

BEYOND YOUR ABILITY  
Thursday, February 12, 2015

How I/we can be involved in world evangelization? (Missions)

- \* Pray
- \* Ministry to Missionaries (they need TLC)
- \* Go (short-term/long-term)
- \* Giving

Be clear. Supporting missions is the priority of the church. We are all called to vigilant commitment to World Evangelization. So supporting the Lord's Call financially isn't negotiable.

Macedonian church caught God's Vision: saw need, the will of God, understood pain of poverty and persecution. This moved them to aggressive action that grew out of confidence in God's power. They were destitute. Out of their brokenness under such circumstances they acted as the Spirit of God moved their hearts.

**2 Corinthians 8:1-5** We want you to know, brothers, **about the grace of God** that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, <sup>2</sup> for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. <sup>3</sup> For they gave **according to their means**, as I can testify, and **beyond their means**, of their **own accord**, <sup>4</sup> **begging** us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the **relief of the saints**-- <sup>5</sup> and this, not as we expected, but they **gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us**.

Some OT background first...

## TWO KINDS OF GIVING: 8:1-3

### 1. TITHE: ACCORDING TO THEIR ABILITY

**PROPORTIONAL GIVING:** . . . it is God's . . . basic biblical principle that says you recognize that everything you have belongs to God and that you are obeying God by giving just a portion back to God. That should go straight to the local church. This church should blossom . . . give according to your ability. What God has already given?

### 2. SACRIFICIAL OR FREE-WILL OFFERINGS: BEYOND THEIR ABILITY: GOD USES ORDINARY AND EXTRAORDINARY MEANS TO DO HIS WORK THROUGH BELIEVERS

= Means you must trust God for it. Over and above the tithe, not just shifting your tithe around and place some in faith promise giving. You can't give what you don't have. Paul states this very thing in 8:12.

**Whenever Sacrificial offerings happened in the OT and NT, all needs were met.** In Moses' situation, they had to command the people to stop giving. Imagine that! The elders order everyone to stop giving! **ESPECIALLY THE ACT OF GRACE IN MOTION!!!**

**Exodus 36:5-7** and said to Moses, "The people bring much more than enough for doing the work that the LORD has **commanded** us to do."<sup>6</sup> So Moses gave command, and word was proclaimed throughout the camp, "**Let no man or woman do anything more for the contribution for the sanctuary.**" **So the people were restrained from bringing,<sup>7</sup> for the material they had was sufficient to do all the work, and more.**

**2 Chronicles 31:10** Azariah the chief priest, who was of the house of Zadok, answered him, "Since they began to bring the contributions into the house of the LORD, **we have eaten and had enough and have plenty left, for the LORD has blessed his people, so that we have this large amount left.**"

**Acts 4:34** There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold

When God moves in our hearts to give like this, amazing things are going to happen! Though the tithe supported the routine aspects of ministry, greater projects beyond the local routine involves the supernatural expression of grace.

This principle was there with Moses and the early church. The church in Macedonia is recorded in God's Word as an example of how to become God's conduit of blessing to other people groups. In this case, it was the suffering church. It was Great Commission blessing to the Jewish believers. This involved selfless giving outside the local church. It was international in focus. (The word "giving" isn't even mentioned until vs 5)

**Therefore, this passage, to my knowledge, does not require that Faith Promise is the only way to support missions. How we support missions is a matter of wisdom that may give through different options.** However, the Great Commission is beyond our ability.

"Make disciples of all nations." Say what???

The very idea of reaching the nations with the Gospel before Jesus' returns transcends natural ability. This principle of sacrificial Faith Promise giving not only has created supernatural amounts of funding for missions, it is biblical and right in application to such an impossible task!!!

**2 Corinthians 8:11-12** So now finish doing it as well, so that your **readiness** in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have.<sup>12</sup> **For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.**

**What does this mean?** How can you "**give beyond your ability**" (what you don't have, vs 3) and then say "**according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.**"?

**The answer here is simple: This statement involves the execution of the plan. It is later - at the time the planned collection is made, give what you have at that time. God will provide in the meantime, set it aside in a planned way and you will be enabled to give it then and there.**

God if you provide this to me, I will give it to send someone to the field. Promise.  
Lots of missionaries and needy world.

## **FAITH PROMISE GIVING IS GRACE IN ACTION (8:1-5)**

God's grace is the source. Here is how it works in the believer's heart and in the church:

### **GAVE OF THEIR OWN ACCORD/NOT COERCED.**

**2 Corinthians 8:3** For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord,

**Ethiopian Pastor shared story:** Widow came to Christ, came to church and wanted to give offering to the Lord. She had only one goat, for African widow, this is only resource: milk, income. Gave it to church. Returning home, there was another goat at her hut. Asked other villagers who owned it, no one had ever seen it. It became hers. The pastor spoke about God's provision for this lady in putting Christ first.

### **DEEP DESIRE TO BE INVOLVED IN IT (8:4)**

**2 Corinthians 8:4** begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints—

**Begging** to give . . . been in ministry a long time and never had anyone come and beg to give more. Please let us be a part of this cause here.

### **FIRST GAVE THEMSELVES TO THE LORD (8:5)**

**2 Corinthians 8:5** and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.

**Priorities right.** Begin at the right place. Jesus takes center-stage. God, I'm giving myself to you. Lordship of Christ. Given yourself to Him first. Starting point. Basics.

## **PICTURE OF BIBLICAL FARMING**

### **SOWING AND REAPING PRINCIPLE (9:6)**

**2 Corinthians 9:6** The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

### **INVESTMENT AND RETURNS ARE OUT OF PROPORTION (GRACE)**

Sow and reap: bountiful? Sparingly? **EX – kernel of corn** in the ground, how many ears will come up on a stalk? = 2 on average!

How many kernels of corn on a Cob = AVG. 600 (400-800 on row of 16; can be between 500 - 1200)? **1 is turned into 1200!!!**  
**120,000% INCREASE! That is investment!!!**

***YOU HAVE TO STICK AT IT LONG ENOUGH TO EXPERIENCE THE HARVEST! YOU HAVE TO HAVE VISION TO SEE WHAT IS COMING, NOT WHAT IS THERE (Just dirt when you start!!!)***

. . . Sometimes Christians get impatient waiting and plowing for the harvest.

The more you are committed to something and the more you put your life into something, the more meaningful it is to you. God desires us to be wholeheartedly involved in world missions. Vision for the world here. Not just an annual conference event.

**2 Corinthians 9:10** He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.

**= WILL SUPPLY:** God supplies! Are you into investments? Here is a good deal. He supplies then He multiplies. Think of the feeding of the 5,000. Kid gave a few fish to Jesus and he takes it and does something miraculous.

### **= WILL INCREASE STORAGE (RESERVES)**

God gives it to you, takes what you give, and multiplies it! Here he is increasing the storage of seeds to plant in the future, which remember results in ever increasing harvests. Oftentimes we have to miss opportunities simply because we don't have seeds on hand to plant into the fields of opportunities.

**= WILL INCREASE THE HARVEST** of your righteousness. Comes back to benefit you. Money has a lot to do, everything to do with the maturity of your relationship to Christ and your growth in grace. If it is a stumbling block to you, if keep it only for yourself and not Him, you are missing great blessing. You aren't growing as a Christian!

**2 Corinthians 9:11** You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.

**= YOU WILL BE MADE RICH:** It comes to you, you give it back, multiplies it, it comes back to you, and then increases it because you gave what he gave. WEALTH NOT TO MOVE MORE UPSCALE IN LIFESTYLE, BUT WEALTH TO BECOME A GREATER CHANNEL OF BLESSING TO OTHERS. WEALTHY IN MANY WAYS: righteousness, maturity, love for Christ, vision, finances, children, wife/husband, friends, opportunities for greater works in God's field!!!

## **HEART ATTITUDES**

**2 Corinthians 9:7-13** Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. 9 As it is written, "He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." 10 He who supplies seed

to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. 12 For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. 13 By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others,

### **PURPOSEFUL GIVING 9:7**

**2 Corinthians 9:7** Each one must give as he has **decided in his heart**, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for **God loves a cheerful giver**.

Thought it through carefully . . . prayed about it, sought the Lord, go along with the purpose of God. What is His great purpose? Mt 28:18-20; Ac 1:7-8

### **CHEERFUL GIVING 9:7**

Not grudgingly . . . if you begrudge God on this, don't give.

Not under compulsion. "I guess I have to do this, give something." Write that faith promise check to God with joy. Think of the lives investing in.

### **FAITH-CENTERED GIVING (9:8)**

**2 Corinthians 9:8** And **God is able to make all grace abound to you**, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

God will provide what is sufficient for us. Will provide what you need, not what you want. Provide an abundance to be used in a certain specific way: ABUNDANCE FOR EVERY GOOD DEED. WHAT IS CONTEXT IN THIS PASSAGE? >>> GIVING TO THE CAUSE OF MISSIONS. (9:9)

### **OBEDIENT GIVING (9:13)**

**2 Corinthians 9:13** By their approval of this service, **they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel** of Christ, and the **generosity** of your contribution for them and for all others,

Glorify God for your obedience . . . for everybody. Not just super-spiritual. All disciples. All!!! GC for all. Everyone here needs to make a faith promise and pray for missions.

### **LIBERAL GIVING (9:13)**

Liberal giving . . . generosity . . . not how little do I have to give God, but how much can I trust you to provide for the cause of world missions through me? Not how little but how much?

**Rest of this text tells you how you benefit through giving to missions in this way . . .**

## MINISTRY RESULTS

### PERSONAL ENRICHMENT (9:11)

**2 Corinthians 9:11** You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.

You will feel good about it . . . feel like significant part . . . cutting edge of kingdom of God with eternal significance. Not like investing in your temporal retirement . . . dwarfs that!

### MEET THE NEEDS OF THE SAINTS (9:12)

**2 Corinthians 9:12** For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God.

Not only providing needs of saints . . . have to have a salary. Spiritualize ministry and missions. They have to earn too. Supplies their needs. We get spiritual (pride) and think they shouldn't be paid in this way.

- **FINANCIAL NEEDS . . .**
- **SPIRITUAL NEEDS . . . THEY GO AND MINISTER TO OTHERS.**

### WILL GLORIFY GOD FOR YOUR CONFESSION AND OBEDIENCE (9:13)

**2 Corinthians 9:13** By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, What is man/s chief end? Glorify God . . .

**Greatest motivation yet . . .**

## BECAME LIKE JESUS: THE ULTIMATE MOTIVATION

**2 Corinthians 8:9** For you know the **grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.**

Isn't it interesting that this verse is tucked right in the middle of this passage about money? WHAT DID JESUS HAVE BEFORE HE CAME TO THIS EARTH? Glory . . . angelic worship . . . great worship service . . . power, recognition . . .

Yet for your sake He became poor. He left all that comfort, glory, majesty, became a man, hard life, suffering, hardship, persecution, they even drug Him off, evil trial, spit on his face, slapped around, beat, put on a cross and killed him. Humiliation. **FOR YOUR SAKE HE BECAME POOR . . . WENT THROUGH THIS . . . THAT YOU THROUGH HIS POVERTY MIGHT**

BECOME RICH. YOU WILL BECOME RICH. >>> Can't take it with you, but you can send it on ahead!

JOINT HEIRS . . . ETERNITY WITH HIM . . . SHARE NEW HEAVENS AND EARTH . . . WHAT IS GREATEST MOTIVATION EVER???? THINK OF WHAT JESUS CHRIST DID FOR YOU.

**MAKE A FAITH PROMISE TO GOD: Remember, this is for World Missions. It doesn't go to ourselves. It is for Jesus and others. This is not waiting for funds to drop out of the sky. It is actively trusting God and looking for His work through you.**

**How? Woody Phillips made some suggestions:**

- Through your abundance: give beyond the tithe.
- Through Sacrifice: give up a restaurant habit, fast, skip the coffee house for a day, cut some expense and live on less in order to give to Christ, luxuries we might give up, out of savings. This is risky, to trust Him with what you have under your control to see Him provide what isn't under your control. Remember the Ethiopian Widow! For her this involved the risk of starvation.
- Through good management: Look at your budget. Revise it where you can.
- Through creativity: make something, do a yard sale for Jesus, tutor someone, use skills to earn money for Christ, a pastor who gives his honorariums to missions. The list is endless.
- Through unexpected income: sometimes God gives an unexpected windfall, tax refund (I know someone who has done this for missions)
- Always through trusting God!!! In all these things, you are seeking Christ actively and asking Him to provide something in a way that brings glory to Him and encouragement to your faith. If you are looking to Him in these details, He will guide you and use you.

Sometimes He works dramatically. (One couple . . . each filled out the card . . . swapped and whispered to his wife "are you crazy?" . . . \$600 more came in on investment account he had written off a few days later which equaled the amount his wife put down.

This is a way for you to put into action what you say you believe. Can we trust God to give beyond our ability for the purpose of world evangelization? Look at the card.

This is a faith promise . . . not a pledge. Will not be asked for it. Fill out card to God for accountability. Also allows Missions Committee to draw up a realistic mission's budget this year. Over and above tithe giving.

**What can I trust God to give through me?**

