

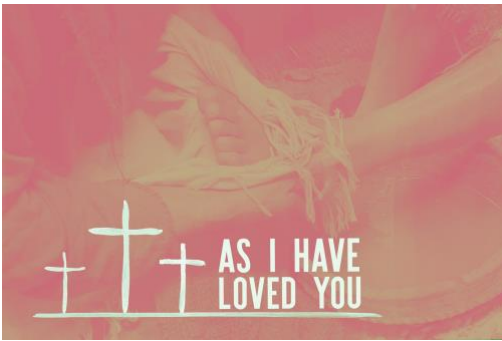
Sermon #8: Mutual Care: Generous Giving

June 11, 2023

Text: [2 Corinthians 8:1-15](#)

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Sermon Open

We continue to look at the responsibility for mutual care among all believers in the church. This is based on the Biblical concept of fellowship (*Greek: Koinonia*). Fellowship has existed for all of eternity between God the Father, Son, and Spirit. In our salvation (*believing in our heart that Jesus will save us from our sin, and confessing Him as Lord*), we are grafted into this same fellowship to enjoy all of its riches. So, we do not create unity in the church, but we are called to maintain the character of it among us by bearing with one another in love & mutual care ([Ephesians 4:2](#), [1 Corinthians 12:25](#)). In Sermon #7, we looked at how we express mutual care for one another through shared partnership, helping one another fulfill our calling from God to advance His Kingdom. In this lesson #8, we look at mutual care expressed through **Generous Giving**.

The Life of Christ

From our text today, we pull this principle for the church: **We are to show the life of Christ in us, by a willingness to become weak so others can grow strong**. Our primary verse is [2 Corinthians 8:9](#), that teaches us Jesus gave up the riches of eternal fellowship so that those who lived in spiritual poverty could be joined to it. This is the foundation of New Testament giving, not a formula but a person. If Jesus is indeed in us through faith, then the direction of our life will include weakening ourselves in order to strengthen others. This includes all of our resources – time, energy, and finances.

The Macedonian Example

In [2 Corinthians 8](#), Paul is writing Corinth to encourage them to complete their financial offering for the believers (church) in Jerusalem which was experiencing a time of poverty & famine. He does not command the Corinthians to give ([v8](#)), but he does hold up for them an example of generosity from the churches in Macedonia. Although these churches were very poor, and suffering themselves, they had been eager to participate in the offering and show the life of Christ that was in them ([v1-5](#)). Their understanding of grace ([v1](#)), their joy in the Lord ([v2](#)), their lack of love for worldly goods ([v2](#)), and their abiding in Christ ([v5](#)) all combined to lead them to sincere and generous giving, beyond what was expected of them. Paul asks Corinth to consider their example and display the same earnest love for Christ and His people through their own offering.

Practical Lessons on Giving

Paul then turns his attention to practical thoughts on giving. He teaches that increasing in generosity is a commendable and expected part of a believer's sanctification (spiritual maturity). Just as we would expect a Christian to grow in faith, knowledge, speech, and earnestness – so they should grow in giving ([v7](#)). Paul also reminds Corinth that to be generous will require discipline and even a systematic plan to prepare your finances for giving ([v10-11](#), [1 Corinthians 16:1-2](#)). And he calls the church not to poverty, but to a reasonable and fair partnership ([v12-14](#)). Because of our shared fellowship, others in the church should not suffer while we enjoy an abundance. And others in the church should not carry the weight of corporate giving while others only enjoy the shared benefits. We should rather be fair through generous giving. Paul uses an example of Israel in the wilderness ([v15](#), [Exodus 16:18-20](#)) to remind us that if we try to hoard what God has provided, we will find his provision ruined. But if we will obey His instructions, whether we are in a season of abundance or of lack, then the church will always be well supplied to grow in godliness and in good works ([2 Corinthians 9:1-14](#)).