

# Confident Life in the Generosity of God

Thomas Robinson, January 26, 2020

## 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

<sup>6</sup> The point is this: whoever **sows seed sparingly** will also **reap sparingly**, and whoever sows trusting God's **blessings** will also reap by those blessings —<sup>7</sup> each one, just as they've **decided in the heart**, not from grief or from compulsion, for **"God loves a cheerful giver"** [Prov 22:8-9 Gk].

<sup>8</sup> Now **God has power** to make **all grace** (*charis*) abound for you, so that having all **self-sufficiency** in all things at all times, you may **abound in every good work**. <sup>9</sup> As it is written, **"They scattered freely, they gave to the poor; their righteousness endures into the age to come"** [Psa 112:9].

<sup>10</sup> The one who **"supplies seed to the sower and bread for food"** [Isa 55:10] will supply and multiply your seed and make the produce of your righteousness grow, <sup>11</sup> as **you're enriched in everything to be simply generous in every way**. That will produce **thanksgiving** to God through us.

<sup>12</sup> For the ministry of this service is not only fully providing the things that God's people lack, it's also creating abundance through many expressions of **thanksgiving to God**. <sup>13</sup> They glorify God through the experience of this ministry when they see how **your confession leads you to yield to the Good News of the Anointed King**, and they see a **simple generosity** in your sharing with them and with all people, <sup>14</sup> All the while they care deeply for you and pray for you, because **God's astonishing grace** (*charis*) that he's giving you.

<sup>15</sup> **Grace** (*charis*) belongs to **God** for **his inexpressible gift!**

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## Proverbs 22:8 Greek LXX

Those who sow useless things will reap bad things and they'll drive home the impact of their deeds. God blesses a person who's cheerful and giving.

## Psalms 112:6-9

<sup>6</sup> The righteous ... <sup>7</sup> won't be afraid of evil news, since their heart is prepared to hope in the Lord.

<sup>8</sup> Their heart is firm ... and unafraid ... <sup>9</sup> They scattered freely; they gave to the poor; their righteousness endures into the age to come ....

## Isaiah 55:1-2, 10-11

<sup>1</sup> "Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. <sup>2</sup> Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food....

<sup>10</sup> For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread for food, <sup>11</sup> so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."

## Philippians 4:11-13

<sup>11</sup> Not that I'm speaking of being in need, for I myself have learned in whatever situation I am to be self-sufficient. <sup>12</sup> I know how to be humbled, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.

<sup>13</sup> I'm strong for all things in him who strengthens me.

## 2 Corinthians 8:3-5, 9 The Generosity of impoverished believers.

<sup>3</sup> For, as I can testify [about the Macedonian believers], it was according to their power, and even beyond their power, by their own choice, <sup>4</sup> with many pleas, begging us for the grace (charis) and the fellowship of this ministry for God's people. <sup>5</sup> This wasn't as we anticipated; rather, they gave themselves first to the Lord and, by the will of God, to us. ...

<sup>9</sup> For you know the grace (charis) of our Lord, Jesus the Anointed King, that for your sakes he became poor, though he was rich, so that by his poverty you may become rich.

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## God's Choice of Generous Grace

Jesus taught farmers and fishermen about treasures in God's realm, serving God and Mammon, and choosing not to be anxious about life. Paul gave us the example of persecuted, impoverished believers overflowing with simple generosity.

It's hard to relate. We in the US are well-off in the world at large but most of us don't feel rich enough to be generous. We like generosity. Henry Ford or Bill Gates makes a pile of money, sets up a foundation, becomes "good," a benefactor. We learn generosity as a function of wealth. That's "love of honor" (a payoff) not simple generosity.

The striking thing in the NT is Generosity of the Poor, not for any glory but to learn God's grace by simply seeing and helping the needs of others. There's no virtue in poverty nor any necessary evil in wealth, but there's danger in both. Dispair and rage, corrupt power, blindness to others, etc. All along the spectrum, we learn that Mammon saves.

God's grace draws us to see simple, non-manipulative generosity as a core of life for everyone no matter what their circumstances. Seek to share in the practice of Grace!

## Meditating on God's Grace – Practicing God's Grace

God, as we see him in Jesus, unites the limits of wealth/power and poverty/vulnerability.

Paul calls us to think how Grace re-makes us as we live within it. Three scriptures. It challenges us to think clearly about reality, about just how much we receive: life, hope, forgiveness, God's Spirit, etc. All came by God joyfully taking on my vulnerability, poverty, death in Jesus. I'm like that lily, more beautiful than Solomon. Even persecuted and without money, I'm rich. I want to learn that joy and love of God that I see in Jesus. God's grace re-makes me as I make choices, find ways to practice God's love and joy in generous grace. No bargain, no payment, only gift: God's inexpressible Gift.

This sort of re-make can't be law. We see it in Jesus; we catch it from others; we learn to breathe it. We find it bears our weight. It makes life joyful in any circumstances. Not pleasurable or without pain and suffering, but joyful in the high, wide, deep love of God.

## Do it, Do it, Do it!

Paul is offering the Corinthian one starter way to begin this remake. People far away in need. Sacrifice without any real response except the creation of thanksgiving. Not the end but the beginning of learning Grace, but it is a step on the journey into God's life.

We seek out ways in our own situations to practice simple generosity. No repayment except insight into God's joy. That's what church ministries are. Starter opportunities, ways to grow, places to learn what matters, God's grace, his inexpressible gift!