

Sermon Outline

"Generosity," What Christmas Creates, Part 4 – 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 – Robin Boisvert – December 12, 2012

I. Introduction

- A. 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 have to do with a collection – a financial gift that Paul is collecting for the impoverished believers in Jerusalem.
- B. The generosity of the Gentile Christians to the Jewish Christians shows that the gospel breaks down racial barriers (Ephesians 2:11-22). It is a generosity that flows from God's Spirit: "if man is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has passed away. Behold, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- C. Generous giving does not necessarily involve money. Money, after all, is a medium of exchange that represents time and energy. Giving time and energy by mowing an elderly person's lawn, for example, is just as much an act of generosity as giving money.
- D. *Generosity is Giving Rooted in the Gospel*

II. Generous giving is sowing (9:6)

- A. Paul says that giving is sowing. He uses a farming metaphor. The idea is that when you sow seed into the ground, you're not really using up that seed, because as any good farmer knows: that seed will eventually produce a harvest of many seeds.
- B. Paul's purpose is to encourage believers to give: sow sparingly, reap sparingly; sow generously, reap generously.

III. Generous giving must be free of constraint (9:7)

- A. There must be real freedom in giving. It should not be coerced through guilt. God wants us to give willingly and cheerfully.
- B. God loves a cheerful giver because God himself is generous (Malachi 3:10, Luke 6:38).

IV. Generous giving is empowered by God (9:8)

- A. God has all power. He is completely capable of supplying help to his people.
- B. God gives us his power so that we would abound in good works.

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V. Generous giving produces an abundant harvest of righteousness (9:9-12)

- A. Paul quotes from Psalm 112 which speaks of the man who distributes generously to the poor. The result is that his righteousness endures forever.
- B. If you are a bountiful sower, you will never have to worry about running out of seed. God will multiply your seed.

VI. Generous giving strengthens the bonds of Christian love (9:13-14)

- A. Generosity of Christian love demonstrates the grace of God. It generates thanksgiving to God and strengthens the bonds between believers.
- B. And at the bottom of it all is the gospel of Christ. You see it explicitly in verse 13. It flows from your confession of the gospel. It is the supreme act of generosity from which all other generosity follows.

VII. Conclusion

- A. There is a strange paradox with giving, with sowing. What you sow you seem to lose, but you end up with more than you had before (John 12:24-25). God the Father generously gave up his Son with the result that untold numbers would enjoy eternity with him. "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!"

Fellowship Starters

1. Take time as a Care Group to read 2 Corinthians 9:6-15.
2. In 2 Corinthians 8-9 Paul is raising support from gentile Christians for impoverished Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. What does this say about the Gospel? What are some implications for our time?
3. What thoughts or fears hinder me from being more generous with others? How does Christ's generosity toward me address those hindrances?
4. What steps can I take to be more radically generous toward others with my money, time, and resources?
5. What three specific ways do I want to grow in Christ-motivated generosity?