

Faith Promise Giving

II Corinthians 8:1-5

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Introduction: We are all familiar with the story of the widow's mite in Luke 21:1-4. Christ testifies of her, "*Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.*" We can conclude from this, "The most genuine liberality is frequently displayed by those who have least to give. Christian giving is estimated in terms not of quantity but of sacrifice" (Hughes). Chapters 8 & 9 of II Corinthians give us the most detailed exposition of true Christian giving. Note with me this morning faith promise giving here in verses 1-5 as we center our attention first on the principles of faith promise giving & then, next Sunday, the purposes for faith promise giving described in 8:6-15.

I. The **first** principle of faith promise giving > Giving is **enabled** by grace (:1)
[Compare & contrast "tithes & offerings" with "faith promise giving."]

A. The expressions of God's grace -

1. Magnifications of grace (in song):
 - a. "Amazing Grace."
 - b. "Saved by Grace,"
 - c. "Wonderful Grace of Jesus."
 - d. "Grace Greater Than Our Sin."
2. Manifestations of grace (in spirit):
 - a. Saving grace > Ephesians 2:8-9.
 - b. Serving grace > Hebrews 12:28.
 - c. Sustaining grace > I Corinthians 15:10.
 - d. Suffering grace > II Corinthians 12:9.
 - e. Succumbing grace > Hebrew 4:16 (cf. Acts 7:59-60).
 - f. Sharing grace > II Corinthians 8:1, 7 & 9:8.

B. The experience of God's grace -

1. By the churches of Macedonia (:1) - Philippi, Thessalonica, & Berea.
2. By the church at Corinth (9:13-14).

II. The **second** principle of faith promise giving > Giving is **exercised** (even) in poverty (:2-3)

A. The Macedonians' condition (:2a)

1. Their persecution - "*great trial of affliction*" (see I Thess. 1:6, 2:14 & Acts 16:20).
2. Their poverty - "*deep poverty*" - "Extremely deep (poverty)... the most severe type of economic deprivation, the kind that caused a person to become a beggar."

B. The Macedonians' compassion (:2b-3)

1. Their liberality extended (:2b).
 - a. "*Liberality*" means generosity, sincerity, single-hearted.
 - b. "The Macedonian believers were rich in their single-minded & selfless generosity to God & to others." [Great affliction + deep poverty = abundant joy & abounding liberality??]
2. Their ability exceeded (:3) - Three elements of freewill giving:
 - a. "*For to their power* (ability)" > Proportionate giving - 8:12 & I Cor. 16:2.
 - b. "*Beyond their power*" > Sacrificial giving - Mark 12:41-44 (widow's mite).
 - c. "*Willing of themselves*" > Voluntary giving - II Cor. 9:6; Pro. 3:9-10.

III. The **third** principle of faith promise giving > Giving is **evidenced** through fellowship (:4)

A. There is spiritual fellowship > in the bonds of Christ

1. There is unity in the bonds of the Gospel - II Cor. 9:13-14.
2. There is unity in the body of Christ - I Cor. 12:13 & Gal. 3:27-29.

B. There is material fellowship > in the blessings of Christ

1. The principle of sharing material blessings - Gal. 6:10, I Cor. 9:11.
2. The privilege of sharing material blessings - II Cor. 8:4, & 9:7.

Summary: Verse 4 begins, *"Praying us with much intreaty..."* – compare > *"Imploring us with much urgency"* (NKJV). They 'begged' Paul because of their strong desire to have a part in ministering to the saints in Jerusalem (sad to say, it is oftentimes just the opposite today). Compare Exodus 36:5-7.

IV. The **fourth** principle of faith promise giving > Giving is **expected** after dedication (:5)

A. Surrender means recognizing God's sovereignty (God's ownership & our stewardship).

1. Dedicated to be God's sacrifices > Romans 12:1-2.
2. Dedicated to be God's servants > Romans 6:18-22 [see I Chronicles 29:10-13].

B. Surrender means realizing man's dependency.

1. We are able to live only as God gives life > Acts 17:25, Isaiah 42:5, & Daniel 5:23.
2. We are able to give only what God has given > Philippians 4:10-19 [see I Chronicles 29:14-17].

Summary: How did they give? *"By the will of God."* They gave "at the direction of God. In spite of their own desperate circumstances these saints exhibited faith in God to care for them while they attempted to care for their brethren" (Nutz). "Generous giving follows personal dedication."

Conclusion: The Corinthian church had made a "faith promise." Yet they had failed to follow through on that promise. Therefore, Paul writes these 2 chapters to exhort & explain what true Christian giving is all about. We see here in 8:1-5 the principles of faith promise giving & next week we will consider the purposes for faith promise giving. The 4 principles we have seen in verses 1-5 could be summarized: Gracious, generous giving is the result of genuine, grateful surrender. These principles can be identified as: Faith promise giving is enabled by grace, it is exercised even in poverty, it is evidenced through fellowship, & it is expected after dedication. If you would like to be a part of our missions giving, consider the card: "The faith promise plan," As you read through it, first pray & ask the Lord if He would have you to be a part of this ministry. If so, then ask the Lord how much He would have you to give. If you have any questions about this, please let me know.

In closing, I refer you to II Corinthians 9:8, *"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."*