The Sacrificial Giver

2 Corinthians 8:1-5, 9
8/21/2011

Introduction:

How can people give sacrificially, when it would seemingly hurt to give?

I. ***People give sacrificially*** **when <u>God</u> does a work of <u>grace</u> in their hearts** (v.1)

II. ***People give sacrificially*** **when the <u>joy</u> of the Lord <u>motivates</u> them to give** (v.2a)

III. ***People give sacrificially*** **when they can <u>empathize</u> with the <u>need</u> they give towards** (v.2b)

IV. ***People give sacrificially*** **when they are <u>not forced</u> to give, but give of their own <u>free will</u>** (v.3)

V. ***People give sacrificially*** **when they are <u>burdened to share</u> in the <u>fellowship</u> of the saints** (v.4)

VI. ***People give sacrificially*** **when they <u>first give themselves</u> as a sacrifice to the Lord** (v.5)

VII. ***People give sacrificially*** **when they fully understand the <u>sacrifice Christ made</u> on our behalf** (v.9)

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Introduction: 2 Corinthians chapters 8 & 9 are the Bible's most detailed description of the subject of "giving."

The Bible has much to say about money:

It teaches us to earn it honestly
Proverbs 10:2
Treasures of wickedness profit nothing

To invest it wisely
Mt. 6:20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

To pay our debts promptly (Prov. 3:27-28, 22:7)
Proverbs 3:27-28
Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.
[28] Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.

To view it soberly (Prov. 8:10-12, 16:16)
Proverbs 8:10-12
Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold.
[11] For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.

Money will Buy:
A bed but not sleep.
A steak but not an appetite.
Books but not wisdom.
A house but not a home.
Medicine but not health.
Luxuries but not peace.
Amusement but not joy.
A crucifix but not Salvation.
A church pew but not heaven.

Proverbs 10:22
The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.
Wisdom regarding money:

1. The Principle of Ownership
   You and your possessions are God's.
   Psalm 24:1
   The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.
   Psalm 50:12
   If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.

2. The Principle of Dependency
   Your power to derive wealth comes from God.
   Deut. 8:18
   But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.

3. The Principle of Stewardship
   You are God's manager/steward.
   (Lk. 16:1-13)
   1 Cor. 4:2
   Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. (Acts 20:35)

All of us likes to receive gifts, presents, help, etc.
Receiving is a blessing!

Many times we have stingy hearts

However, Jesus said that the giver is more blessed than the receiver.

Ill. The dead sea (takes, takes & takes but never gives) it receives water from the Jordan river and other sources but because of its depth nothing flows out. Therefore, nothing can live in the dead sea.

When you give, you are acting like God, who gives & gives
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

God created the earth to give: The Sun gives of it's energy; Flowers give nectar to bees; the Clouds give rain; the trees give off oxygen; the ground produces crops etc.

We as Christians ought to be givers!

Nothing God expects of us is without instruction. God gives us a spiritual plan for how we ought to give.

“A story is told about a man who, after twenty years of marriage, decided to divorce his wife. In preparing for the financial settlement, he began to rummage through his old checks.

“One canceled check after another stirred up memories of a long-forgotten past: the check to the hotel where he and his wife had spent their honeymoon, the check for their first car, the check for the hospital bill for their daughter’s birth, the check for the $2,000 down payment on their first home.

“Finally, he could stand it no longer. He pushed the checks aside, reached for the telephone, and called his wife. Telling her they had invested too much in each other to throw it all away, he asked her to start over with him in a fresh beginning.

“Our own checkbook also tells the story of our life—our values and our lifestyle. And more than almost anything else, that checkbook reveals our true walk with God. Because our checkbook announces what our treasures are.”

(Chuck Swindoll, “A Minister Everyone Would Respect,” Bible Study Guide of 2 Cor. 8-13, Insight for Living)

A whole year had passed between the writing of 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians. A year prior, the Corinthians were exhorted to help the needy church at Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:1-4). In response to that Epistle, they stated their eagerness to send a big offering to help the Lord’s work and people. Now Paul admonishes them to follow through in their decision.

How can people give sacrificially, when it would seemingly hurt to give?

I. ***People give sacrificially*** **when <u>God</u> does a work of <u>grace</u> in their hearts** (v.1)

Macedonia was the area God led Paul to (Acts 16:9) during his second and third missionary journeys.

Macedonia was the region north of Achaia (Greece) which included such cities as Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. If you know anything about the Christians of these areas, you know that they were serious about God's Word and serious about giving to support God's work.

"Brethren, we do you to wit" – Brothers, we want you to know. Know what? How the Macedonians sacrificed and gave money to meet the needs of the impoverished Judean believers.
To encourage the Corinthians in their giving, Paul uses the churches of Macedonia as an example of sacrificial giving.

God often uses the examples of others to motivate and encourage His children to do things. Here Paul uses the churches of Macedonia as an example to the Corinthians of sacrificial giving. If they could give when living in deep poverty, then certainly the "well off" Corinthians could. What is interesting is that the Corinthians boasted that they would give to help meet the needs of the Judean saints. Their promise to give provoked the Macedonians and those of Achaia to give (2 Cor. 9:2); well, they gave, but the Corinthians (a year later) had not yet kept their word to give.

"The grace of God" –

Paul is careful to note that their desire and ability to give was based not on their natural goodness, but on "the <u>grace</u> of <u>God</u>" (v. 1; cp. V. 7).

The Macedonian believers gave, yet God gets the credit and glory. Why? The ability to give and to give sacrificially is a gift from God. When God does a work of grace in a believer's heart, that heart opens up and gives back to the ultimate Giver and to His cause.

God gave us salvation by grace and that act of giving to us is the greatest motivating power for us to give back in return.

Paul further admonished the Corinthians to "abound in this <u>grace</u> also." (v. 7)

Someone who is not a giver is one who perhaps has never experienced the grace of God. But for all who have experienced God's saving grace, God also makes available a giving grace—that is—a capacity to be as God has been to you.

How is <u>giving</u> a demonstration of God's grace?

1) God has been gracious to show the giver that all that he/she has ultimately <u>came from God</u>.

2) God has been gracious to the giver to <u>convince</u> him/her that He will supply all of his needs. There is no need to fear because God has graciously imparted faith – faith to know that "all these things shall be added unto thee" (Mt. 6:33); faith to know that if you cast your bread upon many waters, it shall return to you in due time (Eccl. 11:1); faith to know that Jesus said, (***Luke 6:38)*** Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

To God be the glory for our ability even to give when we don't have an over-abundance of resources.

II. ***People give sacrificially*** **when the <u>joy</u> of the Lord <u>motivates</u> them to give** (v.2a)

"A great trial of affliction: - a big test of pressure, a gigantic pressure-filled test. The Macedonian saints passed a test of their faith by giving to meet others' needs when their own needs were screaming out for attention.

Financial pressure did not pressure the Macedonians into keeping a lock on their wallets and purses.

"The abundance of their joy" - the overflow of their joy resulted in the overflow of their giving.

Giving flows out of joyful hearts! God loves cheerful giving (2 Cor. 9:7).

When God's people rejoice in God and His goodness, they will also give out of that joy. Inner joy motivates outward giving! A Christian without joy will be a Christian (who, if he gives) does not give much and does not give with a smile. Why? Because he lacks the faith to give. Faith brings joy which brings giving. Faith is like the water which primes the pump of the well, with the expectation that more water is coming out of that well because of the water that I pour into it.

The Christians of Macedonia did not have big, fat bank accounts from which to give. As a matter of fact, they were severely strapped with tight financial pressure ("affliction" – *thipsis*) themselves. Yet they had a deep well of joy, and they scraped deeply from the "bottom of the barrel" and accumulated a tremendous offering.

III. ***People give sacrificially*** **when they can <u>empathize</u> with the <u>need</u> they give towards** (v.2b)

IV. ***People give sacrificially*** **when they are <u>not forced</u> to give, but give of their own <u>free will</u>** (v.3)

They (seeming supernaturally) gave beyond their ability. Sacrifice is not measured by the size of your gift, but by the size of what you had to give from and from the size of what you have left over.

The bigness of our giving is determined by the size of resources that we have to begin with.

What determines the sacrifice of your giving is not the amount you give, but the amount you have left after you give (EX: the widow's mite; see: Mark 12:41-44)

"Many say, 'If only I had more, I would give.' A preacher went to see a farmer and asked, 'If you had $200, would you give $100 to the Lord?' 'I would.' He answered. 'If you had two cows, would you give one of them to the Lord' 'Sure.' 'If you had two pigs, would you give one of them to the Lord?' The farmer said, 'Now that isn't fair. You know I have two pigs.'" (Hughs, p. 95, "Moody" June 1983).

V. ***People give sacrificially*** **when they are <u>burdened to share</u> in the <u>fellowship</u> of the saints** (v.4)

Paul is implying that he, knowing their low financial status, did not expect them to give of their last denari. But they urged him to take the offering and give it to the Jerusalem church.

VI. ***People give sacrificially*** **when they first give themselves as a sacrifice to the Lord** (v.5)

They gave more that was expected ("not as we hoped").

How could they go beyond what Paul anticipated? Answer: They first surrendered themselves to the Lord (Rom. 12:1-2), and then they yielded their lives to serve with Paul and God's servants.

Give God YOURSELF, before you give Him your money

Don't give him money thinking you can earn your salvation or appease Him with gifts (obedience is better than sacrifice).

VII. ***People give sacrificially*** **when they fully understand the sacrifice Christ made on our behalf** (v.9)

A. THE GRACE OF CHRIST BROUGHT HIM DOWN TO THE DEPTHS OF POVERTY (v. 9a)
How low did Christ go?

"Our Lord Jesus Christ" - note full title:
1)"Lord" - He who is master (of the Universe) - the eternal Yahweh became poor!

2)"Jesus" - He who is Savior (the only deliverer from sin and hell) became poor!

3)"Christ" - He who is Messiah (the anointed King of kings) became poor!

"Though He was rich" –

--This points to His pre-existence (Jesus existed before incarnation)
--This points to His pre-eminence (He was ruler over all creation)

Before He came to earth, the Lord Jesus shared the same glory as the Father (Jn. 17:5).

Phil. 2:5-11 - Christ's Humiliation

"Let this mind be in you . . . made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man."

Jesus humbled Himself so much as seen by:

1) His coming to earth
2) Taking on a physical body with all of its limitations

Christ had:

1) Humble ancestors (lineage)
--Tamar (incest with Judah)
--Rahab (a prostitute)
--Ruth (a Moabite)
Mt. 1:3, 5

2) Humble birth
--swaddling clothes (Lk. 2:7, 12)
Cp. how we are so interested in how we wrap gifts to beautify what is inside, with how God wrapped His gift to us!
"Swaddling clothes" = lit. strips of cloth - Christ was wrapped up like a mummy.
NOTE: This wrapping was part of a sign (v. 12) (a sign is something out of the ordinary).

God's gift was the best gift ever imaginable and yet it wasn't wrapped in special paper! In God`s infinite wisdom He planned that His Son would not be recognized man's way. (by a royal, wealthy family with imperial power and prestige) but that He would be revealed solely by the Holy Spirit (as the Child was to Simeon).

--Manger - a feeding trough for animals in a stall or stable (possibly a cave or an underground barn).

--Bethlehem (Micah 5:2 - "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.")

3) a humble family (Lk. 2:24)
Mary and Joseph could only afford to give two turtledoves or two young pigeons, rather than a lamb (READ Lev. 12:6 - cp. with 5:7).

4) a humble trade (Mk. 6:3 - "Carpenter . . . they were offended at Him"
(Mt. 11:6 - "And blessed is He, whosoever shall not be offended in me.")

5) a humble upbringing - "Nazareth in Galilee" Nathaniel said: "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (Jn. 1:46) (Town was very small and had a negative reputation) Jn. 7:52 - "They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."

6) a humble ministry
--He had no pillow to lay His head (Mt. 8:20)
--He had no money to pay His taxes (Mt. 17:24-27)

Christ's life shows that He plunged into the depths of poverty. At birth, he slept in another's manger; in ministry, He cruised in another's boat; in ministry, He ate in another's house; at triumphal entry, He rode on another's donkey; at death, he was buried in another's tomb (Mt. 27:57-60).

7) a humble death (Phil. 2:8)
crucified = a curse (Gal. 3:13)
Stripped of clothes, thorns, etc.

The hymnwriter wrote:
"There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus--
No, not one! No, not one!
None would could heal all our soul's diseases--
No, not one! No, not one!

No friend like Him is so high and holy--
No, not one! No, not one!
And yet no friend is so meek and lowly--
No, not one! No, not one!

Jesus knows all about our struggles,
He will guide till the day is done"
(Hymn # 208)

Jesus "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister . . ." (Mt. 20:28)
The Lord of the universe ut up with poverty, persecution, scorn, abandonment, and the cruelties of the cross.

Why?
So that we might be rich.
He "spent" all He had - to purchase our redemption.

B. THE GRACE OF CHRIST BROUGHT US UP TO THE HEIGHT OF PROSPERITY (v. 9b)
How high were we lifted?

He gave His life so that we might have life.
He suffered so that we might have peace.
He faced agonies of this wicked earth so that we might enjoy the blessings of our "promised land."

"Rich" = very wealthy (spiritually)

NOTE: He did not merely make us "well off" but rich!

We have so much in Christ, we will be shocked when we get to Heaven.

I Cor. 2:9 - "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

Therefore, we are "complete in Him."
(we lack nothing in Christ)

True riches are in Christ!

Eph. 1:3 - "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"

In Ephesians, it is evident that: we have been adopted into a royal family (1:5); accepted in the Beloved (1:6); we already have redemption, forgiveness (1:7); an inheritance that will never end (1:11).

We have gone from sin to the Savior.
We have gone from spiritual blindness to the light.
We have gone from the wrath of God to peace with God.
We have gone from fear to comfort.
We have gone from facing the prospect of hell to anticipating the blessings of Heaven.
We have gone from spiritual poverty to spiritual riches.

CONCLUSION:

Christ went from riches to rags so that we might go from rags to riches.
Christ went from the top to the bottom so that we might go from the bottom to the top.
Christ went from everything to nothing so that we might go from nothing to everything.
Christ went from wealth to poverty so that we might go from poverty to wealth.
He experienced rockbottom humiliation so that we might experience mountain top wealth (in Heaven)

If Christ gave His all for us:

Is anything too great to give?

Is any price too high to pay?

Is any sacrifice too great to make?