

2 Corinthians 8:7, "Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also."

My prayer this morning is for the family of God to understand and be exhorted concerning the blessings of giving. In the verse previously cited, it was the Apostle Paul who would exhort the Church at Corinth to abound in the grace of giving. The word abound in this verse literally means to go or do above and beyond. Paul desired the Church at Corinth to go above and beyond in giving as they had in other things. I would offer seven reasons why they, as well as we, should be exhorted to give to the Church and the poor saints in the world:

(1) God gave His "only begotten Son" ( 2 Cor 8:9). The Apostle Paul exhorts the congregation at Corinth to give, because their salvation was by the Lord giving His Son, and the Son giving His life on the Cross of Calvary. By this perfect work, the family of God, who are poor by nature, are rich in His grace.

(2) God's gifts in the ministry (2 Cor 8:16). When the Apostle says "God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus", Paul is saying that the desire that they see in Titus exists because God gave it to him, that he might be able to give in return.

(3) What we have been blessed to have (2 Cor 8:12). The person who gives, does not give out of what he or she has not, but out of what they have. One good question to ask yourself daily is, 'What do I have that was not given to me by the Lord?' The answer is 'nothing of value.' Now if what we have was given to us of the Lord (1 Cor 4:7), we should be willing to give as He hath given to us.

(4) The example of others (2 Cor 8:2-3). When we read that the saints at Macedonia, who were in a "great trial of affliction" and "deep poverty", were praying with "much intreaty" to give, we should be pricked in our hearts to give to others also.

(5) The fellowship with other saints depends on our willingness to give (2 Cor 8:4 and 2 Cor 8:14). When we are willing to give to others, it brings us all closer together in our service to God. We truly, in the effort of giving, are trying to "bear one another's burdens" (Gal 6:2).

(6) Giving shows forth the grace of God in our hearts (2 Cor 8:6-7). When the Apostle exhorts them to "abound in this grace", he is exhorting them to show forth God's grace in their lives by their giving to others. When we do for the Church and for the poor saints, we show our thanksgivings to God for His grace upon undeserving sinners like you and I.

(7) Giving pleases our Father which is in heaven (2 Cor 9:6-7). When we read that "God loveth a cheerful giver", it should be enough for us to be willing to live our lives for the glory of God and the benefit of other children of God. Oh, how every one of us should be exhorted and have an earnest desire to please God, who has loved us and saved us from our sins. Amen !

Elder Ronnie B. Loudermilk