

Seize the Opportunity . . . To Give – 2 Cor 9:6-15

This is the 4th and final message in our Seize the Opp series – intended to prepare us to do exactly that – seize the opp of buying a building and preparing for more ministry
We saw in our first message that extraordinary opp's like this one, require ext faith, commitment, and sacrifice; leading to ext joy
In our second message – Seize the Opp . . . For a Change – we discovered that opp's like this often require a change of pace, plans, and priorities in our own lives; looking always unto Jesus as our example and source of strength
Last week, we looked at the apostle Paul's example of seizing an opp to spread the word – the good news of Jesus
And how we too should seize this opp to spread the word of all that God is doing, with everyone we can; and do so with great expectation

This week, with commitment Sunday only a week away, I think it's important that we clearly understand what God says about giving, so that we seize this opp *with the right heart and motives* – **2 Cor 9:6-15**

The *original* purpose of this part of Paul's letter was to encourage the believers in Corinth to give a special collection over and above their normal giving, to relieve the church in Jerusalem of their hardship caused by a drought, taxation, and persecution

That was the *original* purpose, but the *principles* apply to *all* our giving – special occasions *or* regular tithes . . .

Because they are consistent with the whole of Scripture, and reflect the desires and character of the same God – then and now

In addition to that, these principles of giving apply not just to our money and treasure, but to our time and talent as well

So this example of giving by the Corinthian church in the 1st century, provides a pattern of giving for our church in the 21st century

The point is this (6) . . .

Give generously – God blesses it (v6,11)

Pretty clear – you reap what you sow (6)

- God blesses generous giving, generously; God blesses sparing giving, sparingly
Invest little – gain little; Sow little – harvest little; Give little – reap little
Sow/Invest much (give generously) – Reap/Gain much (be blessed generously)

Begs the question – What is *generous* giving?

Giving more than what is expected

Giving above what is needed

Giving a lot when you could get by with a little

It requires a . . .

Loose grip on all you have; Solid belief that it's not yours in the first place

Firm conviction that God will provide for you; Burning passion for God's purposes

Just in case there's any doubt as to what Paul is saying, he makes it explicit in v11 – *You will be enriched in every way for all your generosity*

Enriched – blessed, fortunate, better off *in every way*

Generosity – the openness of your heart as shown by your giving

Just in case you think that you don't have much of God's blessing to look forward to because you don't have much to give – look at 2 Cor 8:12 (read it) –

It's not what you have that determines whether your gift is generous/acceptable to God

It's whether you want to give it, or not

It's your heart, not your amount, that makes your gift generous and acceptable to God, resulting in his blessing

A little caveat – God blesses generous giving, yes, but . . .

- It should never be in your mind to give in order to get
Obedience to the promptings of God for what you should give, *will* bring blessing, but not if you *give* with the motive to *get*
Nor should you think that God will give you what you give him – money for money, time to time, talent for talent
That presumes on God; Places expectations on him that we're in no position to make
He's God and we're not; His ways are not our ways; His timing is not our timing
He will bless us as he chooses and when he chooses

It should never be in your mind to give in order to get

- Instead, you should give generously because it blesses others, pleases God, and advances his kingdom

Kind of like a little boy – let's call him Tommy . . .

His mom and dad said that if he shares his toys with his sister Tammy, they would give him an ice cream cone on Saturday

Is it their highest desire that Tommy shares just to get the ice cream cone?

Are they trying to teach him that if he performs, he gets a reward like Pavlov's dog?

Of course not – their intent is that Tommy will share because he loves his sister and loves to do right

Anything he gets beyond the satisfaction of having blessed his sister and pleased his parents, is a bonus

That should be our motive in giving generously – we should do so because we know it blesses others, pleases God, and advances his kingdom; Anything else is a bonus

Give generously – God blesses it

Give joyfully – God loves it (v7)

No one should give because they think they have to; or because everybody's doing it
Or because someone tells you to

- You should give as you make up your mind; as God moves you
That way you'll give joyfully, cheerfully

That's important because . . .

God loves a cheerful giver – delights in, honors, favors . . .

Someone who gives because they want to

Someone who gives with their whole heart, and is happy about it

This cheerful/joyful giving is not some little “he-he” kind of happiness

“I'm a little bit happy; I just want to keep to myself about it”

This is a can't-keep-the-lid-on, can't-help-myself, affect-everybody-I'm-around type of joy – Gr word for cheerful is – hi-lar-os; Forms the root of our English word hilarious

It's that kind of overflowing joy, that degree of cheer, that God loves in our giving

So get with the Lord if you haven't already, and give as he moves you so that you can do so joyfully

On the other side of the coin . . .

- God does not look favorably on those who give *reluctantly* – whose heart is not full in
Nor does he look favorably on those who give because they think they have to, under
compulsion/pressure

If you're feeling *pressure* – you're either giving too much, or the HS is telling you to
give more and you're resisting

If that's you, lower your amount and see if that alleviates it

If it does, you were giving too much out of compulsion

If it doesn't alleviate it – chances are God's telling you to give more

If you're feeling *reluctant*, do everything you can to remove it

If you have doubts – about ministries, doctrine, direction, details

Get them addressed; Talk to someone

If you lack info – Go to Open House; That's why we have them

Don't use your doubts or lack of info as an excuse to withhold your gift

If you do, you'll miss out on God's best because you gave reluctantly, or not at all

Seize the opp to remove any reluctance/pressure, so that you can give joyfully, and
experience the *fullness* of God's blessing in your life

Give generously – God blesses it; Give joyfully – God loves it

Give freely – God supplies it (v8-10)

God will enable you to participate in this and every good work

- He will supply what you need so that you can supply what is needed (8)

Paul's like, you know that; Cites Ps 112:9 – that's what happens w/ the righteous (9)

They're able to abound in every good work because they give freely of what God has
given to them (9)

In doing so, they're able to make a lasting impact for righteousness; lasting impact in
the kingdom of God

That's one of the reasons we want to seize this opp – not only will it lead to more
ministry and grow us through much *sacrifice*; but it will result in a greater *impact*
for the kingdom of God

Reinforces it in v10 . . .

Just like God supplies the means to plant and harvest for *food* (10) . . .

He also supplies/multiplies the means to initiate and increase works of righteousness

One commentator – “As regularly as the resources of the cheerful giver are depleted by
his generous giving, they are replenished by divine grace.”

- Ever heard the adage “you can't out give God” – these vs are the biblical basis for it
God will supply the generous, joyful giver *with* more, so that he can *give* more
It doesn't matter *how* much you give – if you give *freely* of what he supplies, he'll supply
more so that you can freely *give*

Warren Wiersbe, pastor of 40+ years, spoke one time of a wealthy Christian man who
each day at family devos, prayed for the \$ needs of missionaries his church supported
One morning after he had concluded his prayers, his little boy said, “Dad, if I had your
checkbook, I could answer your prayers!” – Wisdom from the mouth of babes
The man was all about God helping others, and genuinely so, but he wasn't willing to
give freely as God's instrument to help them
That's how God most often provides for the needs of his people – as he supplies, his
people freely give; and as you give freely, he supplies more

Give generously, joyfully, freely, and . . .

Give expectantly – God uses it (12-15)

You can be confident that when you give generously, joyfully, and freely for the purposes
of God – he will use it

This passage shows us 6 things you can expect God to do as a result of your giving

We should be looking for these things in our church, due to both our sacrificial giving,
and our regular giving

You can expect that God will use your giving to . . .

1. Encourage others to give (8:1-7; 9:1-5)

Paul uses the example of sacrificial giving on the part of the Macedonian Christians, to
encourage the Christians in Corinth to give in the same way

You can expect that God will use your giving to encourage others to give as well – both
now and in the future

Hearing some of your stories of giving has encouraged Becky and I to give more

2. Increase the prayers of his people

Prayers of thanks (11b, 12b – *the ministry of this service . . . is overflowing in many
thanksgivings to God*)

We met with 6 of our SG's this past week, and were so blessed and encouraged to
have heard such heartfelt prayers of thanks, because of the giving already

As we give, we can expect even more of that; And not only prayers of thanks, but . . .

Prayers of intercession (14) – those benefiting from gift, will pray *for you*

Your giving doesn't buy you prayer, but it's certainly a natural result

Who doesn't want that?

3. Supply the needs of the saints (12a)

Just like the Corinthian's giving would supply the needs of the saints in Jerusalem . . .

Your giving will supply the needs of the saints here in the QC's

Ministry needs for discipling believers; Physical needs for those in hardship

Spiritual needs for those who don't know Christ

4. Bring glory to himself (13)

13 – *they will glorify God*

Isn't that the point? That more and more people will worship and glorify the God
who's worthy of our praise?

That will happen here just like it happened there, as more and more people walk
through our doors, commit their lives to Christ, and consider the sacrifice that you
made to seize this opp

They will glorify God because you don't just profess to follow Christ, you live it (13a)
We don't just talk about giving, we do it (13b)

5. Knit our hearts together (14a)

14 – *they* [Jerusalem believers] will *long for you*

Do you realize what Paul was predicting here?

He was predicting a reconciliation between two of the most racially divided people in
the history of the world – Jews/Gentiles; All because of generous giving of Gentile
That same power of unity is available to us through our giving

We can expect that God will use our generous and joyful giving to unify us as a body,
and knit us together even more than he already has

You can expect that God will use your giving to . . .

6. Refresh your perspective (15)

To keep your heart centered on the most amazing act of giving of all –

God sending his Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins, in our place, so we could
be forgiven and have life forever and life to the full

That's the *inexpressible gift* that Paul thanks God for

When he enables and blesses your *financial* gifts, you can expect a fresh perspective of
his gift, most likely from your knees – as you thank him for life and salvation in Jesus
Christ

Summary

Give generously, joyfully, freely, and expectantly

God blesses it, he loves it, he supplies it, and he uses it for his glory