is no spiritual man, there is no spiritual giving, there is nothing. Everything begins with the grace of God.

When the grace of God comes upon you, then that is the beginning of anything spiritual. Now the grace of God was bestowed upon the assemblies of Macedonia. Now if you go back to the book of Acts, you'll find that how Paul and his companions, how they came to Troas, they were confronted by the agency and they didn't know where to go, and that night a Macedonian appeared to Paul in a dream and said, come over and help us.

So the next morning as Paul shared his dream with his fellow laborers, they realized that it was the Lord who was calling them to cross the agency into Europe. That was the first time the gospel was preached to Europe, a tremendous thing. And after they crossed the agency and came to Europe, the first city that they entered in was Philippi.

And there you'll find how Paul suffered in that city. In bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to that city, how he and Silas were imprisoned. They were beaten, they were put in the dungeon, and how at midnight they sang and they praised the Lord, and how the doors of the prison were all open, and how the jailer and his

household came to the Lord.

The grace of God came to the churches in Macedonia. The grace of God came to the church at Philippi. There was Lydia and her family.

There was that slave girl, demon possessed, set free by the power of the gospel. There was the jailer and his family. They came to Christ, and that was the beginning of the grace of God bestowed upon the church at Philippi.

The grace of God was so great upon that assembly. There was such love in that assembly. Oh, how they loved one another, how they served one another, how they ministered unto Paul, and even after Paul had left them once and twice, they ministered to Paul in material needs.

They sent people to minister to Paul. The grace of God bestowed upon the church, the church at Thessalonica. Again you find when the gospel was preached to Thessalonica, it was under great conflict.

Why, Paul just came out of prison of Macedonia, and then when he came into Thessalonica, there was conflict, spiritual conflict, and you find not only the Jews, but even their own people began to persecute the Christians at Thessalonica. But the grace of God was upon them, and their faith, their love spread abroad in whole Macedonia, and not only in Macedonia, but even in Achaia. The grace, dear brothers and sisters, has the grace of God come upon us.

Thank God it has. Oh, how gracious is our God, how he is gracious to us. He has not only forgiven all our sins, but he has given us his own very life.

How he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. How he has not withheld any good things from us. The grace of God is beyond description.

The grace of God has been bestowed upon us, and because of the grace of God bestowed, what happens? Of course, when the grace of God came upon an assembly or a person, there will be an expression of love, no doubt about that. There will be that expression of faith, no doubt about that. There will be a great abundance of hope, no doubt about that.

There will be joy and rejoicing, no doubt about that. There will be manifestation of spiritual life, there will be the manifestation of spiritual ministry, no doubt about that. But you'll find among all these manifestations of the grace, there is also this manifestation of kidding.

Kidding is one of the manifestations of the grace of God upon these people. So here you'll find in verse 2, that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty has abounded to the riches of their free-hearted liberality. We often think that if people live a life of ease and comfort, then certainly he will have abundance of joy.

Where can you find abundance of joy? In affliction. Here you'll find a great trial of affliction, the abundance of joy. Do you believe that? Our life is too easy, therefore we have no joy.

Everything is so smooth. There is no abundance of joy. But suppose we have some trials.

Suppose we are in affliction. Yes, outwardly we are shedding tears. No, yeah, that's right.

We are shading tears outwardly, but inwardly there is joy, an abundance of joy. Why? Because joy is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Joy is not joking and jesting and laughing every day.

That's not joy. The saddest person in the world is a clown. Joy is the fruit of the Spirit, and oftentimes you'll find in the depths of affliction, the Holy Spirit bears that fruit of joy in our hearts.

Do not try to find joy among people who live in peace, who live in ease, who live in luxury. They have no joy. You'll find joy among those people who are afflicted.

Oh, the joy of the Lord is their strength. And their deep poverty has abounded to the riches of their free-hearted liberality. We will think that surely the rich will give liberally.

Where can you find liberality of heart? No, we are not talking about the amount of money given. No. We are talking about liberality of heart.

Where can you find large heart, a liberal heart, a generous heart? Where can you find it? You'll find it in the depths of poverty. People who are rich do not know what poverty is. People who are rich have no sympathy for it.

They do not understand. But people who are in the depths of poverty, oh, how the Lord enlarged their heart. A liberal heart is found among the poor.

You remember the widow with two mice? When the rich people came into the temple and they dropped money into that offering boxes, you know, according to Jewish tradition, we are told that in the temple, in the court of the women, there were seven boxes standing around and each box is in the shape of a trumpet. That's why the Bible said you blow the trumpet and drop the money, you know, because all these boxes are in the shape of a trumpet. And then the rich people came and dropped their money into that.

And our Lord Jesus was standing by, you know, I don't, I think probably our Lord just glanced sideways and he was there looking at how they dropped the money and the Lord said nothing. One after another came and dropped and he said nothing. But when a widow stole into that place and just hiddenly dropped two mice, he was, he was too shameful to be seen by any.

Two mice is one penny, only one penny. And immediately the Lord said, she has given more than all the rich people because the rich people gave out of their abundance. They gave what was left over.

But this widow gave her. Liberality is found in the depths of poverty. The Macedonian believers, they were persecuted by their fellow man.

Probably some of their possessions were plundered. They were poor. They were reduced to deep poverty.

Yet out of the depth of poverty, the grace of God was so great that they had the grace. Praise God. For according to their power, I bear witness, and beyond their power, they were willing of their own accord, begging of us with much entity to the effect, to the grace and fellowship of the suffering, which of the service, which was to be rendered to.

So first of all, let's see that giving comes from grace. Because it comes from grace, therefore it is spiritual. Giving is never a mechanical thing.

You know, we can give mechanically. We can give without a heart in it. You know, when you're walking on the street and someone is begging for something, and as you go along, in order to get rid of that beggarware out of your pocket, you just put maybe a nickel and throw into his hand.

We can give like that. That is mechanical. God never wants mechanical gifts.

Giving in the scripture is spiritual. It has to be the result of grace. It is not a mechanical thing.

It is not a legal thing. We may give legally, but the Lord keeps it. But only when we give spiritually.

We give as we are touched by the grace of God. Now you remember one day the Lord Jesus said, you scribes and Pharisees, you devour the houses of the widows and you make a pretext of long prayer. Now we are told that during those days, these Pharisees and scribes, after a woman is widowed, widow, they will go to that widow and try to stir up the widow's heart.

Well, if you love God, you should devote your house to God. Give your house to God to show your love to God, you know. And when the house was sold and the proceeds go to the temple, then these scribes and Pharisees, they got something out of it.

Now in order to cover their thing, you know, they try to pray long prayers as if they were very, very pious and religious. And I wonder if this is one of the widows that was devoured by these Pharisees. This widow, her everything was taken away and all that was left with her were two mites.

Was it because of that her heart got bitter, sour, smaller, pressed in? No. You find that even though she was deprived of everything, yet her heart was enlarged under pressure. In pressure, the heart is enlarged.

People can take away her house and all that was left was two mites. And she said, I will not keep the two mites with me. I'll give them willingly from her heart.

That is giving. That is spiritual giving. God does not want mechanical giving.

The Lord is silent to legalistic giving. But the Lord cannot keep quiet when there is spiritual giving out of a liberal heart, a heart that is touched by the grace of number two. Verse four, begging of us with much entity to give effect to the grace and fellowship of the service which was to be rendered to the saints.

You know the word grace in this chapter is used in many different ways. The first time it is used, it is the grace of God. That is to say how God gives graciously, liberally, freely, abundantly everything to us.

The grace of God. But here you'll find the second time the word grace is used, it is connected with fellowship. Grace and fellowship of the service.

The grace and fellowship. Now what is the meaning of the grace here? If you have a David Bible, you'll find David in the footnote explains it. In the footnote, David says the grace here is not the collection, but the grace and favor shown to the poor in the gift.

Instead of Paul having to press this grace on the Macedonians, they beg of him the grace and fellowship of the administration. That is to be the instrument through an apostle of its manifestation by them. The grace and fellowship is the active exercise of grace towards the Jewish saints.

This they beg of Paul. So the grace here is after one has received the grace of God, then the grace of God begins to work in that person and make that person gracious. In other words, the character of God begins to characterize the recipient of God's grace.

Brothers and sisters, our God is the God of grace. And he has been gracious to us. And we have received much grace.

Grace upon grace. But after we have received such grace from God, should not that grace transform us? Should not that grace change our character? Should not that grace make us a bigger man? Should not that grace characterize us to be gracious people? If after we have received the grace of God and we are still ungracious, then we waste the grace of God. Oh, you remember that servant who owed his master so much that it was just impossible to repay.

We do not know how he came to owe his master too much. We only know that we all did. We do not know how, but we all did.

And it was impossible for that servant to pay. So when the master said, all right, if you cannot pay, you and your wife and your children and all that you have must be sold in order to repay. Not that after these were sold, the money was enough.

Not at all. It couldn't be repaid. But when the servant begged for grace, for mercy, oh give me time.

I will pay. Of course he couldn't. But he was just asking for time.

Give me time and I will pay. And the master was filled with and he forgave him. But when he left the house, he met a fellow servant who owed him just a little debt.

And he caught his throat and said, pay. And that servant said, oh give me time. He said, no, pay now or you'll go to jail.

And he, when the thing was known to the master, the master called him back and said, I have forgiven you much. Ought you not forgive your fellow servant. And because he was not gracious, he was cast into jail and will remain there until the last penny.

Brothers and sisters, what is the meaning of that parable? The meaning is, after grace is bestowed upon us, should it not transform us to be gracious? Should we not be characterized by the spirit of grace? Oh brothers and sisters, if we who receive so much grace and yet we are not characterized by grace, who are we? Grace. Oh, if we have received so much grace from the Lord, how can we give back anything? We have to share it in fellowship with those who are in need. And this of course is not just in material things.

This includes everything. Suppose God has been gracious to you and give you an uplifting experience of his grace. Can you hold it back and not share with your brothers and sisters that they too may be uplifted? Of course we should.

If the Lord has given you some words that brings comfort to you, can you just hide it for yourself? Oh no, you have to share it with your brothers and sisters. They too may be comforted. Nothing is given to us just for us.

When the grace of God comes upon us, it makes us gracious people. We want to fellowship. We want to share.

Brothers and sisters, people who are selfish, people who want to keep for themselves, people who do not want to share. We wonder how much of the grace of God is there. We wonder how much of the grace of God is wasted.

The more we share, the more otherwise we will be dead. So here you'll find the second thing is grace shared. Grace and fellowship.

But this matter of fellowship is not just fellowshiping on something, you know, that will not touch our pockets. Oh we like to fellowship something that will never touch our purse. But brothers and sisters, it's all included.

It is all grace. Whether the things we receive, spiritual things, or whether the things we receive, material things, all these are the grace of God. And if they are all the grace of God, then we should have the grace to fellowship with them.

And how do they share? They share not only according to their power, but they share even beyond their power. In other words, they share as much as they can. And even they share beyond their power, that is to say, they share sacrificially.

And how do they share? Oh they do not just share some, when they share, they first give themselves. Therefore we say there is no such thing as mechanical giving. I mean there is such a thing, but it is not in the scripture.

It is not approved by God. Giving is intensely spiritual. Why? Because before there can be giving out of your pocket, there must be first the giving of yourself to God.

God does not need your money. All the cattle on a thousand hills belong to God. If he has any need, he does not need to ask you.

What God needs is that we who are the recipient of his grace, all we need to give ourselves. Brothers and sisters, we are not our own, we are his. We are bought with a price, with the precious blood of our Lord Jesus.

How can we keep ourselves in our own hands? We have no right to do it. We have to give ourselves, oh not just what we have, but what we are. Not the thing, but we ourselves.

If we do not first give ourselves to the Lord, you may give of your things, but there is no spiritual value. Yes, it will help some people, but there is no spiritual value. In giving we must first give ourselves to the Lord.

And after we have given ourselves to the Lord, in the case of the Macedonian believers, then they give themselves to the apostles. Now what does it mean according to God's will? What does it mean? It doesn't mean that they give themselves to the apostle to belong to the apostle. No, they belong to God.

How can you belong to two persons at the same time? You cannot. Brothers and sisters, we belong to God. We have given ourselves to God.

We do not give ourselves to any man, not even an apostle. But they give themselves to the apostles according to the will of God. It means this.

Because the apostle at that time, Apostle Paul, was used by God to think of helping the poor saints in Jerusalem. God gave this idea to Paul. Paul was moved by God to think of the poor saints in Jerusalem.

And he felt led of God to collect funds to help the poor in Jerusalem. So in other words, he was an instrument in God's hand of the will of God. And because he was an instrument of the will of God, therefore those who want to do the will of God, they give themselves to the apostle according to the will of God.

That is to say they cooperate with him. They said, all right, you are doing the will of God, we see it. Therefore we want to have a share.

That is giving themselves to the apostle. So you find here, it is not just doing it mechanically. They know the will of God.

And knowing the will of God, they are willing to cooperate with apostles in this will of God. And then the third thing is, they give the money. Dear brothers and sisters, how do we give? Do we just give, or do we first give ourselves to God, and then seek to know his will? So when we give, it is given according to his will, and even though it is given to the poor, it is given.

And you find the apostle begins to move. First the grace of God, then the grace and fellowship. And then when you come to verse 8-6, you will find disgrace.

The word grace is used in still another way now. First it is the grace of God. God is the God of grace.

And because he is the God of grace, so he is so gracious to us. And he gives so freely and liberally to us, of all things. And because he has given to us, therefore we are touched by his grace, and in turn we become gracious, and we have the grace and fellowship of the service.

Then now you'll find Paul come to disgrace. Now what is disgrace? Now disgrace is this, is the collection. That is disgrace.

So here you see brothers and sisters, giving is grace. It is even called disgrace. Disgrace.

Do not ever connect giving with law. You go back to the Old Testament times. You live in slavery.

You come under bondage. You will be in constant fear and trembling. Oh brothers and sisters, don't go back to that.

Remember that giving is called disgrace. It is grace. Shall we not thank God that he is so gracious to us, that we can have a share in giving? If he does not give to us, if his grace does not come upon us, if his grace does not come upon us overabundantly, we do not even have the privilege of giving.

Isn't that a grace? This whole matter of giving is grace. Disgrace. Oh thank God if he allows us to have a share in this grace.

Oh today you'll find how in Christianity today, old people will try every means. High salesman's talk and pressure and promise and all kinds of things trying to squeeze some money out of your pocket. All this babbling.

Once upon a time there was a very strong man. And he demonstrated his strength by squeezing an orange. He could take an orange in his hand and squeeze it.

And after he had squeezed that orange out of all the Jews, he challenged anybody in the audience to come up and try to squeeze a drop out of it. Nobody could. He was so strong he squeezed every bit of the Jews out of that orange.

He was a strong man. But one day when he was challenging, a little man got up and said, I can. So everybody was surprised.

And this man came to the platform and sure enough he was a little man and yet he took that squeezed orange, shriveled orange in his hand and he squeezed and out came. So the strong man was surprised. Everybody was surprised and asked, who are you? How can you do that? And he said, I'm a deacon of the Baptist church.

But that's a joke of course. Forgive me, I'm not talking, I'm not trying to reflect upon the Baptist church because the story was told by a Baptist minister. You see, this matter of giving is so abused.

You find everywhere in Christianity begging, begging, begging, begging, begging for money, begging for God. Oh, how our God, his faith must be read. Does he want us to do such a thing? How should we give? We beg.

The Macedonians, they beg of Paul. Let us have a party here. Paul said, oh no, no, you are too poor.

You yourself do not have enough. How can you give? But the Macedonians said, no, we want to have a hearing. And they begged Paul and begged Paul until Paul cannot stand it anymore and said, now all right, if you really want to do that, okay, you can do it.

That is giving. Dear brothers and sisters, remember this always. We beg to give.

We never give because we are begged. That is the grace of giving. Number three, verse nine.

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that for your sakes he being rich became poor, in order that ye by his poverty might be. Number one is grace restored. Number two is grace shared.

And number three is grace. Dear brothers and sisters, we need to understand the basic principle of giving. And the basic principle of giving is the grace of our Lord Jesus.

Because everything must go back. The Lord Jesus is our example of giving. He is exemplar of the grace of giving.

You notice, he being rich became poor, for your sake, in order that you by his poverty might be. That lifts the matter of giving to the third. This verse you have to connect with Philippians chapter He being equal with God, it is not something to be grasped at.

And yet he emptied himself of his glory, of his position, of his honor. He emptied himself and he took upon himself the form of a slave. Being in the likeness of man, and he further humbled himself and became obedient to the Father, even unto death.

And that was death. Brothers and sisters, who can be compared with our Lord Jesus in his riches? He being rich. He is the richest person in the whole universe.

He owned the creation. He owned the universe. He owned everything.

Our Lord Jesus is the richest of all. And yet he made himself poor, not only he emptied himself of his glory on the throne, worshiped and served unbeatly. Not only he laid down his honor, his might, his dignity as God.

He was born in a manger. There was no place, no house, not even an inn. He was wrapped with squattering clothes.

He fled to Egypt. No place for him. He came back, reared in Nazareth, that poor, hilly country.

He was called the Nazarene, Jesus of Nazareth. The birds have nested. He had no place.

Can you think of anyone poorer than our Lord Jesus? He who made everything. And yet you ask of a Samaritan woman for a little water and it was not given. He who had everything and yet he was supported by a few women, by a few women.

There was no place for him. He was crucified on the cross. And when he was buried, he was buried in a bar or tomb.

There was not even a burial ground. He who is the richest became the poorest. He being rich that his poverty may end.

You know our Lord Jesus was really poor. Literally poor. Have you ever thought of our Lord Jesus as being a poor man? Poor not only in the sense that he had laid down all his glory and honor and power as God, but poor even in the sense of a man.

He impoverished himself. His poverty becomes our riches. Oh, how true that is.

And brothers and sisters, this is the spirit. He gives until he makes himself poor. He gives until he can give no more.

He not only gives his glory, gives us his glory, he gives us his life. And when he gives up, he gives to. That is the spirit.

That's the reason why giving is called grace. It is the grace of giving. Oh, brothers and sisters, we should always in giving think of our Lord Jesus.

If we think of our Lord Jesus in this matter of giving, then you know we have never given. We never have. May the spirit come upon us that we may have an entirely new concept, that we may see that giving is grace.

Oh, that we may receive more grace. Are you afraid of receiving more grace? Are you afraid to impoverish yourself? If only you can enrich your brethren. That is an understanding that we should have.

I think I will close up just with one more. I have more to say. The fourth thing is grace.

Having received the grace of God, having that spirit of grace within us, seeing Christ as the example of giving, then we lead to number one, verse 10. And I give my opinion in this. And this is profitable for you who began before.

Not only to do, but also to be willing a year ago. But now also complete the doing of it, so that as there was readiness to be willing, so also to complete out of what you have. For if the readiness be there, a man is accepted according to what he may have, not according to what he has.

Number one. When we give, first there should be the readiness and the willingness. Therefore we say giving is not a mechanical thing.

It is a spiritual thing. If anyone has that readiness within him, or that willingness within him, he is accepted. He is accepted.

God accepts our heart more than our mind. So that's the first thing. If it doesn't touch our heart, it cannot touch God.

Brothers and sisters, if giving does not touch your heart, it can never touch God. Our heart must be exercised in this matter of giving. Our heart must be willing.

Our heart must be ready. And if there is that readiness of heart, you are accepted according to what you have, not according to what you do not have. Is there any contradiction between give beyond your power and according to what you have? When you give beyond your power, you still have it, but you deprive yourself of something in order to give.

That is superstition. But it's still according to what you have, not according to what you do not have. Number three.

The principle of equality, or if you like, you may use another word, the principle of balance. And here you'll find verse 14. For it is not in order that there may be ease for others, and for you distress.

No, not at all. It is not a matter of Paul is depriving the Macedonians in order to make these Jewish saints in Jerusalem easier. Not at all.

Not at all. He said, that on the principle of equality, in the present time your abundance for their lack, that their abundance may be for your lack, so that there should be equality. According as it is written, he who gathered much had no excess, and he who gathered little was nothing short.

The principle of equality. Are we not members of one body? If we are members of one body, then you'll find if the Lord should give abundance to one member, it is for the sake of supplying the lack of the other member, and vice versa. Suppose God gave abundance of grace to your hand.

You hold a lot in your hand, but if you hold it tight and will not share it with the body, the body will be starved to death. And when the body is starved, even if you hold it in your hand, you got no nutrition whatsoever. Your hand will be withered too.

If you hold it in your hand and you give it to the body, then you'll find one day when you have nothing in your hand, you are supplied with the overabundance. That is the principle of balance. The principle of do you not understand that today you have abundance is because God wants to use you to supply the lack of somebody.

Do you not understand that earthly things can change overnight? Do you not understand that one day you may be in lack, and that brother or sister at that time, he or she may be abundant, and he can supply. That is the principle, and not only that, of course, Paul said, when you give, you give in a manner that will glorify God and will be honored before man. Not only they give this, they collect these money to supply the needs of the poor in Jerusalem.

It is to glorify God, but because of the abundance of the funds, less anybody will think that Paul got something in his pocket. So you'll find, Paul said, you choose someone to go with us. And the churches sent two whom they can trust to go with Titus and go with Paul, that they may do everything honest before God and honest before man.

That's the way it should be done. That's how it should be practiced. So dear brothers and sisters, without going on further, I hope that you will go back and read these chapters over again, and let the Spirit of God really show you not only the meaning of these two chapters, but the whole giving is the grace of giving this very Spirit.

Giving is to give as Christ. Lord, as we think of thee, how thou being rich, voluntarily became poor for us. The richest became the poorest.

In order that, by thy poverty, we might be as thou, O Lord, ever keep before us. Teach us the grace of giving.

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