



# SECOND CORINTHIANS

*The Comfort of God FOR and THROUGH His People*



Part 29—“Christian Charity & the Gospel”— 9 June 2024

## Introduction: Tithing & Grace-Based Giving

- In the OT there are examples of (Gen. 14:20; 28:22) and commands regarding (Lev. 27:30; Num. 18:26) the “tithing” or a giving of a tenth of one’s wealth to the Lord. In the NT, although there are examples of (Acts 2:44-45) and exhortations to give freely to others (Rom. 12:8; 2 Cor. 9:7), the tithing command is never repeated.

“[Giving for NT believers] was not by commandment, nor of necessity. Under the law, a tenth was *commanded* and its payment was a *necessity*; under grace, God is not seeking the gift, but an expression of devotion from the giver. Under grace no law is imposed, and no proportion to be given is stipulated; and, while it is true that God works in the yielded heart both to will and to do His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13), He finds pleasure only in that gift which is given cheerfully...” —Chafer & Walvoord, *Major Biblical Themes*

**Main Point:** The message of the Gospel informs our understanding of Christian \_\_\_\_\_ because the Lord Jesus is the ultimate example of sacrificial giving motivated by love.

## The Situation in Jerusalem

- Jerusalem had been the epicenter of the early church and continued to have an importance influence on matters of the faith.
  - ⇒ The experience of the early church in Jerusalem set the example for Christian \_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 2:44-46)
  - ⇒ Paul and Barnabas were sent from the church in Antioch at some point between AD 48-50 because of the controversy over circumcision and the relationship of Gentile believers to the Mosaic Law (Acts 15:1-5).
 

“[Here] Paul was recognized as the apostle to the Gentiles. He was encouraged by the Jerusalem leaders to continue in his effort to reach the Gentiles for Christ. Even more significantly, the basis for Gentile acceptance was established. Paul’s principle of “faith in Christ alone” was acknowledged. Gentiles would be required neither to be circumcised nor to live by the Torah.” —John Polhill, *Paul & His Letters*
- The church in Jerusalem had was experiencing \_\_\_\_\_ hardship as a result of both persecution and famine.
 

“...the loss of inheritance and family rights could lead to hopelessness...their new life as Christians affected their social status...[and] may even have jeopardized their inheritance as members of...Jewish families...” —Karen Jobes, *1 Peter*

“A series of severe droughts hit the [region] in AD 46, which caused the harvests of Syria and Judea...to fail...But the [region] did not suffer just one year of drought, nor just one year of famine. According to Suetonius, a whole series of droughts that spanned many years ‘caused a scarcity of grain’ for the entire empire, including Judea.” —Daryn Graham, *The Genesis of the Jerusalem Donation*

## 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

### Exposition

- I. Paul’s challenged the Corinthians in their giving with the example of the \_\_\_\_\_.

*“the grace of God”*

⇒ ‘Grace’ here is to be identified with ‘\_\_\_\_\_’ which Paul understands to itself be a gift of God.

⇒ Paul describes their giving using a series of contrasts:

*“a severe test of affliction” — “abundance of joy”*

*“extreme poverty” — “a wealth of generosity”*

2. The Macedonians had been \_\_\_\_\_ by God to give more than Paul had anticipated.

*“of their own accord”*

(1) *They gave what could reasonably be \_\_\_\_\_.*      (2) *They gave \_\_\_\_\_ this as well.*

⇒ The churches had desired to take part in the “relief” of the saints because of their love for the \_\_\_\_\_ and His \_\_\_\_\_.

*“gave themselves...to the Lord...and then...to us”*

**Key Point:** Sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ God’s work through others serves to encourage and assure us that He can also work through us.

3. Their benefits because of the ultimate ‘act of grace’ should \_\_\_\_\_ the Corinthians to participate with God in this ‘act of grace’ that He would accomplish among them.

*“you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness”*

- ⇒ Because these things were true of them, it was certainly possible for them to show their generosity and \_\_\_\_\_ for God’s servants and their brothers and sisters.

*“For you know the grace of the Lord Jesus”*

- ⇒ Paul calls them to reflect upon the truths of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord Jesus as they consider the opportunity to give selflessly towards the work of God.

**The Incarnation** (Phil. 2:5-9)

(1) *Christ was ‘rich’ in that He had always been recognized as who He truly was:* \_\_\_\_\_

(2) *He became ‘poor’ by taking on human \_\_\_\_\_ and being born into our world.*

(3) *The ultimate purpose of His incarnation (‘poverty’) was that He might \_\_\_\_\_ in the place of sinners and \_\_\_\_\_ again.*

(4) *By this, those who \_\_\_\_\_ in Him may become ‘rich’ through the salvation found in Him.*

“Just as Jesus’ poverty is not to be understood in terms of desperate need, so too the riches which he came to make available to believers are not to be understood in terms of material prosperity. It is salvation itself and the blessings accompanying it that constitute the riches which Christ by his ‘poverty’ enabled believers to enjoy.” —Colin Kruse

**Key Point:** Believers should continually reflect upon the person and work of Christ and of the the \_\_\_\_\_ that are ours as a result.

4. ‘\_\_\_\_\_’ rather than compulsion should prompt them to complete the collection as they had previously intended.

- ⇒ The Corinthians had the means by which to give and had already expressed a \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in the collection and now Paul exhorted them to do what their hearts had already been prompted to do.

“As the thriving capital of Achaia, Corinth was far more wealthy than the Macedonian cities, and the congregation had some members who were relatively well off. Paul does not mention anything about their poverty, so we can assume that they were not in the same financial straits as the Macedonians.” —David Garland

*“as he started, so he should complete among you this act of grace”*

*“this benefits you, who a year ago started...to do this work”*

- ⇒ Paul laid out certain principles for giving according to God’s grace:

(1) There is a place for \_\_\_\_\_ believers who express a desire to give to act in accord with that desire. (8:11)

(2) It is to be according to what one \_\_\_\_\_, not what he does not have. (8:12)

(3) It should be done in \_\_\_\_\_ of how God has blessed the one who gives. (8:13)

- ⇒ He ended his exhortation with a quote from the OT that assured them of God’s ongoing \_\_\_\_\_.

Exod. 16:18—But when they measured it with an omer, whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack. Each of them gathered as much as he could eat.

**Key Point:** Our willingness to give sacrificially of what we have is a tangible expression of our trust in God’s \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to provide for us.

### Concluding Thoughts

- What blessings are \_\_\_\_\_ because of the person and work of Christ?
- \_\_\_\_\_ and to \_\_\_\_\_ would God have me to give of the material blessings that He has provided to me?