**Title: LIVING GENEROUS**

**Passage: 2 Cor 8:1-9**

8 And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. 2 In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. 3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord’s people. 5 And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. 6 So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. 7 But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you[a]—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. 8 I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

**Why:**

Giving can be difficult for Christians >> How to live generous!!! Where its something we do willingly, not reluctantly.

**HOW TO LIVE GENEROUS:**

1. **Giving to others is more about overflow than inflow**

**CHAPTER 8** And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. 2 In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.

* Background: Northern part of Greece Macedonia, raising money to help poor Christians in Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16), Romans had taken Macedonia wealth after conquering
* Macedonians had every reason NOT to give >>> Very severe trial, & extreme poverty
* Overflow of joy more than an inflow of money is what lead to generous living
* Being rich doesn’t make you generous.
* 9:11 **You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion**, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.
* Regardless of what you have CHOOSE to start living generous today

**HOW TO LIVE GENEROUS:**

1. **Giving to others becomes a privilege when you understand the purpose**

3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord’s people.

* Gave in two ways:
  1. Gave as much as they were able >> Gods not asking you to give more than you have
  2. Beyond their ability >> Give in a stretching way
     + Christian giving is estimated in terms not of quantity but of sacrifice.” (Hughes)
* Paul didn't BEG >>> THEY BEGGED >> urgently pleaded (Reverse)
* View giving through 3 lens:
  1. Have to
  2. Ought to
  3. Get to >>> PRIVILEGE
* Privilege = help other Christians out >>> **SERVICE!**
  1. Matt 25:40 - whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, **you did for me**.
  2. Galatians 5:13 You, my brothers and sisters, **were called to be free**. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh ; rather, **serve one another humbly in love**.
  3. **Hebrews 6:10** God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and **the love you have shown him as you have helped his people** and continue to help them.

**HOW TO LIVE GENEROUS:**

1. **Giving to others starts with giving ourselves to the Lord**

5 And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.

* Paul expectations for the gift were exceeded
* The secret to being a generous Christian is first giving yourself to the Lord.
  + Romans 12:1 - Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.
* Giving (ourselves) is an act of worship
* **ILLUST:** Giving baby saint a bath with shower head. Water wasn't flowing that well. Figured out.
  + The toy had to be submerged for the water to flow.
  + **PS:**For our giving to flow we need to be submerged in Christ.
* PS: The more we give ourselves to the Lord, the more we want to give to others.

**HOW TO LIVE GENEROUS:**

1. **Giving to others is part of being a well round Christian**

6 So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. 7 But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you[a]—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

* Growing in maturity & becoming more like Christ >> We change
* Paul is saying you need to be well rounded in your faith. Excelling in all areas.
* **ILLUST:**Guys that go to the gym. Don't skip leg day. Be well rounded.
  + Be well round Christian. Don't skip giving.
* **STRONG** in Faith, speech, knowledge, earnestness, and love >>>> **WEAK**in giving
* Start working out that gift of giving. Start practicing.
  + In the beginning it may be tough, or challenging, but learn to excel. It will become easier.

**HOW TO LIVE GENEROUS:**

1. **Giving to others is a test of our love for others**

8 I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

* ILLUST: My brother and I will compete sometimes. I can beat you at arm wrestling. How much you want to bet?
  + TRANS: I am testing him. Prove it!!!!
* Paul is testing their SINCERITY. How real is your love Corinthians? Paul is saying PROVE IT!
* The true test of love is not feelings, but actions - Pastor
* Testing it by COMPARING >>> Compare to Macedonians giving (others) (NOT THE AMOUNT BUT THE HEART)
* What to know if you have more to grow in giving? COMPARE it to CHRIST GIVING! (**For you know** the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ)
* Christ came down from heaven and gave His life as a sacrifice - JM
* He was rich **FOR YOUR SAKE** became poor >>>> Left the riches of heaven for the poverty of humanity
* Through his poverty we might **become rich**
* Philippians 4:19 >>> And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.
  + Everything we need in Christ on Earth
  + Riches in Heaven
* COMPARED to CHRIST >>> a lot to grow in our giving