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2 Corinthians 8:1-9 *Moreover, brethren, we [Paul and Sosthenes (see 1 Corinthians 1:1)] do you to wit [I want to remind you] of the grace of God bestowed on [given by the Holy Spirit to] the churches of Macedonia; ²How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality [poverty showed itself in their overflowing generosity]. ³For to their power, I bear record, yea, and [I testify to you of their attitudes, and even] beyond their power they were willing of themselves; ⁴Praying us with much entreaty [They begged us again and again] that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. ⁵And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. ⁶Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also. ⁷Therefore, as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. ⁸I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love. ⁹For 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.*

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I. Introduction

A. Gospel is God's expression of love

1. God's grace is good & perfect

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

2. Cannot separate love from giving

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

3. Gospel's saving power is Christian new birth

B. Gospel flows through God's people

1. Christian shows God's grace by freely sharing

2 Corinthians 9:15 Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.

2. Gospel's serving power shown during Christian lifetime

C. Showing service of giving

1. Valentine weekend time to show love by giving sentimental gift

2. Gospel produces grace, love, & sacrifice in Christian life

II. Grace of the Gospel (verse 7)

A. God's grace

1. Letter written to Corinthian church for special gift
2. Grace of gospel salvation freely given by God

Ephesians 2:8-9 ⁸ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast.

3. Growing in God's grace

- a. Grow in both God's grace & knowledge

2 Peter 3:18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.

- b. Christian growing to become like Christ daily

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

- c. Christian experience similar to seeing in a dark mirror

1 Corinthians 13.12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

B. Produces Generosity

1. Growing in grace produces generosity
2. Example of Macedonian churches (verses 1-6)
 - a. Churches in northern Greece
 - b. Very poor people
 - c. They gave freely even in poverty for gift to Jerusalem church
 - d. They gave out of the abundance of their joy
 - e. They gave with liberality

3. God does not fail His people

Psalm 37:25 I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

4. Many reasons for people to give to charity
5. But Christian giving based on God's grace
6. God's equation: Affliction + Poverty + Grace = Liberality

C. Produces Willing Spirit

1. Example of Macedonian churches & their willing heart
 - a. They first gave themselves to the Lord
 - b. They gave beyond their means of living
 - c. Corinthian church many times wealthier than Macedonian churches
2. Similar to widow's experience in her offering to God
 - a. Poor widow's mites (copper coins similar to pennies)
 - b. She gave all that she had with nothing left over
 - c. Contrasted to many rich people

Mark 12:44 For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

III. Love of the Gospel (verse 8)

A. Love Provides

1. Love central theme in God's gospel
2. God's love provides:
 - a. Meeting needs of other people who unable to take care of themselves
 - b. God saw human need from sin
- c. Jesus offers kingdom of God to those who trust coming like a little child

Isaiah 64:6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

Matthew 18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

3. Paul asks Corinthians rather than commands them

4. Learn from the example of the Philippian church in Macedonia
 - a. They sent gifts to Paul twice for his necessities

Philippians 4:15-18 ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. ¹⁷Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. ¹⁸But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.

- b. Epaphroditus brought the gifts to Paul
- c. Their actions created spiritual fruit on their account in heaven's books

B. Love Proves

1. Paul asks Corinthians to show the sincerity of their love
2. Where God guides, God provides

James 4:6-7 ⁶ But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. ⁷ Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

3. Paul boasted of the Corinthian church

2 Corinthians 8:24 Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.

IV. Sacrifice of the Gospel (verse 9)

A. Focus on Christ Himself

1. Jesus became poor for our sakes
2. He even died a criminal death on the cross
3. Jesus purpose for His life

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

4. Jesus sacrificed His life for the gospel
5. Christian love based on Jesus love
6. Christian life makes no sense without Jesus

B. Focus on Christ's Sacrifice

1. Jesus lived in the riches of heaven before birth in Bethlehem

2. Jesus became flesh and lived among humans in poverty
John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.
3. Jesus finished His work when He died on the cross
John 19:30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.
4. Jesus came as human substitute in payment of sins
2 Corinthians 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.
5. Jesus took the death meant for me
John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.
6. Living as human, Jesus became merciful & faithful high priest
Hebrews 2:17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.
7. God has raised up Christian to sit in heavenly places with Jesus
Ephesians 2:6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

V. Conclusion

- A. Corinthians desired to do offering one year before
- B. Paul asked Corinthians to complete their offering “today”
- C. Not everything can be done in one day
- D. Some things must be completed over weeks or months
- E. Christian is rich in Christ
 1. Jesus personally lives in heaven now
 2. Christian has future treasures in heaven