

The Potter's Christian Life Center

SERMON NOTES
with Pastor Greg Formey



Generosity Is From God

2 Corinthians 8:1-7

Sunday, April 24, 2016

The Macedonians were crushed by life. The surrounding culture was squeezing them harder and harder because of their devotion to Jesus Christ. They were experiencing grinding poverty and a crushing tribulation that made life simply impossible. They were dirt poor, but remarkably rich spiritually. They did not allow their financial conditions to dictate what they would or would not do for the kingdom of God. They were told about the plight of fellow believers in another country (Israel) and were determined to do something about it.

Romans 15:26

For you see, the believers in Macedonia and Achaia have eagerly taken up an offering for the poor among the believers in Jerusalem. NLT

HE INSPIRES US

2 Corinthians 8:1-2

¹Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. ²They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy...

We consider ourselves poor if we have to think twice about the cost before we go out to dinner. The Macedonians had no credit cards. They had no wardrobes. They had no vacations. They had no TV. They had no electricity. They had no indoor plumbing.

God is showing favor toward a church when He excites in it a spirit of generosity. It is one of the evidences of his love. It is a special thing when He inspires us to contribute generously to improve the condition other people.

HE EMPOWERS US

³For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will. NLT

They went beyond what was thought possible in their condition. Remember that they were in the midst of serious deprivation. The literal idea is that they are scraping the bottom of the barrel.

But now comes a truly incredible statement: **"they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity."** NLT 2 Corinthians 8:2b

In their meager existence, these little churches burst out with the joy of giving. This could only be the grace of God.

⁴They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem. NLT

Entirely on their own they pleaded with Paul for the privilege of sharing what they little they had with the people of Jerusalem, who were worse off than them." They gave, literally, contrary to their ability.

This is what happens when grace motivates a heart. Things don't happen because of ability or resources. People moved by grace see giving as a privilege, and it becomes an act of joy.

THE SECRET BEHIND IT ALL

⁵They even did more than we had hoped, for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and to us, just as God wanted them to do.

When the grace of God comes into your life, you give yourself back to God. When this happens, you give to others in the best way you can.

It does no good to give our possessions to God unless we first give ourselves. In fact, when we give out of some other motivation, then we will be tempted to imagine that giving our resources is enough, and that somehow God will be pleased with us.

And so he says to the Corinthian church, **"⁷Since you excel in so many ways - in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us - I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving."** (2 Corinthians 8:7) He wants them to come to completion, to maturity in that. The Corinthian church was not like the Macedonian church. It was not poor, and it was marvelously gifted. He wanted them to come to completion but growing in the grace of generosity.