

Tapes
Emerald Bay
New Years

THE GREATEST GIVER

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

Hide-away: "I don't care who you are fat man. Get those reindeer off my roof..."

INTRODUCTION

Christmas time is the time when kids and money both sprout wings.

Incidentally, Santa Claus won't be making the rounds this year. He's still down at the Internal Revenue Service trying to explain the six billion dollars he put down for gifts last year.

This is the letter of explanation he wrote:

I'm sending this note to advise you that taxes have taken away the things I find most essential. My reindeer, my workshop, my sleigh. Now I'm making my rounds on a donkey. He's old and crippled and slow, so you'll know if I don't see you Christmas, I'm out on my fanny in the snow.

Mark told me the other day Christmas in Los Angeles is always interesting. You usually see the carolers dressed in bermuda shorts groping their way through the smog singing "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear."

Christmas cards, you've got to send one to everybody and if you miss someone, you'll never live it down. Personally, I've licked so many flaps I even burp sticky.

Christmas is also the time for giving and there are presents galore. I just bought a perfect Christmas present for my dentist, a leaky ant farm.

One of my friends said that his wife hadn't spoken to him since Labor Day, so he figured that the least he could do was buy her a little Christmas present to show his appreciation.

It is really fascinating the new toys they've got now for Christmas. One is called a neurotic doll. It's wound up already.

One clerk said, "Here's a doll for you. It drinks, it wets and it cries." I said, "I'm not surprised."

Christmas is not only a time of cards and giving, it's also a time of greetings. One guy said, "Merry Christmas to the Christians, Happy Hanukkah to the Jews, and good luck to Madelyn Murray O'Hair."

One of the cutest stories that I heard this year came from a group of first graders who were told to draw a picture representing Christmas. There were pictures of Santa Clauses, Christmas trees, presents and all of the other things that we relate with the Christmas season. One little fellow had drawn a picture of a Nativity scene. He had Mary, and Joseph and the shepherds coming to kneel at the stable and several of the animals standing around. Off to one side, however, he had drawn a picture of a little fat man. As the teacher looked over the would be artist's work, she noticed the little fat man off to the side and asked the question, "Who is he?" And the response of the child was, "Oh, he is round John Burgeon."

My very favorite Christmas story has to do with three Aggies that went to a Christmas party and they were to come dressed up at the party for something which depicted the Christmas season. They came decked out in their yellow fireman's slickers with John Hancock red hats on. Someone quizzed them as to why they came dressed that way. Their simple reply was, "We are three wise men coming from a fire."

INTRODUCTION TO PASSAGE

Last week we studied together Mark 10:35-45. We learned that the two keys to greatness:

1. being a servant

2. being a giver

Fulfilling our function we will
Always get A response rather than
A reaction !!

Being servants and being stewards.

Since Christmas is a time of giving, I thought it would be good for us to consider one of the greatest passages on the subject of giving in 2 Corinthians 9:6-15.

TEXT

- v. 6 Now this I am saying, He who is sowing sparingly shall also reap sparingly and he who is sowing bountifully shall also reap bountifully.
- v. 7 Let each one give just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion for God is loving a cheerful giver.
- v. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you in order that having always enough of everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed.
- v. 9 Even as it stands written, He scattered abroad, He gave to those who are poor, His righteousness is abiding forever.
- v.10 Now He who is supplying seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.
- v.11 You, being enriched in everything for all generosity which through us is producing thanksgiving to God.
- v.12 Because the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints but also is overflowing through many thanksgivings to God,
- v.13 because of the approved character of your service, they are glorifying God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and the generosity of your contribution to them and to all,
- v.14 While they also with petitions on your behalf are longing for you because of the extraordinary grace of God in you.
- v.15 Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift.

CONTEXT

The apostle Paul begins his exposition on the business of giving in Chapter 8. He starts first of all with the example of the poor Macedonians who beyond their ability gave of their own accord, begging with much entreaty for the favor of participation in the support of the saints.

He then uses a second illustration of someone who was rich and who became poor, v. 9 of chapter 8.

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake, He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."

Critical
Physical +
Financial
Needs in
Jerusalem.

300
p 99

As we come into Chapter 9, I want us to notice five things in 2 Corinthians 9:6-15.

OUTLINE OF THE PASSAGE

I. The principle of giving, verses 6-8.

A. Giving is productive, verse 6

B. Giving is personal, verse 7

C. Giving is prospered, verse 8

II. The promise of giving, verses 9 & 10

A. From Scripture, verse 9

B. From God, verse 10

III. The provision of giving, verses 11-13

A. For givers, verse 11

B. For receivers, verse 12

C. For God, verse 13

IV. The potential of giving, verse 14

V. The picture of giving, verse 15

The gospel of Jesus Christ is founded on the principle of giving and its spirit is giving. The subjects of buying and selling are unknown in the spiritual realm.

Under the law, you have a payment, but under the gospel of grace, everything is a gift.

God gives us Jesus, God gives us eternal life, God gives us grace and glory, God gives us everything, in fact.

The mark of a heart that has been touched by the grace of God counts giving as a privilege. The key to a giving heart is to give ourselves first to the Lord. Once you have given yourself, it is easy to give anything else. Giving is a manifestation of a heart that has been touched by the love and grace of God.

Freely you have received, freely give. The apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:14 that the love of Christ motivates us. Nothing can move a man more to a commitment than the awareness that he is loved.

Sacrifice is the sheer ecstasy of giving what we have to the one we love the most.

2 Corinthians 8:1-5 "Now brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. For I testify that according to their ability and beyond their ability they gave of their own accord begging us with much entreaty for the favor of participation in the support of the saints. And this not as we had expected but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God."

I. THE PRINCIPLE OF GIVING, verses 6-8

We're going to have:

the principle stated in verse 6

the command given in verse 7

God's response in verse 8

A. Giving is productive, verse 6

"Now this I am saying, 'He who is sowing sparingly shall also reap sparingly and he who is sowing bountifully shall also reap bountifully.'"

The scene of our passage opens in the garden. Giving is likened to sowing of seed which will produce a harvest.

What you put in, you get back. Your return is equal to your investment.

Giving is sowing in verse 6 and reaping is the result of the giving.

John 12:24 "Truly, truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone, but if it dies it bears much fruit."

Isaiah 55:10 & 11 "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be which goes forth from my mouth. It shall not return to me empty without accomplishing what I desire and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it."

Matthew 13:1-9 "On that day Jesus went out of the house and was sitting by the sea and great multitudes gathered about Him so that He got into a boat and sat down and the whole multitude was standing on the beach and He spoke many things to them in parables saying, 'Behold the sower went out to sow and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road and the birds came and devoured them. And others fell upon the rocky places where they did not have much soil and immediately, they sprang up because they had no depth of soil, but when the sun had risen, they were scorched and because they had no root, they withered away. And others fell among the thorns and the thorns came up and choked them out. And others fell on the good soil and yielded a crop, some a hundred fold, some sixty and some thirty. He who has ears let him hear.'

John 4:35-38 "Do not say there are yet four months and then comes the harvest, behold I say to you, 'Lift up your eyes and look on the fields that they are white for harvest. Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this case, the saying is true, one sows and another reaps. I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored, others have labored and you have entered into their labor.'

Galatians 6:7-9 "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked for whatever a man sows this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption. The one who sows to the spirit shall from

the spirit reap eternal life. And let us not lose heart in doing good for in due time, we shall reap if we do not grow weary."

In verse 6, a choice is given. We can sow a little and reap a little or we can sow a lot and reap a lot.

Jeremiah 8:20 "Harvest is past, summer is ended and we are not saved."

The law of the harvest then is: to sow sparingly is to reap sparingly and to sow bountifully is to reap bountifully.

Giving is a process that will return something to you as well.

Proverbs 19:17 "He who is gracious to a poor man lends to the Lord and He will repay him for his good deed."

Giving then, is not a contribution, it is an investment. Giving is not a means of distributing charity but rather of developing character.

Proverbs 11:24 & 25 "There is one who scatters, yet increases all the more and there is one who withholds what is justly due but it results only in want. The generous man will be prosperous and he who waters will himself be watered."

Luke 6:38 "Give and it will be given to you. Good measure pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap for whatever measure you deal out to others it will be dealt to you in return."

God delights in what flows liberally from a loving heart.

God is a God of the showers of harvest riches.

Psalm 126:5 & 6 "Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting. He who goes to and fro weeping, carrying his bag of seed shall indeed come again with a shout of joy bringing his sheaves with him."

In the statement of the principle of giving in these first three verses we have seen that giving is productive according to verse 6.

B. Giving is personal, verse 7

"Let each one give just as he has purposed in his heart not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God is loving a cheerful giver."

Whereas, we have the PRINCIPLE stated in verse 6, we have the COMMAND given now in verse 7. We're going to learn that giving is a private matter. It is also an investment.

The principle has stated that we can sow sparingly and reap sparingly or sow bountifully and reap bountifully. Now each one has to purpose in his heart whether he is going to do it sparingly or bountifully and this is each individual's business to take care of this matter.

The sowing in verse 6 is the giving in verse 7.

It is each man just as he has determined in his heart.

One has to be impressed with the freedom that there is in the grace of God. When it comes to the private matter of questionable areas of conduct the apostle in Romans 14:5 tells us to let each be fully persuaded in his own mind. And here, the apostle when it comes to the matter of giving says that we are to purpose in our heart how big we want our garden to be, whether it's going to be big or little, We can give however we want to.

Whereas on the positive side he is telling us to give as we have purposed in our hearts, on the negative side he warns us:

1. it's not grudgingly
2. not under compulsion

And then the reason is stated, "for God is loving a cheerful giver."

God is interested less in how much you give and more in why you give.

God is concerned about motives. Some give because they're afraid of dying. Some give because they know they're going to have to face the record at the judgment seat of Christ and their giving is not to help the cause of God. They have no more use for the work of God than a hog has for hip pockets.

The only true motive for giving is the grace of God, the goodness of God to you. If God has not done anything for you, then for goodness sakes, do not give Him a dime. But if He has, then pour it out according to the measure you have received.

When we consider the words 'grudgingly' or 'of necessity', God does not want one penny from you if you would rather keep it for yourself. There are many who would give of necessity because they would be embarrassed of what others would think if they did not give. This is not a foundation for giving.

You will notice that tithing has nothing to do with the New Testament pattern for giving stated in this command. Jesus only spoke of tithing in a derogatory way during His ministry. The apostle Paul, being a Jew, had every opportunity to speak and enlist in this regard and did not do so. There is only one mention of it in Hebrews 7 and it is in a historical context.

So many give grudgingly and under compulsion or of necessity, simply because they have been taught that they are under the burden of the tithe.

Each one positively is to give as he has purposed in his heart. Negatively, not grudgingly or under compulsion. And then the reason is given, "For God is loving a cheerful giver." You will notice that this is something which pleases the Father. The attitude is important to the Lord.

For it is a joyful giver that God loves.

Robert Lewis Stevenson's native servants loved him much. Each day his boy servant would awaken him with tea. On one occasion, his servant was off duty and another boy not only brought tea but a beautifully cooked omelet.

The response of Robert Lewis Stevenson was "Great is your forethought." And the servant's reply was, "No master, great is my love."

God's kind of love produced in the heart of the child of God gives and gives and gives.

The word for cheerful here in verse 7 is the word for hilarious, gladly, happily, thankfully, with exuberance.

Luke 2:10 & 11 "And the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for behold I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people. For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Saviour who is Christ the Lord.'"

John 15:11 "These things I have spoken to you that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full."

Song of Solomon 2:4 "He has brought me to his banquet hall and his banner over me is love."

In Acts 5, Ananias and Sapphira are impressed with the fact that the believers in the early church are giving much to the Lord. In a grudging and necessary way to be noticed, they entered upon a plan to sell a piece of property and then to keep back some of the price for themselves. This of course, cost both of them their lives as they had lied to the Holy Spirit.

What are some of the things that we can give? There at least four things that come to my mind.

the challenge

BOX 580
COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO 80901

... a biweekly letter from the heart of a man to men

September 15, 1984

Dear Friend,

LESSONS FROM THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT SUCCESSFUL LIVING BOTH HAPPY AND RADICAL

MY VERSE: "...you cannot serve God and the power of money" Matthew 6:19-24.

MY COMMITMENT: The treasure I seek is determined by the master I choose to serve.

MY MEDITATION: Pussy cat, pussy cat, where are you going? "I'm going to London to see the Queen." Pussy cat, pussy cat, what did you see there? "I saw a mouse under her chair!"

She didn't see London, nor the Queen, nor the throne. Cats see what they are looking for...mice.

What your eyes see is what your heart wants. We want clout. We want all the "gusto" we can get. We are pumping all the adrenalin we can in order to stimulate success...security...investments and the power of money.

The decision isn't between God and Satan...that's a theological choice. The decision isn't between God and self...that's a psychological choice. The decision isn't between God and education...that's an academic choice.

My choice...God or gold? "Their orders are diametrically opposite. The one commands you to walk by faith, the other to walk by sight; the one to be humble, the other to be proud; the one looks at the eternal, the other at the temporal; God would have you be careful about nothing, whereas gold would have you be all anxious. God says be content, the other demands that you enlarge your desires. One says look upon others, the others say to seek your own happiness. You cannot serve God and the power of money."

Choose your investments carefully and examine your securities continually. Clothing? The moths will eat them up. Cadillac? Rust will erode it away. Cash? Thieves will steal you blind!

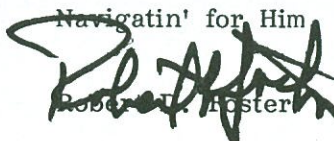
"Those are things which make it difficult to die."

No man can be a bondsman to two owners. The word for money is the Hebrew for material possessions...mamon. "That which you entrust to your banker for safe keeping." As the years rolled by, mamon got an extra "m"...mammon and became that in which a man puts his trust. It has ended up in the 20th Century being spelled with a capital "M"...Mammon.

Ron Blue puts his finger right on the heart of the issue: "If an independent observer were to look at your checkbook would he conclude that God was your Master? 'How much is enough?' is a tough question to answer...but it must be answered. In answering it, never forget, 'God owns it all!'"

MY PRAYER: "Oh God, give me neither poverty nor riches! Give me just enough to satisfy my needs. For if I grow rich, I may become content without God, and if I am too poor, I may steal, and thus insult God's Holy Name. Amen." Agur's prayer in Proverbs 30:8,9.

Navigatin' for Him


Robert D. Foster

1. our time
2. our talents
3. our money
4. our teaching of the Word of God.

Our giving is to be cheerful. That is, light hearted, joyful and happy. This is what God loves.

Whereas in the statement of the principle of giving, we have seen:

in verse 6 that giving is productive and

in verse 7 that giving is personal;

we now come to a consideration of:

C. Giving is prospered, verse 8

"And God is able to make all grace abound to you in order that having always enough of everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed."

We have learned in verse 7 that God is loving a cheerful giver and now in verse 8 we are going to learn what He is able to do.

"He is able to make all grace abound to you" and the purpose behind this is "in order that having always enough of everything you may have an abundance for every good deed."

The Lord is able to supply what you need to give.

In the parable of the talents, the one who had five gained five more and the one who had two gained two more. But the one who kept the one and buried it had to in the end surrender that one to the one who had acquired the ten.

Over and over again in the life Joseph in Genesis 39 and following we read this statement, "Now his master saw that the Lord was with him and how the Lord caused all that he did to prosper in his hand."

The Lord was with him and whatever he did the Lord made to prosper.

Joshua 1:8 "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth but you shall meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it, for then you will make your way prosperous and then you will have good success."

Philippians 4:19 "And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

Colossians 3:23 "Whatever you do, do your work heartily as for the Lord rather than for men."

Ephesians 3:20 "Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works within us."

My parents always plant quite a large garden in the Northwest during the spring and summer. There are potatoes, peas, green beans, carrots, corn and all kinds of different vegetables. It is an amazing thing that every year they have a surplus and they are giving, giving, giving as much of the produce begins to ripen.

As God is able to prosper the garden, so He is able also to prosper the sowing of your seed in giving.

The Father's response to our obedience in heeding the principle of sowing bountifully and of giving in a personal way, we find that His response is:

1. He loves a cheerful giver
2. He makes His grace abound

In verse 8, we have the Father's relationship to the giving process.

If we let the seed fulfill its appointed process, the farmer will have it back and much more besides. That is what God has designed.

When you take the loaf of bread in your hand, you've got to think about the flour, the mill and the wheat, and ultimately, the rain and the Father's will and the miracle of taking the seed and bringing it to harvest.

What is scattered freely by a heart which trusts in God, He renders back with overflowing increase.

We possess that we may pass it on.

God is providing the grace^{+H2} provides the desire and the means to be generous. The man with the bountiful heart finds that God supplies him with something to bestow.

Stedman tells the following story in his exposition on 2 Corinthians 9:8: "A friend of mine received a letter. In the letter he read, 'You can't outgive God. We have figured it out, therefore if you and everybody else who hears our program will send us \$67, we'll have all the money that we need and God will give it back to you five times over.' Stedman's friend wrote back to the financial plea and said, 'I believe that. I believe you can't outgive God. You give me the \$67 and God will give it back to you five times over, then you'll get the bigger amount.' For some reason they took him off the mailing list."

Romans 8:32 "He who did not spare His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things."

Paul insists that God can give a man both the substance to give and the spirit in which to give it. The man who has had his life directed not in amassing possessions but in eliminating needs.

It never was loving that emptied a heart or giving that emptied a purse.

John Bunyan in Pilgrim's Progress says,

"A man there was though some did count him mad,
The more he cast away, the more he had."

Grace equals all the blessings that come to our lives undeservedly from God through Jesus Christ; a kindness and overflowing disposition in the heart of God; love that is demonstrated and displayed in action.

You will notice that grace is in the singular because it's wrapped up in a person. God's hands are nail pierced and they are wide open.

There is never one package of affliction that can come into the life of any of His children but that when you unwrap it, you will discover sufficient grace.

Hebrews 4:16 "Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace that we may attain mercy and may find grace to help in time of need."

Whereas in verse 8 we have WHAT GOD IS ABLE TO DO (speaking of His ability),
in verse 10 we have WHAT HE WILL DO.

God is ready and able to make all grace abound. But we must first storm the secret place and seek His face, to find that grace available so that we might abound in every good deed.

We have considered THE PRINCIPLE OF GIVING in verses 6-8:

we have learned that GIVING IS PRODUCTIVE - verse 6

GIVING IS PERSONAL in verse 7

GIVING IS PROSPERED in verse 8.

We turn now to --

II. THE PROMISE OF GIVING - verses 9,10

A. FROM SCRIPTURE - verse 9

"Even as it stands written, He scattered abroad; He gave to those who are poor: His righteousness is abiding forever."

Here the apostle now brings the Scriptures into his argument. He is using this to show that the harvest of righteousness will last forever.

This is a scriptural illustration of how God works.

Psalm 112:3,9 "Wealth and riches are in his house; and his righteousness endures forever....He has given freely to the poor; his righteousness endures forever; his horn will be exalted in honor."

Righteousness leads to prosperity and

Prosperity promotes alms-giving.

Matthew 6:1,2 "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. When, therefore, you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full."

B. FROM GOD - verse 10

"Now he who is supplying seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness."

Whereas we have THE PROMISE OF GIVING FROM SCRIPTURE in v.9,

we have THE PROMISE OF GIVING FROM GOD in v.10.

Whereas we have WHAT GOD IS ABLE TO DO in v. 8,

we now have WHAT HE WILL DO in v.10.

There are three things that we see here that he will do:

1. He will supply your seed.
2. He will multiply your seed.
3. He will increase the harvest of your righteousness.

He will give you more seed to sow in order that you might increase your harvest of righteousness.

We see this process graphically demonstrated in the FEEDING OF THE 5,000 in John 6:

When Andrew finds a little lad with a lunch of five loaves and a couple of fish, he gives this to the Lord. And in the account, the Lord takes what he has and feeds the multitude. *He Then gives them 12 baskets Full left over!!*

Someone asked DR DONALD GREY BARNHOUSE in a question and answer session following one of his messages:

"Dr. Barnhouse, What explanation do you give for the fact that almost two million people could live in a total desert for 40 years? How do you explain that kind of a thing?" Dr. Barnhouse's answer was, "Only one word, Sir. GOD."

Today is our 10th Anniversary for the Ministries - Dec. 19th 1972. The Charter + By-Laws were filed w/ the state of Texas. 2,000 Bible Classes; 400,000 mi.; Tapes; Churches; Israel

Hosea 10:12 "Sow with a view to righteousness; reap in accordance with kindness. Break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord, until He comes to rain righteousness on you."

"Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto Me."

"Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit."

This brings us now to:

III. THE PROVISION OF GIVING - verses 11-13

We have considered THE PRINCIPLE OF GIVING - vv. 6-8

THE PROMISE OF GIVING in vv. 9,10

now: THE PROVISION OF GIVING Verses 11-13

A. FOR GIVERS - verse 11

"You, being enriched in everything for all generosity, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God."

The one who is involved in obedience as far as giving is concerned will himself be enriched for all of his generosity. And it is also producing thanksgiving to God.

In other words, THE GIVER IS BLESSED.

GIVING and GRATITUDE are a proper CAUSE AND EFFECT.

B. FOR RECEIVERS - verse 12

"Because the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but also is overflowing through many thanksgivings to God."

We have learned that the benefit to the giver is that he is enriched, which results in thanksgiving to God.

And for the receiver--his needs are being supplied, and that is overflowing also in thanksgiving to God.

The apostle tells us that the ministry of giving, negatively, not only fully supplies the needs of the poor saints in the land of Judea; but by contrast from a positive point of view, it is overflowing through many thanksgivings to God.

C. FOR GOD, verse 13

Because of the approved character of your service, they are glorifying God for your obedience to your confession to the gospel of Christ and the generosity of your contribution to them and to all.

God is glorified because:

1. The approved character of your service or giving
2. Your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ.
3. The generosity of your contribution to them and to all.

Herein is my Father glorified that you bear much fruit.

IV. THE POTENTIAL OF GIVING, verse 14

"While they also, with petitions on your behalf are longing for you because of the extraordinary grace of God in you."

Here we have the twofold potential in the response of the receivers:

1. They pray for the givers, these Gentile Christians in Europe who have shared generously to meet their needs.
2. They are longing for some fellowship with these folks because of the grace of God that has manifested itself in them through the approved character of their service through their obedience to the confession of the gospel and the generosity of their contribution.

They are praying for them and they personally want to be with them.

V. THE PICTURE OF GIVING, verse 15

"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift."

God is a giver too. You just cannot outgive God.

Whereas we have seen the PRINCIPLE OF GIVING in verses 6-8,
the PROMISE OF GIVING in verses 9-10,
THE PROVISION OF GIVING in verses 11-13,
THE POTENTIAL OF GIVING in verse 14,
the passage concludes with this graphic PICTURE OF GIVING
in the gift of God the Father in the person of the Lord
Jesus Christ.

Throughout eternity, we will never get over the fact that
God indeed is the greatest of all givers.

The Son is just like His Father, though He was rich, yet
for our sakes He became poor that we through His poverty
might be made rich.

Mark 10:45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be
served but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many.

Yes, indeed the gift of God was a giver too.

Philippians 2:6ff "Who although He existed in the form of
God did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped
but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant and
being made in the likeness of men and being found in
appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming
obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

William R. Newell wrote the hymn "At Calvary".

Oh, the love that drew salvation's plan
Oh, the grace that brought it down to man
Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span
At Calvary.

In this verse, we have the source and inspiration of all Christian benevolence.

John 15:13 "Greater love has no one than this, than one lay down his life for his friends."

There have been those who have felt that the unspeakable gift refers to the fact that Gentile Christians in Europe are making provisions for these Jewish Christians in the Jerusalem area and that is the unspeakable gift.

This, however, was the greatest of all gifts. Beyond this there can be no other.

The apostle Paul concludes this section on giving with this great ejaculation of praise. *He bursts For in doxology*

I Corinthians 15:57 "But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

John 10:11 "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life the sheep."

Hebrews 12:2 "Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame and who sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

You cannot estimate the value of God's own dear Son.

The word the apostle Paul coins for this occasion is the word 'indescribable' or unspeakable.

Paul's prayer for the Ephesian saints in Ephesians 3:17-19 says:

"So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith and that you, being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God."

Romans 11:33 & 34 "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways. For who has known the mind of the Lord or who became His counselor?"

1 Corinthians 2:9 "But just as it is written, things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him."

The best gift of all is described here in verse 15:

"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift."

There are two times in our lives when words fail to come and we are left speechless.

1. in the time of grief
2. when we are overwhelmed in gratitude because of the gift which has been given.

It was Job who said, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." And then in the 22nd verse of Job chapter 1, we read:

"Through all this, Job did not sin nor did he blame God."

Romans 8:26 "And in the same way, the Spirit also helps our weakness for we do not know how to pray as we should. But the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words."

John 12:3 "Mary therefore, took a pound of very costly genuine spikenard ointment and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment."

Words seemed to fail Mary as she bows at the Lord's feet in this time of His impending departure and all she can do is perform an act of worship.

Revelation 5:3ff "And no one in heaven or on the earth nor under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it. And I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it. And one of the elders said to me, 'Stop weeping. Behold the lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals.'"

There are times in our loneliness and grief when words fail to come and all we can experience is eyes filled with tears.

Secondly, words fail us and we are overwhelmed at the time of gratitude for the gift which has been given. This is what the apostle is describing here in this portion:

"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift."

* Truly, it is joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Words fail us as we contemplate the unconditional and overwhelming love of God. A love which was so great that He created us in the beginning because He was lonely and He longed for a relationship.

Stooping to pick up the pieces of broken humanity, He begins immediately to make plans to provide for a seed of redemption in the sending of His own Son.

He enters into an unconditional covenant of commitment to see to it that that seed is born and that the price for sin has been paid for and that the relationship might again be reestablished.

What a glorious moment of triumph when to that lonely stable in Bethlehem a Saviour came. The mighty God, leaving His scepter and crown to take the form of man. Who can comprehend a love and commitment like that?

Words fail us when we try to express the feelings we have inside when we see Him as the poorest of men, living out the 33 years of His life here on earth as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

All the world is stilled in silence. I'm sure that even the choiring angels stopped as God the Father turned His back and God the Son split the air waves with His orphaned cry, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Yes, God is the greatest of all givers and as a result of what took place on Calvary, He now comes to offer us the gift of His righteousness which makes it possible for us to now have a relationship with Himself. He not only provides His righteousness, but He has also sent the heavenly resident, the Spirit of God to dwell within us, to comfort and to sustain us in the hours of our need.

Who can measure the gift of His grace which comes to provide strength in our weakness. His grace is always sufficient for every need that we face.

One is overwhelmed in gratitude and words fail when we realize how patient with us, how forgiving, how kind, how slow and painful the process as we so often thwart the Father's purposes in making us like His Son while we're here.

Yes, words do fail when we think of the fact that God created us because He wanted a relationship, He wanted someone He could love; and that He provided for the restoration of that relationship through the death of His Son upon Calvary. And all the gifts that come with the greatest gift of all, His Son and the provision of salvation, stop our mouths and still our hearts and fill our eyes with tears.

But the greatest gift of all is the gift of His promise that He's going to come again and receive us unto Himself. There are many times down here when we become very lonely. It helps to know that He cares and that He's coming back again and that He has promised never to leave us nor forsake us.

I believe in many ways, the Lord strips us of everything down here, so we start to get homesick for being over there with Jesus.

Overwhelming gratitude wells up within our hearts when we realize that now He has gone to prepare a place for us and He's going to come again and receive us unto Himself; that we are going to live with Him eternally.

*1 Cor.
2:9
earnest for
our intent.*

ONWARD to the prize before us. Soon his beauty we behold !!

Yes, truly, emotions run so deep and eyes fill with tears of gratitude, the voice is choked into silence when we think of what He is going to yet do for us.

CONCLUSION

In 1 Corinthians 9:6-15 we have considered together:

I. THE PRINCIPLE OF GIVING. We have seen in: **6-8**

verse 6-giving is productive

verse 7 - giving is personal

verse 8 - giving is prospered.

II. THE PROMISE OF GIVING. **9-10**

verse 9-from the Scripture

verse 10 - from God

III. THE PROVISION OF GIVING **11-13**

verse 11- for givers

verse 12 for receivers

verse 13 - for God

IV. THE POTENTIAL OF GIVING - verse 14

V. THE PICTURE OF GIVING, even the picture of Jesus Christ, that unspeakable gift, verse 15

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1 Giving is an investment. Matthew 6:20 - "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in or steal."

LESSON #2 Giving is a private matter.

LESSON #3 The attitude in giving is more important to God than the amount of the gift.

LESSON #4 The Lord is able to supply what you need to give.

LESSON #5 A harvest of righteousness will result from your faithful giving.

LESSON #6 God is glorified and thanksgiving is expressed when we give.

LESSON #7 The greatest gift of all is the gift of the Father's Son, even Jesus Christ.

It is like the whole passage comes to one grand finale and the focus of all that has been said is on the Father's gift in verse 15. In no way can we outgive God. His gift has totally overwhelmed us.

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."

This great God who has been a giver from the very beginning waits this Christmas season to make another offer to you of the gift of His Son.

Revelation 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come into him and will have fellowship with him and he with me."

The tragedy of Christmas is in John 1:11, "He came unto His own and His own received Him not." verse 12, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God."

Who could measure the heartbreak of a child who was so careful to choose a very special gift for his parent. With limited resources, he planned and worked and prepared and finally gave the gift of love on Christmas morning, only to hear from the parent that the gift was unsuitable and not desirable. In essence this is what we will do to God the Father this day. Having made all the provision, the gift is wrapped and ready. It's prepared for the taking of humanity and would you spurn the voice of the Spirit and turn away from the most precious gift of all, even Jesus Christ. Could not you bow your knee and receive this gift as your Saviour and having received Him, express with the apostle Paul, "Thanks be to God for the best gift of all, His indescribable gift, the gift of His Son."

He waits beneath God's X-mas tree, Calvary,
Cross to do A work in Your life.

O for a thousand tongues to sing my great redeemer's
praise,

The glories of my God and King, the triumphs of His
grace.

My gracious master and my God, assist me to proclaim
To spread through all the earth abroad the honors of
thy name.

Jesus, the name that charms our fears, that bids our
sorrows cease,

Tis music in the sinner's ears, tis life and health
and peace.

He breaks the power of cancelled sin, He sets the
prisoner free,

His blood can make the foulest clean, His blood
availed for me.

Hear Him, ye deaf, His praise, ye dumb, your loosened
tongues employ.

Ye blind, behold your Saviour come and leap, ye lame
for joy.