

I Love You This Much!

2 Corinthians 8

February 13-14, 2010

Introduction

- Open your Bibles to 2 Corinthians 8
- Previously, we have looked at “What a Great Opportunity!” we have as a church to eliminate our debt, renovate our facilities and continue in greater strength the ministry of making disciples.
- We encouraged each Northsider last week that “You’re a Part of the Team!” and in unity, with discipline and through obedience we can accomplish all that God has asked of us.
- This is Valentine’s Day – hopefully you men remembered.
- With this being Valentine’s Day, I thought it only appropriate to talk about Love.
- I believe that it’s impossible to talk about giving and not talk about Love or to talk about Love and not talk about giving
- Grandpa Kroll’s “I Love You a bushel and a peck...” and “I Love You This Much!”
- I Love You This Much!...

Challenge

- **The Intersection of Giving**
 - 2 Corinthians 8:6-9
 - 6 *So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part.*
 - 7 *But just as you excel in everything-- in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us--see that you also excel in this grace of giving.*
 - 8 *I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others.*
 - 9 *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.*

- When it comes to Christian giving, there are two forces that intersect
 - God’s Grace and Our Love
- God’s Grace
 - 2 Corinthians 8:6-7
 - 6 *So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part.*
 - 7 *But just as you excel in everything-- in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us--see that you also excel in this grace of giving.*
 - ✓ “grace” = Grace is God’s working on our behalf – His actions for us that we otherwise could not do
 - Giving is only possible because God has already given to us – everything is His
 - 1 Chronicles 29:10-16
 - 10 *David praised the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly, saying, "Praise be to you, O LORD, God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting.*
 - 11 *Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all.*
 - 12 *Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.*
 - 13 *Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name.*
 - 14 *"But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.*
 - 15 *We are aliens and strangers in your sight, as were all our forefathers. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope.*
 - 16 *O LORD our God, as for all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name, it comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you.*
 - Everything we have has been given to us by God – that’s His grace
 - Matthew 25 = Parable of the Talents (He doesn’t give to all the same

- Job 1:20-21 (He gives and takes away as He sees fit to accomplish His will and bring about His glory)
- ❖ Giving must start with understanding that everything we have is His creation and His blessing
- ❖ Giving will only be what it should be when we recognize God's grace in blessing us – He never asks for more than He has or will work in or through us

- Our Love
 - 2 Corinthians 8:7-9
 - 7 *But just as you excel in everything-- in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us--see that you also excel in this grace of giving.*
 - 8 *I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others.*
 - 9 *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.*
 - ✓ “test the sincerity of your love” = To the Corinthians, Paul raises the example of the Macedonians to teach them the other force in giving – Our Love
 - God can work and bless, in fact He does, but giving still not happen – because those He shows His grace to accept His love but fail to return it
 - 1 Chronicles 29:17-19
 - 17 *I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things have I given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you.*
 - 18 *O LORD, God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep this desire in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you.*
 - 19 *And give my son Solomon the wholehearted devotion to keep your commands, requirements and decrees and to do everything to build the palatial structure for which I have provided."*
 - We are able to give, willingly, to God when we love Him
 - Our Love is necessary for our giving

- 1 Corinthians 13:3, *“If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.”*
 - ❖ Giving will start with responding to God’s grace by our love
 - ❖ Giving will only be what it should be when we love God enough to return His blessings to Him
- **I Love You...**
 - Generously
 - 2 Corinthians 8:1-2
 - 1 *And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches.*
 - 2 *Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.*
 - ✓ “rich generosity” = While the word can be translated “generosity” or “liberality” (KJV/NASB), it’s base meaning is “sincerity or singleness of purpose or motivation”
 - ✓ Cp. Ephesians 6:5; Colossians 3:22 (slaves to masters)
 - The Macedonians gave because they had the Lord as the single focus of their love and He was the motivation for their giving
 - Cp. Paul’s “test” of the sincerity of their love
 - Illustration: Bad Valentines (giving more to themselves than to those they “love”)
 - ❖ If we love the Lord, then we will give to Him generously because He is our sole focus and purpose
 - ❖ If you are not giving to the Lord, then have you passed the test of the sincerity of love for Him?
 - ❖ I Love You This Much – Generously
 - Sacrificially
 - 2 Corinthians 8:2-3
 - 2 *Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.*
 - 3 *For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own,*
 - ✓ “even beyond their ability” = sacrificial giving – giving so much that it changes your life
 - Sacrificial giving is not simply that I give you more than me (generosity) but I give you so much that it changes my life

- Jesus on the Cross – John 3:16
- Abraham and Isaac – Genesis 22
- Boy with loaves and fishes – John 6
- Illustration: From Robert Coleman’s Written in Blood

The story is told of a little boy whose sister needed a blood transfusion. The doctor had explained that she had the same disease the boy had recovered from two years earlier. Her only chance for recovery was a transfusion from someone who had previously conquered the disease

Since the two children had the same rare blood type, the boy was the ideal donor. "Would you give your blood to Mary?" the doctor asked.

Johnny hesitated. His lower lip started to tremble. Then he smiled and said, "Sure, for my sister."

Soon the two children were wheeled into the hospital room-Mary, pale and thin; Johnny, robust and healthy. Neither spoke, but when their eyes met, Johnny grinned.

As the nurse inserted the needle into his arm, Johnny's smile faded. He watched the blood flow through the tube.

With the ordeal almost over, his voice, slightly shaky, broke the silence. "Doctor, when do I die?"

Only then did the doctor realize why Johnny had hesitated, why his lip had trembled when he'd agreed to donate his blood. He'd thought giving his blood to his sister meant giving up his life.

- ❖ If we love the Lord, then we will give to Him sacrificially – recognizing that our lives will be changed by the sacrifice
- ❖ We give sacrificially by adjusting our standard of living to meet our standard of giving (not the other way around).
- ❖ I Love You This Much – Sacrificially

➤ Eagerly

- 2 Corinthians 8:4

4 *they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints.*

✓ “*urgently pleaded*” = It’s not just that they gave but they wanted to give

- Cp. 2 Corinthians 9:7 – cheerful giver

➤ Exodus 36:3-7, “ *...The people are bringing more than enough for doing the work the LORD commanded to be done...* ” Then

Moses gave an order and they sent this word throughout the camp: "No man or woman is to make anything else as an offering for the sanctuary." And so the people were restrained from bringing more, because what they already had was more than enough to do all the work."

- Illustration: Visitor to NBC last week
- Giving even when you haven't been here = give every week not just the weeks you are here (giving rather than paying)
- Illustration: Bad Valentines ("do we have to" / "it's a made-up holiday" / "I told you I loved you when we got married")
- ❖ If we love the Lord, then we will give to Him eagerly – wanting to take part in His ministry more than wanting other things
- ❖ We give eagerly when we find the joy and hilarity in giving (2 Corinthians 9:7)
- ❖ I Love You This Much – Eagerly

- Personally
 - 2 Corinthians 8:5
 - 5 *And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.*
 - ✓ "gave themselves" = Their financial giving began with their personal giving
 - When you give financially, you are giving of yourself (wages are the exchange of your life/effort)
 - 1 Corinthians 16:2, "*On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.*"
 - Giving is personal – as God has blessed you (proportional to your income)
 - Those who don't give financially rarely give personally but those who give personally usually give financially
 - Illustration: Bad Valentines (having your assistant send gifts to your wife)
 - Illustration: I'm not leaving NBC
- ❖ If we love the Lord, then we will give to Him personally
{TESTIMONIES for next week}

- ❖ We give personally when we give according to the blessings He has given to us and not in comparison with someone else or by someone else's standard (O.T. tithe)
- ❖ I Love You This Much – Personally

Response

- **Allow God to work in and through you**
 - 15-Day Prayer Commitment
 - Family Conference
 - Testimonies

- **Show your love to the Lord through your giving**
 - Make an Investment = Start giving
 - Make a Greater Investment = Commitment Weekend (bring your card)