

## 2 Corinthians 9

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Take your Bible, go with me to the book of 2 Corinthians chapter 9, 2 Corinthians chapter 9. We will be finishing up this morning, we'll be looking at the entire 9th chapter and we'll be finishing up at least as it pertains to the New Testament, just about as much as it pertains to all the scripture, the largest section in scripture that directly applies to giving. It is one of the longest discourses that we can find, if not the longest discourse that we find in all of scripture as it pertains simply to the giving of the saints, what it looks like to be a generous people and a giving people. It is an extended study within the book of 2 Corinthians as Paul is admonishing the church at Corinth to put faith out authentically. I don't know why that just cut out, maybe my batteries are getting dipped, it's okay, I won't move brother, if my mic cuts out then we've got this one, okay? They look at me up there when my mic cuts out like I did something wrong. You guys saw me, my hands were on the pulpit, I didn't touch it, okay? I'm trying. But anyway, wow, complete side note, I'm not a guy who gets distracted by squirrels at all. Anyway, let's wrap it back up, right? So as

Paul is admonishing the church at Corinth to live out an authentic faith, inevitably he gets to this portion of the authenticity of their faith as it directly applies to the giving. This particular offering which he is dealing with in these chapters is mentioned a number of times throughout the New Testament. If you're reading through the book of Romans, by the time you get to Romans 15, you see that the reason he was going to Jerusalem was to provide that collection that had been given from the churches in Acacia and Macedonia. This is here. We see the letters to other churches that reference this matter of giving. He has already referenced it once in the first letter that he wrote to the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 16. But here in chapters 8 and 9, he really gets extensive in what it looks like to be a giving believer. What it looks like to be a saint who lives generously. Now again, we're not looking at this legalistically because we are looking at this within its proper context. We have to set this stage because it would be real easy to pull out these two chapters and say, this is what giving should look like. And we can tell you that it's a matter of the head and not a matter of the heart. But we have to understand that what precedes this, even in this letter, is the seventh chapter. You say, well, yes, that makes a lot of sense because chapter 7 comes before 8 and 9. Right. But it's in chapter 7 in context, which Paul has already settled the matter that their heart is a heart of repentance. Their heart is a heart that has been softened by the admonition and even the rebuke that he gives them in the first letter because Titus has come back and shared that with him. And they're living with a heart that is soft and sensitive to the leading and guiding of the Lord God. So therefore, in light of the reality that their heart has been softened by the gospel, he begins to teach them regarding the contribution and the offering of the saints. Because, quite honestly, they had already given some mental assent to that. We'll see it in just a minute. They had already accepted it mentally or intellectually, but now he wants them to do it practically. Listen, you can give mentally, but practically it only matters when it flows from the heart. Okay, that's the reality.

Legalistic giving is not a blessing to anyone. As our brother prayed this morning, the Lord doesn't need our money. We need to be able to give our money. The Lord doesn't need our time. We need to be able to give our time because giving is not confined to finances. Some of you know, if you're here for the first time this morning, you're like, man, this preacher loves to preach on giving. No. In 18 years of ministry, this is the first series I've ever preached on giving.

And if maybe there's 18 years worth of it coming out, I don't know. But this is the first series. I've always avoided that, not intentionally, but I just didn't want to make a, you know, stand on a soapbox that wasn't there. But when you get there and the box is there, then you got to stand on it, right? When scripture says, here it is, then you stay true to the context of the text and you say, there it is. So that's what we're saying. But we understand these matters. Giving is something we do as a matter of worship. And it is an aspect of our worship. Worship is not the songs we sing.

We do not have a worship time here. At least we're not trying to have a worship time here. We come together that we may worship. We worship in our fellowship. We worship in our singing. We

worship in our giving and we worship in our preaching and listening to the word of God.

[ 4 : 31 ] God, I'm reminded of one class I sat in. Actually, it was an online class. I was listening to the professor teach and he was teaching regarding his student, to his students. And he was telling them about the old days of ministry. And he was talking about when the sermons used to be two and three hours long. I think I've shared this with you before. And one of the students asked the question, said, well, professor, when did they worship? And he admonished the student and said, in those days, son, the preaching was the worship of the saints. That was why they came together.

And part of that was the songs we sing or worship. The way we give is worship. The fellowship we have is worship. Worship is not a time. Worship is an attitude, right? And we understand these realities.

But I want you to see this morning as we stand together, I'll go ahead and give you the title. So hopefully that you can look at it while we're reading it. We're going to look at the ninth chapter. And I want you to see that the giving of the saints is a unique ministry opportunity. It is a unique ministry opportunity. If you are physically able and desire to do so, I'm asking you to join with me as we stand together and we read the word of God from 2 Corinthians chapter 9. The word of God says, for it is superfluous. By the way, that's a wonderful word, isn't it? I love that word. I get so caught up in words. I'm sorry, pastor is just kind of a little bit off the trail a little bit. I love words.

I didn't love words so much until, you know, the Lord called me to be a man who spoke words all the time. So superfluous is a great word. For it is superfluous for me to write to you about this ministry to the saints. For I know your readiness of which I boast about to you. I boast about you to the Macedonians, namely that Achaia has been prepared since last year and your zeal has stirred up most of them. But I have sent the brethren in order that our boasting about you may not be empty in this case.

So that, as I was saying, you may be prepared. Otherwise, if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we, not to speak of you, will be put to shame by this confidence. So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren that they would go on ahead to you and arrange beforehand your previously promised bountiful gift so that the same would be ready as a bountiful gift and not affect it by covetousness. Now, as I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do just as he purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion. For God loves a cheerful giver and God is able to make all grace abound to you so that always having all sufficiency and everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed. As it is written, he scattered abroad and gave to the poor. His righteousness endures forever.

[ 7 : 19 ] Now, 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. You will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God. For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God.

Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all. While they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift. Let's pray. Oh, Lord God, we do thank you so much for this day. God, with much rejoicing, we come before you with the great privilege of reading and hearing the word of God. We pray, Lord, now as we have read it and we've heard it together, that you would speak to our hearts. Lord, that you'd help us to take a moment to be still, that every distraction and every hindrance may be removed and we would hear what it is you have to say to us corporately and what it is you have to say to us individually, and that you would be the one who receives all praise and glory.

We ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. You may be seated. Truly and sincerely, this giving of the saints is a rather unique ministry opportunity.

I hope that you've seen in that passage how many times Paul refers to this ministry to the saints or this ministry of the saints. Too often we confine ourselves to ministry or what may or may not be ministry. We say that an individual is called into the ministry when someone is experiencing or really trying to discern a call to pastoral ministry, and that is true. We say that an individual is called to the mission field when the Lord is putting the great commission upon their heart and mind, and they enter into the mission field either nationally or internationally. We begin to confine ourselves to what

ministry is and what it is not based upon what a person does vocationally, whether or not they have to leave something behind to go do something else. But not all ministry is vocational. As a matter of fact, most ministry is just a part of our everyday lives. Ministry is anything that we do for the kingdom. Paul has taken an extensive portion of this letter already and spoke of our calling and equipping for the good work which the Lord prepared beforehand for us to do. That is, each one of us have a ministry assignment. One of our ministry assignments is to be a people of giving spirit, to be those who give to others. Maybe it is not always financial because I understand there are times, again, we're not getting legalistic, but it is people who have a willingness and a desire to give, to give of ourselves and to give to others. If we notice within context, this ministry is a ministry to the saints. That is, we're not speaking about what we would call evangelistic giving.

[10:34] Paul is not encouraging the church here to give in order to share the gospel. He is actually discussing with the church here and encouraging the church to give to brothers and sisters in Christ who have already received the gospel. He is speaking about the one another's in passage here, how they care for one another, they love for one another, they are united to one another. These are people who have social and geographical differences, that is, they are Gentiles and Jews. They have national identities which may separate them on every other front, but they have one common factor, and that is, they have all accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. And that commonality is the one thing that is pressed upon them, a concern for one another, so therefore they are bound to support and encourage one another and to be united to one another. They minister to one another. See, not all ministry in scripture, I don't want to blow your lids off here, but not all ministry in scripture was done by the pastors. As a matter of fact, the majority of the ministry done in scripture is done by the believers. If you understand and you remember the greatest job description we will ever have for the pastor is found in Ephesians. It is found in the book of Ephesians chapter 4 verse 12, and it is that

God has called some to be pastors and teachers, that is, one office, not two offices, for the equipping of the saints. That is, my job responsibility, according to scripture, is to equip the saints, and now finish that verse, for the work of the ministry. That is, it is the pastor's responsibility to equip the saints to do the work of the ministry. Rather than making it more of a professional or professionalization position where we hire someone else to do the ministry, we want to have someone to equip us to do the ministry. I know that runs contrary to much of our western thinking, but it is a reality that if we have look at scripture, this is what we are called to do. Part of that giving is ministry. We are called to be people who give. Now, this is a unique ministry opportunity in that there are things that come to us in this ministry of giving that do not come to us in any other fashion or any other way. These matters that Paul addresses in this passage are only reaped or sown in the attitude and in the act of giving. The first thing that we notice about this ministry opportunity is that it absolutely matters the posture of giving, that is, how we give. The posture of giving is essential. Paul writes to them and says, for it is superfluous for me to write to you about this ministry of the saints or to the saints. Again, there's this reiteration that this is a ministry opportunity and Paul is fulfilling the very job requirements that he is the author of in Ephesians chapter 4 that the Lord had impressed upon his heart. Paul, being the founding pastor of this church and the one who established this church, we would refer to him today as the church planner, he's the one who rose up elders to be in this church, is now fulfilling that role and equipping them to do the work of the ministry. He says, hey, I have a great ministry opportunity for you. And he is telling them that he knew that they wanted to do this, for I know your readiness of which you boast about the mass or I boast about you to the Macedonians.

Again, intellectually or mentally, the church had already said, we're going to give. Paul says they were ready. He said their readiness and their ambition and their excitement that they have been prepared since last year, but preparedness hadn't filled the offering plate, so to say. He said, though you say you were ready to give, you have not given yet. The other churches based upon your preparedness have given above and beyond. The churches in Macedonia gave sacrificially, Paul tells us in the eighth chapter because they were moved by the desire of the churches in Achaia, which of which Corinth was one of them. And they were led by them to give their own means and even above their means. But Paul says, even though they have given, you have not. Now, we don't need to ask ourselves why they haven't given.

We just have to go back and read first Corinthians and see why they haven't given. They were too busy doing matters their own way, right? Their heart wasn't set yet. Their mind said, we'll give, but

their heart was saying, let's take the Lord's supper in vain. Their heart was saying, let's not only look over sin, let's welcome sin into the church. Their heart was saying, we don't have to look different than the world. We can look like the world. See, their hearts had not been conformed to the gospel that they were acknowledging intellectually in their minds. They were ready, but they weren't prepared. So Paul says, though you were ready, now I want you to move forward because our posture in giving absolutely matters. Because friend, listen to me. It is not necessarily the readiness or the willingness to give that matters. It is the actual act of giving that matters. Something that I have written down and I know I've quoted it time and time again, and I keep it in my office over and over again. Satan is not bothered by our good intentions. He's just not. But we see this reality here. He says, you have been prepared. Your zeal is there. Your zeal has stirred up other people. And now it's time for you to put feet to your preparedness, so to say. He says, but I've sent the brethren so that you're not ashamed in case any of the brethren from Macedonia come and they find that you haven't brought up any collection. I don't want you to be ashamed and I'll be ashamed too. And you don't want to be ashamed because I'm ashamed. Paul says, my confidence in you needs to be met with the reality of what you do.

[16:21] And then he goes on and he starts talking about this bountiful gift. They said, oh, we'll give bountifully. They'll give bountifully. Now, let's put it in proper context here. The church at Corinth was mildly blessed. They were living in financial stability. They weren't in a season of need.

The city of Corinth was a prosperous city. The merchants of Corinth were prosperous merchants. And the Lord had redeemed a number of prosperous merchants simply because they became a believer in Christ. That was not the same as the believers in Jerusalem and around Judea because people there, their life was so connected to Judaism. The moment they accepted Christ, things were changed in our own lands. We have people just like that. We as a church, local church, pour into another church in a different part of our country. And the reason we pour into that church is because that church is still trying to be self-supporting. And legalistically, we could look at it and say, oh, well, the church is growing. They're up around 60 people. They ought to be able to support themselves. But the reality is, is that those who are coming to Christ in that church are so tied to a society that the faith that they are leaving is connected to the people around them that they suffer economically when they come to

Christ in our own land. And so Paul is writing to Corinth much like he would write to us in Wartex. He says, you have an opportunity. God has given you a gracious opportunity. And he is pinning this to them. And he says that he wants them to have this bountiful gift which they had already said they would have. He's not putting words in their mouth. He is only repeating them what they've said. But he says that he wants it to be ready and not affected by covetousness. The first posture we see in our giving is that we ought to be willing givers and not coveting givers.

Going, oh, I wish I had not said so much. There needs to be a willingness and not a covetousness that is attached to it. He says in verse 6, now I say, now this, I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. He who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. We'll come back to that in just a moment. Each one, now pay attention to this, each one. So here, you can just stop right there for just a moment. The posture is up to the individual. Each one. Right? So my posture in giving is based solely upon my relationship with my Lord and Savior. Each one. We do not get to ride on the tailcoats of anybody else around us. We do not get to ride on the tailcoats of the generosity of the church. We come together. We have these matters of discussion as a church. This church is a very generous church.

[19:26] And we as individuals, as each individual, are the ones who are making those decisions. It's not anyone making it for us. But each one, it says, must do just as he's purposed in his heart. Again, the focus here is not on a legalism. It is. It is not for an individual to stand up and say, well, you give this, you give that, you give this, you give that. No, it is for the individual to stand before his Lord and Savior and to live in such a relationship with his Lord and Savior that he purposes in his heart how he or she is going to give. Right? It is the individual that is moved by the relationship that then takes the action based upon that relationship. The greatest thing we can ever tell an individual when someone comes to us and asks us the do's and don'ts and the rules and won'ts and all these things and they want us to put check marks about, should I do this or should I not do that? I love the answer that we can give. Well, that's between you and your Lord and Savior. If you can do that before Christ and you're happy with that, if that represents your love for Christ, then by all means do it.

And see, they would rather say, well, you just tell me what I can get away with. Well, that's not what scripture tells us. Scripture tells us it's between the individual and his Savior. If that represents our love for Christ, then by all means move forward. Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly. Here's another position. We should not say, well, I have to give.

Let me make this emphatically clear. You don't have to give. That's grudgingly. We get to give. And that's a whole different posture. It's a whole different reality. I remember when I was a new believer, I came to Christ shortly before my 21st birthday. Very early in our walk, my wife decided it would be a good idea for us to clean the church that we were attending. I wasn't a pastor yet. I wasn't a youth leader yet. I wasn't a deacon yet. I wasn't any of those things yet. So I was a church custodian.

That was the very first position I ever had in the church. She was, and I was her assistant. And I remember there were so many times I'd go down there and go, great, we got to clean the church. We got to clean the church. And, you know, I did not like cleaning the church. There's nothing worse than vacuuming between pews. There's nothing, right? You'll throw a shoulder out, vacuuming between pews. There's no vacuum that fits between pews. And bathrooms are awful. That's just, you know, I learned so many lessons. Don't whistle while you're cleaning toilets. Don't just do all these things. You just, you don't want to know how to learn them, right? There, there, there are scars that are permanently there. And I was, I was like, great, we got to go clean the church. And my wife would look at me. She said, we don't have to go clean the church. We get to go clean the church.

[ 22 : 05 ] And I was like, and I'll just be honest, transparent. I'm glad you have that attitude. I'm going to drive you down there so you get the opportunity to do it, but I got to do it because you're going. And I wasn't always very happy and joyous. And I didn't have the joy of the Lord was in my heart, but it wasn't on my face, right? But it absolutely changes the manner in which you do something based upon how you perceive it. When I began to see the, oh, well now we have the opportunity to clean the church or we get the opportunity rather than we have to do it. It became something that was done first grudgingly, then it became worshipful because we understand this not under compulsion. Friend, listen to me. Nobody is making you give. Nobody. Not under compulsion.

For God loves a cheerful giver. Do you know that the posture of our giving absolutely matters? The creator and sustainer of it all is not going to force us to give, but he is providing us the opportunity to give. Grand difference. Grand difference. The posture of giving. Number two, we notice the provisions of giving. This is where we get into the law of the harvest, so to say, in verse six, because giving provides something. Something is unique with this giving. This is the ministry opportunity. If we go into giving either of our time, our resources, our finances, and we give with an open hand. Understanding this, then we know that we are given from our provisions. Unfortunately, what happens too often is believers' hands are open in the receptive side and closed in the giving side, right? We want to receive it and hold on to it rather than receiving it and keeping it. Things ought to be laid in our hands and our hands ought to remain open because giving is based upon provisions. Notice what it says. I say this, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. He who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. You know this, right? If you sow a little, you get a little. If you sow a lot, you get a lot. We understand that, but what does it look like being fleshed out? Look at what it says here.

Which one must do just as his purpose in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. That position is right. Look at what it says. And God is able. Just look at that. God is able to make all grace abound to you. You say, oh, well, grace is great, but what I need is this. And you put the blank there, but wait a minute. Look at the gracious provisions of God to make all grace abound to you.

Look at this. So that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance. And some of us want to end the sentence there. Yes. May the grace of God come to me so that always having all sufficiency in everything, I may have an abundance. But that's not where it stops. Read the rest of it.

For every good deed. The provisions of God of an abundance is so that we may have more to do more.

[ 25 : 13 ] We may have an abundance for every good deed. Here's the law of the harvest. Jesus said it this way. He who has been faithful in little will be entrusted with much. When we've been

faithful in what we've already been given, he gives more to us because he knows we would do more with it.

The greatest story we ever see in this throughout church history is one of a more recent church history in Henry Blackaby. Henry Blackaby died this past year or earlier this year. He wrote, along with others, experiencing God studies. Some of you have done knowing and doing the will of God through experiencing God studies. Henry Blackaby, when he wrote that study, really came out of his ministry up in Canada. He was leading a small church up in Canada, a small Baptist church up there in Canada, and they were doing phenomenal missions work. They were planning churches. They had actually constructed a Bible college. They were funding a college that was training up pastors. They were doing work all around the world, and it was this very small local assembly in the heart of Canada.

If you know anything about the gospel field in Canada, there are really no mega churches there, and they were doing this abundant work. God called him away from there and actually called him out of Canada down to Atlanta. He ended up in Atlanta by way of Nashville and some other places, but at the writing of that book, at least the revision of that book, the pastor who followed Henry Blackaby, he came in, and the first thing he looked at, as most pastors do, is the budget report. As a matter of fact, the first Wednesday that I was ever here, I saw a budget meeting for the first time, and I was like, oh, this is the first time I've ever seen a budget report. That's a totally different story. So this new pastor comes in. He looks at the budget report. He begins to look at the office of the church, and then he begins to look at everything the church is supporting, and the church is supporting missions.

It's supporting church plants. It's supporting a college, and the pastor said, wait a minute. We don't have enough coming in to support all these things, so he began to make cuts, and he began to make cuts because it made financial sense, and as he began to make cuts that made financial sense, the church went under. Why? Because he was operating intellectually then by faith. God was providing much to the church because they were doing much. The moment they quit doing much good deeds is the moment the provision stopped coming. We see this reality. God is able. [ 27 : 31 ] God is able. I've met many, many churches who say, well, I wish we could do that, and I wish we couldn't do that, and I say, you are in more dangerous ground if you don't do that, because I promise you that the moment you quit doing it or the moment you don't do what the Lord is leading you to do will be the moment that the provisions quit coming in, and we don't need to get so concerned about counting our offerings as we do about counting our opportunities and the opportunities we have to do good and to do right, because look at what it says. God is able. Don't ever lose that. So that always having all sufficiency and everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed, the things that he puts before you. Here are the provisions. We only give that of which God has given to us. You say, pastor, who are you to tell me that ought to give, or what are you talking about that I should give of my time, my resource? Do you not know that everything you have comes to you by the way of the Jehovah Jireh, the Lord your provider? So you only give of that which has already been given. You're not giving something. You say, well, no, I earned this. Well, really? Well, who gave you the air in your lungs? The Bible says in the book of Job that if God was to call his spirit back to himself, that every spirit would descend from the heart of man, and all of mankind would die. That is, the very air in your lungs is a gift that has been given to you. Who has given you the opportunity to work? Who's given you the increase in muscle? Who's given you the stamina? Who's given you the joyous opportunity that by the sweat of your brow, or by the burning of your brain cells, and you're just kind of being stressed out, these are a wondrous gift. Men ought to praise God that we get to labor, because that's one of the things we've been given to do in scripture. To praise God that we have the opportunity. Thank you, Lord, for hard work. Thank you, Lord, for the opportunity to strive, and to earn, and the energy. Rather than saying, God, make it easier on me. God, help me to have the energy to do the things you want me to do, right? Whatever that is. We only give of that which has already been given unto us, because he quotes the book of Psalms here. He who scatters abroad, he gave to the poor. His righteousness endures forever. If you continue on through that Psalm, which in the New Testament, when a Psalm is quoted, it is quoted with the context of the entire Psalm, so you have to go look up that cross reference, right? It says, and his horn will never run out.

Now, the horn is the horn full of oil. That is, the oil doesn't run dry, because his righteousness endures. He is continuing to give to others. He's scattering abroad. God not only makes him

righteous, but he also provides for him. Now, 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. Look at this, and you will be enriched in everything. You're just like, great, I want to be enriched in everything, but look, finish it. For all, liberality. If you want to be enriched in everything, those provisions come to you that you may be givers liberally. For all, liberality.

I love the proverb that says, Lord, give me neither riches nor poverty, lest in my riches I deny you, and in my poverty I forsake you, but give me what I need. Some of us have set our needs way higher.

Way higher. Don't let society set your standard. Let the word of God dictate it for you. We understand this. The posture of giving, the provisions of giving. Number three, and you're very patient. This is my final giving sermon, right? So the production of giving. Giving produces something. When the saints give, and they take a hold of this unique ministry opportunity, something is produced by that action.

Ministry always results in something. Someone asked Billy Graham one time, how many points should a sermon have? Billy Graham's response is very classic. He said, at least one. That is, if you're preaching, you don't have a point, you shouldn't be preaching, right? You need to have at least one point.

[ 31 : 21 ] You got to be doing something. There's something that is a result of what you're doing. Ministry is a labor and a work that should produce something. So what is the production of giving? He says that the word of God tells us that you will be enriched in everything for all liberality. So our liberality, that is giving freely, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God. Notice what Paul is saying here. Paul says the liberality of the saints moving through Paul is producing much thanksgiving unto God. Notice this. The result of giving is not that people thank you.

It's so that there will be much thanksgiving unto God. Notice what it says. For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God. This repetition, right? So we pay attention to it. When the word of God says something once, we all go, oh, that's neat. When it says it twice, we ought to go, oh, that means something. When it begins to repeat itself, we need to stand up and take notice. Look at what he says.

This giving is there so that the thanksgiving may flow to God. Do you know this, my friend? Listen to me. God is deserving of all praise and all glory and all righteousness, all lifted up. He is deserving of all thanksgiving that could ever be given to him, right? He deserves all the praise and the glory of all beings. He is the great unfathomable one that needs or doesn't need the praise. He is deserving of the praise that should be offered to him. And one way we increase the praise to God is through the ministry of our giving. That is, God gets the glory. Man doesn't have to have the recognition, but God gets the glory. And it's a wonderful thing. Not only are you fully supplying the needs of the saints, but many thanksgivings are flowing to God. Its production is, it produces greater and greater greater praise. Because of the proof given by this ministry. By the way, our faith can be proven, right? Because of the proof given by this ministry. Your obedience. Again, they're not glorifying them.

Nobody's going, oh, look at the church at Corinth. They're glorifying God for their obedience. That is, our obedience to the gospel message. Look at what it says. For your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ. How we obey our confession of the gospel directly impacts how people praise God.

The way we live out our faith has an impact upon the praise of others. It's always my own faith. It's my personal faith. That's between me and my Lord, right? But the way you live that out, the proof of that relationship will result in a greater amount of praise and a greater amount of going into the Father.

[ 34 : 18 ] He says that by your obedience, the confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all, while they also by prayer on your behalf yearn for you because of their surpassing grace of God in you. Again, we notice that the production of giving is that God gets the recognition.

Man's natural desire is to take care of himself. We're talking about a supernatural reality of giving here. Fourth and finally, and I'll be done. We notice the proportion of giving.

Many of us want to know exactly how much should I give. Again, that's as each one has settled in his own heart. But here's the reflection of that proportion. As Paul has been writing about the giving

of the saints in chapters 8 and 9, there's one thing he can't leave off. And he encapsulates it all there in verse 15.

Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift. Paul says, I've tried to describe to you how I want you to give financially. I've tried to encourage you how I want you to give based upon your profession. I've tried to encourage you based upon what you've already stated. I don't want to be legalistic. I want you to give according to how you're being led. But I want to remind you of the gift of God. God has given so much. Words cannot describe it. It's indescribable. God has given so great that man cannot even tell of it. It is indescribable. Thanks be unto God because the proportion of our giving will never outmatch the proportion of his God has given. God has given above and beyond all that we could ever think, believe, or imagine.

God has given more than ever man could. God's gift is indescribable. God's gift was the gift of his son Jesus Christ for the great need of man. He met the need of man in one great gift and it is so glorious and so wonderful words fail to even encapsulate it.

[ 36 : 20 ] And if God can give such a gift as that, then can't his people be those who give to meet the temporal needs of those around us? See, the proportion.

Too often we think, well, I can't give that much. The whole time we fail to realize just how much he gave. This is a unique ministry opportunity that is given to each one of us for the glory of God and not the recognition of man.

May we be those who walk faithfully in it. I don't think it's coincidental, by the way, that in the very next few verses, we'll start talking about the destruction of spiritual forces that are raised up in the mind of the believer.

Because the moment our heart begins to be stirred, Satan begins to work. But for now, the giving of the saints is a unique ministry opportunity. We can give financially.

We can give spiritually. We can give of our resources and our time. The reality is we've been called to give in proportion to what he has given to us. Let's pray.

[ 37 : 27 ] God, thank you so much for this day. Thank you for your faithfulness to us. Thank you for your goodness. Lord, we repeat the refrain.

We thank you for your indescribable gift. Though we realize that no matter how much we try to give, no matter how much we try to sacrifice, it will never, ever match what you've given to us in Christ Jesus.

So, Lord Jesus, may our hearts be right. May it be a matter of the heart and not of the mind. And may you lead us all as individuals for your sole benefit and your sole glory.

And we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[ 40 : 08 ] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.