**THANKS BE TO GOD FOR HIS INDESCRIBABLE GIFT!**

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

Key Verse 9:15

***Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!***

**Introduction**

 In this thanksgiving passage, the Apostle Paul encouraged each believer to give generously by mentioning God’s indescribable blessing for those who do so. May God help us to know the priceless value of generous giving and to remember His reward. May He also help us know the purpose of this blessing so that we may give thanks to God for his indescribable gift. Amen!

1. Read verses 6-9. What does it mean to sow sparingly or to sow generously? What will be the outcome of both types of sowing? (6) What should be our attitude when we give and why? (7) How much is God able to bless us? (8a) What is the purpose of God’s giving such abundant blessings? (8b) How is “generous giving” related to “righteousness”? (Psalm 112:9, 9)

1-1.Read verses 6-9.

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. **7** Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. **8** And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. **9** As it is written:

“They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever.”

1-2. What does it mean to sow sparingly or to sow generously?

* Paul had in mind to support the believers in Jerusalem.
* Some reasons why the church of Jerusalem might have been poor, includes that there were a number of widows among them (Acts 6:1-6). There was also a severe famine.

Acts 11:27-30 reads,

 “During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) 29 The disciples, as each one was able, decided to provide help for the brothers and sisters living in Judea. 30 This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.”

* There are several passages which speak of the efforts of some churches to help the poor believers in Jerusalem with the help of apostle Paul.

1 Corinthians 16:1-4 reads,

 **“**Now about the collection for the Lord’s people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. **2** On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. **3** Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. **4** If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me.”

Romans 15:25-28 reads,

 “Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the Lord’s people there. **26** For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the Lord’s people in Jerusalem. **27** They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews’ spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings. **28** So after I have completed this task and have made sure that they have received this contribution, I will go to Spain and visit you on the way.”

* Paul would be in Corinth to pick up this collection for the Jerusalem saints, which he mentioned in 2 Corinthians 8.

2 Corinthians 8:1-12 reads,

And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. **2** In the midst of a very 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, **4** they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord’s people. **5** And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. **6** So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. **7** But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—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 sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich. **10** And here is my judgment about what is best for you in this matter. Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. **11** Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. **12** For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.

2 Corinthians 9:1-5 reads,

 There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the Lord’s people. **2** For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action. **3** But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow, but that you may be ready, as I said you would be. **4** For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to say anything about you—would be ashamed of having been so confident. **5** So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given.

* Sowing sparingly - giving or offering only a little of something, or in restraint.
* Just as we reap grain if we sow the seed of it, we will reap something as the fruit of our giving or offering.
* Sowing generously – giving or offering generously

1-3. What will be the outcome of both types of sowing? (6)

 ***Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.***

* As a farmer sowing seed may feel he loses seed as it falls from his hand to the ground, we may feel we are losing when we give.
* But just as the farmer gives the seed in anticipation of a future harvest, we should give with the same heart.
* If a farmer planted only a few seeds because he wanted to "hold on" to as much seed as he could, he would have more seed in his barn after sowing time.
* But at the harvest, the one who planted more seed would have much more grain in his barn.
* Materially, we can trust that God will provide for the giving heart.

Philippians 4:15-19 reads,

 “Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; **16** for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. **17** Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. **18** I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. ***They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. 19 And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.”***

* If we give to God, He will give to us materially.
* May the Lord raise up many sacrificial servants like Epaphroditus.



* Likewise if we give little, we will receive a little from God. But if we give generously we will receive abundantly from God.
* God rewards us in a proportion to how much we give, and how much we offer to serve others and God.
* Giving is not wasting or losing something. It is like sowing seeds that produce a lot more than we sow.
* Again we can trust that God will reward the giving heart both now and in eternity.

Matthew 19:29 reads,

 “And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.”

* Jesus meant that we are never the losers when we give to God. The Lord can never be in debt to any man, and we should never be afraid of giving God "too much."
* Simply speaking you can't surpass in giving (out-give) God.

1-4. What should be our attitude when we give and why? (7)

  ***Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.***

* We should give according to our personal decision. We should not give comparing with others or with the intention to save our skin or to be recognized by others.
* It should be done before God, not before man.
* So giving is for **each one**. Every Christian should be a giver.
* Because of small resources some cannot give *much* but it is still important that they give, and that they give with the right kind of heart.
* When Mother Sarah Barry served poor Korean students in 1950’s, she challenged them to stretch out their hands to overcome their beggar’s mentality.
* Even though it was not easy at first, her message spurred them to give.
* A poor student accepted her spiritual advice and by any means tried to give something to the poor.
* She ended up selling her blood to offer money to the poor.
* One time Dr. John Jun also shared a story that missionaries in middle east countries were filled with spirit because they were in constant danger when they went out fishing and sharing the gospel message on campus. He pointed out that our affluent condition would influence us negatively. May the Lord help us to adopt God’s absolute standard, overcoming our easy-going mentality or complacency.

2 Corinthians 8:9 reads,

 “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.”

  ***Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.***

* Our giving reveals the purpose in our own heart for the way we spend our money shows the purpose of our own heart more accurately than our words do..
* For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:21)

  ***Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.***

* We should not give reluctantly or under compulsion.
* **Compulsion** - the action or state of forcing or being forced to do something
* It should never be coerced or manipulated. We should give because we *want* to give and because God has put it in our own heart to give.

  ***Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.***

* God loves a cheerful giver. God wants us to give with cheerful heart not with the sense of obligation or pressure.
* When we give with a cheerful heart, our giving will become a pleasing offering to God.
* The ancient Greek word for **cheerful** (*hilaros*, used only here in the New Testament) is the root for our English word hilarious.
* God wants us to give ***happily*** because that is how God Himself gives.
* True giving *comes* from a happy heart, and it also *gives* us a happy heart.
* In Acts 5:1-11, Ananias and Sapphira stand as examples of giving for the wrong reasons, not out of a cheerful heart.
* God is the ultimate **cheerful giver**. He *delights* to give to us.
* Genesis 1 and 2 elaborates how much God wants to make us happy by planting the garden of Eden, the meaning of which is “delight.”
* God has blessed us with **every** spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3)

1-5. How much is God able to bless us? (8a)

 ***And God is able to bless you abundantly,***

* God is able to bless us abundantly.
* God blesses abundantly those who give generously and cheerfully.
* God’s reward for a cheerful giver is abundant.
* One of the best ways to experience God’s blessing is to give things to those who are in need.
* Also God is able to bless you without forgetting what we give.

Matthew 10:42 reads,

 “And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.”

* Our giving is rewarded in many different ways.
* God may bless our giving by promotions, with better pay, unexpected gifts of money.
* Or God may bless our giving by freeing our hearts from the tyranny of greed and materialism, by giving us a sense of blessing and happiness, or by storing up rich reward in heaven.

1-6. What is the purpose of God’s giving such abundant blessings? (8b)

 ***so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.***

* The ancient Greek word for **sufficiency** (*autarkeia*) may also be translated ***contentment***.
* It means a complete *self-sufficiency*.
* They meant a frame of mind which was completely independent of all outward things, and which carried the secret of happiness within itself.
* Contentment never comes from the possession of external things.
* In reality most people try to fulfill their needs with material things, but they can only really be met by a spiritual relationship with the God who made us.
* May the Lord help us to overcome both materialism and pragmatism that are two pillars of our American society.

1 Timothy 6:6 reads,

“But godliness with contentment is great gain.”

 ***so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.***

* God blesses us to abound in every good work. God blesses us to do good work all the more by providing all the resources for us.
* God doesn’t bless us to enjoy His blessings all by ourselves. Rather he wants us to be a source of blessing like the God of Abraham by serving others as a father of nations with what we received from God.
* The fruit of our life is to do good work to serve God and others with the blessing that God gives us.

Ephesians 2:10 reads,

 “For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Is your life “A Channel of Blessing”?

https://www.hymnal.net/en/hymn/h/928

1-7. How is “generous giving” related to “righteousness”? (Psalm 112:9, 9)

 ***As it is written: “They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever.”***

* Giving the poor what we received from God is our righteousness before God.
* God’s heart is with the poor and works for them. Sharing what we have with the poor is a righteous act before God, making us stand right with God.
* The poor may also includes those who voluntarily sacrificed their privilege and position to imitate Jesus Christ to serve the eternal will of God.

2. Read verses 10-11. What does God supply to the sower? (10a) What will he do for those who give generously? (10b) How will we be enriched in every way so we can be generous on every occasion? (11a) What will be the result of our generosity? (11b)

2-1. Read verses 10-11.

Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. **11** You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

2-2. What does God supply to the sower? (10a)

 ***Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply***

* Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply.
* God supplies the resources to the givers so that they may give generously to others who are in need.
* God also supplies food to the givers. God takes care of the practical need for those who give. The life of those who give generously will never be in need.

2-3. What will he do for those who give generously? (10b)

 ***increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness***

* God will increase(multiply) the amount of resources that we can share with others so that the harvest of our giving may be enlarged all the more.
* The more we give, the more we will receive from God and our giving to others will become bigger and bigger.
* God uses generous givers to help those who are in need by giving them resources all the more.
* The best way to be truly rich with a lot of resources is to give generously.

2-4. How will we be enriched in every way so we can be generous on every occasion? (11a)

 ***You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion,***

* God blesses us to be rich in every way so that we can help others generously on every occasion.
* God’s enrichment will not be limited in only certain areas of our life. He blesses us for all areas of our life so that we can help others on every occasion.
* That is why we are commanded by God to love God as well as others rather than ourselves. When we do this, we will be enriched in every way.

2-5. What will be the result of our generosity? (11b)

 ***through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.***

* Our generous giving results in thanksgiving to God.
* When people see our generous giving, they give thanks to God.
* By giving generously we can glorify God’s name, which is the purpose of our life.

3. Read verses 12-15. What is another way in which God uses and blesses our generous offering? (12) How does our generous giving serve as evidence of our obedience to God? (13) What else will result from our generous offering? (14) What is Paul’s conclusion in verse 15?

3-1. Read verses 12-15.

This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. **13** Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. **14** And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. **15** Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

3-2. What is another way in which God uses and blesses our generous offering? (12)

 ***This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God***

* Our generous giving is the expression of our thanks to God.
* By giving generously we express our appreciation to God through confessing that all the things that we have came from God.
* We give thanks to God praising him that he blessed us to be able to help others.

3-3. How does our generous giving serve as evidence of our obedience to God? (13)

 ***Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.***

* The service of giving matches with our confession of the gospel. Our giving service proves that we obey God and we are true believers.
* The spirit of gospel is giving because Jesus saved us by giving his life to us. We should follow his example of obedience.

3-4. What else will result from our generous offering? (14)

 ***And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you***

* When we give to others, their hearts go out to us when they pray. They will pray for us with genuine hearts. This is very natural. We want to pay someone back if we receive something from them.
* Their genuine prayer from the heart is powerful and effective.
* By giving to others we can get genuine prayer support, making our work and service fruitful and successful.
* Also through generous giving we can be united with those whom we help. We can be connected with them in genuine heart.

3-5. What is Paul’s conclusion in verse 15?

 ***Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!***

* Giving to others is a great gift from God that brings us abundant blessings.
* When we give others we should be thankful that God blessed us to be able to serve in this way.
* We can give thanks to God all the more by practicing the gift of giving diligently.
* In fact Jesus is the **indescribable gift** God gave to us, and salvation is another **indescribable gift**. The glory of the gift of Jesus and the greatness of the gift of salvation cannot be adequately described for it is beyond full description.
* Praise God for sending his one and only Son, Jesus Christ, and helping us to learn of his giving spirit in our limited earthly lives. Amen.

John 3:16 reads,

 “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

**Conclusion**

 The more we give, the more we receive from God. God loves a cheerful giver. God blesses us all the more when we give to others. When we give generously, people will praise God. Giving is the expression of our inner thanks to God. People will pray for us with genuine heart when we give them. Generous giving is God’s indescribable gift. May God help us give generously with great thanks so that we can be blessed all the more.

**One word: God’s indescribable gift!**