

Sermon Notes

2 Corinthians 9:1-15 NRSV | Written by Rev. Dr. Alf Halvorson

This is the fourth in our series on Paul’s Second Letter to the Church in Corinth. In chapters 8 and 9, Paul invites and challenges the Corinthian congregation to fulfill their pledge financially for the needs of the mother church in Jerusalem. He is very direct in his appeal and challenges them by the example of the churches in Macedonia in chapter 8.

Now, here in chapter 9, Paul admits in the first five verses that he challenged the churches up in Macedonia by the previously agreed upon pledge of the church in Corinth. He has been “playing them off each other” to try to inspire both locations’ participation and faithfulness. He even admits his worry to them that if some friends from Macedonia come with him to Corinth and the Corinthian church does not have the pledge all collected (and ready to be delivered), he and they will look bad and be humiliated.

Paul is definitely pulling out all the stops psychologically—but then, in verses 6-15, he seems to shift and give more of a theological argument for life making sense when we are generous rather than stingy. It is a profound, powerful, beautifully positive section of Scripture.

1. Have you ever been “guilted into” giving or doing something you really did not want to at the time? What was it about or for? How did you feel during and after the episode? Is it good to give based on guilt?
2. Read 2 Cor. 9:1-15; focus especially on verses 6-15. Paul says the gifts are to be “voluntary” in verse 5 and given not “reluctantly, or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful give” in verse 7. What theological argument overall does Paul make in these later verses to help the Corinthian church be able to give from the right motives and with the right view of God in mind?
3. I shared in my sermon that Paul quotes three Old Testament Scriptures to make his case. He quotes Prov. 22:8 from the Greek version of the OT; then Ps. 112:9; and then finally Is. 55:10. He uses specific verses, but I tried to make the case that he intends the audience to know and look at the entire chapter around each verse to see the rationale for the quote. If you have the time, read Proverbs chapter 22, Ps. 112, and Isaiah 55. How do those sections fill in the argument or provide a foundation for Paul’s invitation to generosity?
4. In my message, I spent considerable time on the phrase, “(the person’s) righteousness (benevolence, justice, and mercy together) endures forever.” I shared about my mom and about “a rope of our life and eternity.” What spoke to you, if anything, from that section of the message?
5. In verses 11-15, Paul suggests the benefits that will result from their/our generosity. What are those benefits? How does remembering the “indescribable gift(s) of God” help us grow in giving? Do you have any questions about pledging or giving to the ministries of Christ through MDPC? If you do, talk to one of our pastors, staff, or a church member to get clarity on this core principle of *radical generosity* at MDPC.

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Financial Update	as of Oct 26, 2025
2025 Annual Budget	\$ 14,203,292
Actual Income to Date	9,917,408
Needed to Meet 2025 Budget	4,285,884

Births and Deaths

Rachel Iris French was born Oct 1 to Walker and Ginny French; siblings Grace and Sarah.

Inis Kochman-Scott passed away Oct 17.

More information at memorials.mdpc.org.



MDPC
MEMORIAL DRIVE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Active Generosity

Covenant Sunday
Nov 2, 2025

Matthew 10:8

MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Covenant Sunday
Step Forward with Bold Generosity
At MDPC, generosity isn’t just a season—it’s a way of life. Each year, your pledges of time, talent, and treasure fuel the ministries that touch lives in Houston and around the world. Because of your faithfulness,

- neighbors in need are served with compassion,
- seekers are beckoned to share in the Good News,
- disciples of all ages grow in Christ and in relationship with each other, and
- worship transforms as we offer our praise and allegiance to the living God.

This year’s theme, *Active Generosity*, reminds us that pledging a percentage of our financial blessings to God is more than a passive verbal commitment—it’s an active, humble response to the abundant grace we’ve received. When we pledge, we not only strengthen the mission of MDPC, we also model a lifestyle of open-handed gratitude and outreach.

As Jesus teaches, “Freely you have received; freely give” (Matthew 10:8). Together, let us step forward with bold generosity in the year ahead.

Keep in mind, your pledge isn’t a gift yet—it’s your projection of next year’s giving, which helps MDPC plan wisely for 2026 ministry expenses.

If you pledged online (pledge.mdpc.org) but plan to turn in a covenant card, please check the “I pledged online” box on the card.

To view all events, visit events.mdpc.org.

Women’s Spiritual Retreat
Sat, Nov 15 | 9am-3:30pm
Guided by the Spirit and led by faithful teachers Beth Case and Teri Adair, we will explore Scripture and reflect on how God’s mighty presence brings restoration, purpose, and peace. Learn more and register: delight.mdpc.org


Young Adults Friendsgiving
Sat, Nov 15 | 6-9pm | MDPC
A night of comfort food, heartfelt conversations, and shared gratitude as we hear personal faith stories from a few young adults in their 20s & 30s. Details and RSVP: yaevents.mdpc.org

BLESS Friday Is Coming!
Fri, Nov 28
Turn a day of shopping into a day of service! Learn more: blessfriday.mdpc.org

Apply to Become a Stephen Minister
Applications due in Dec | Training starts Jan 13
Do others turn to you in times of need? Do you have a compassionate heart and a listening ear? Consider becoming a Stephen Minister, providing confidential one-to-one Christian care to others going through hard times. To learn more, visit stephentraining.mdpc.org.



Give Online
give.mdpc.org



CURIOUS ABOUT MDPC?

This class is a laid-back way to learn what we believe, meet others, and see if this might be your church home. No pressure, just connection!

Fri evening, Nov 21 • 6-8:30pm
Sat morning, Nov 22 • 8-11:30am

newmembers.mdpc.org

NEW MEMBER CLASSES



THANKSGIVING

MEAL IN A BAG



This Thanksgiving, ESB and MDPC Fuente Food Pantries will feed over 1,000 families struggling with food insecurity - and you can help!

Pick up shopping bags & lists on campus. Please return filled bags by Nov 16.

Learn more: meals.mdpc.org



As you enter worship, we kindly ask that you silence your cell phones.



8:30 BLENDED SERVICE

GATHERING

Call to Worship		Rachel Poysky
*Songs of Praise	All Creatures of Our God and King O Praise the Name (ANASTASIS)	
*Confession & Assurance Prayers of the People		Dan Aikins
Worship Hymn	Be Thou My Vision	

HEARING THE WORD

Message	Beautifully Broken 2 Corinthians 9:1-15 NRSV	Alf Halvorson
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RESPONDING

Covenant Moment		Alf Halvorson
Song of Response	Abide	

SENDING

*Doxology		OLD 100TH
*Benediction		Alf Halvorson

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9:45 CONTEMPORARY SERVICE

GATHERING

*Call to Worship		Michael Middleton
*Songs of Praise	Awake, My Soul O Praise the Name (ANASTASIS)	
*Confession & Assurance Prayers of the People		Luke Funderburk
*Worship Songs	The Lord Will Provide I Surrender All	

HEARING THE WORD

Message	Beautifully Broken 2 Corinthians 9:1-15 NRSV	Alf Halvorson
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RESPONDING

Covenant Moment		Alf Halvorson
Song of Response	Abide	

SENDING

*Doxology		OLD 100TH
*Benediction		Alf Halvorson

Musicians: Asher Pudlo, drums | Chris Parrott, guitar | Uvaldo Callejas, bass
JJ Blanco, keys | Michael Middleton & Meliza Gómez, worship leaders

*Please stand, if comfortable.

11:15 TRADITIONAL SERVICE

GATHERING

Prelude	Pièce Héroïque	César Franck (1822-1890)
Call to Worship		Rachel Poysky
Choral Introit	Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing	James Mulholland (b. 1935)
*Hymn of Praise	Called As Partners in Christ's Service	Vs. 1, 2 #343 BEECHER
*Confession and Assurance of Pardon		Dan Aikins
*Affirmation of Faith from The Apostles' Creed		
*Responsorial Psalm	Psalm 103: O My Soul, Bless Your Redeemer	Vs. 1, 2 #223 STUTTGART
*Prayers of the People The Lord's Prayer		Rachel Poysky

HEARING THE WORD

Anthem of Preparation	Lay Up Your Treasures in Heaven	Pepper Choplin (b. 1957)
Message	Beautifully Broken 2 Corinthians 9:1-15 NRSV	Alf Halvorson

RESPONDING

*Hymn of Response	God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending	Vs. 1, 3 #422 BEACH SPRING
Covenant Moment		Alf Halvorson
Anthem of Response	God Has Work for Us to Do	Mark A. Miller (b. 1956)

SENDING

*Doxology	Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow	#592 OLD 100TH
*Benediction		Alf Halvorson
Postlude	Voluntary in D	David N. Johnson (1922-1987)

Musicians: Kelli Estes, Megan Berti, soloists | MDPC Sanctuary Choir
Charles Hausmann, Traditional Worship Director | Kathryn White, organist

Mon, Nov 10 • 9:30-11am

VETERANS COFFEE AND CONNECTION

CALLING ALL VETERANS!

Join Pastor Alf in the Parlor for coffee and pastries, a devotional, and connection with other veterans.

You're Invited to

ALL-CHURCH LUNCH

Today! 11am-1pm

Fellowship Hall

Join your church family for lunch on the first Sunday of each month!

Pricing and menu: ACL.mdpc.org

Thanks to your generosity...

MDPC was able to give \$233,000 in October to our local and global ministry partners. That brings our year-to-date outreach giving to a little over \$2.57 million—funds that are fueling Gospel work and changing lives here in Houston and around the world. Thank you for being part of God's mission through your faithful giving!