

Joyful Generosity

Putting a Number on your Giving

2 Cor. 9:6-14

April 26, 2026

Introduction

(Title Slide)

If you are just joining us in the last few weeks, we are now beginning the third message in a series of five on the topic of Joyful Generosity. In other words we're talking about money and giving as it relates to the Christian's mission. And what we've learned in the first two weeks is that our relationship with money and giving is a gospel issue and a heart issue.

It's a gospel issue because Jesus was generous toward us. He gave up everything that he possessed in order to reconcile and restore us into a relationship with the Father. So generosity is a gospel issue.

And generosity is a heart issue. It's not a budget issue. It's not an income issue. It's not a job issue. You can be rich or poor and not be generous. It's a heart issue. And as we saw last week, our hearts are particularly great at making Idols out of money or possessions.

Matthew 6:24 ... where Jesus says that you cannot serve both God and money ... should tell you just how compelling and desirous it is for us to serve money. (Slide) In effect, **Jesus is saying that you cannot grow spiritually if you don't give God**

control of your money. Spiritual growth ... spiritual health ... sanctification ... becoming more like Jesus ... is stunted to the degree that you do not give God control over your resources.

Jesus is saying, “You come to me because you want meaning, because you want renewal, because you want strength, because you want forgiveness. If you want me in your life, then you have to let me talk to you about your money.”

Unless we’re willing to cede control of our resources, unless we’re willing to put our money and our attitude toward our money in His hands as well, we can’t do business.

Segue

So perhaps after wrestling with all of that, you are now asking the question, **(slide - how do I measure generosity?) “What should my giving actually look like, pastor?”** The great leadership guru Peter Drucker famously said, “All great ideas degenerate into work,” and the same principle applies here. Eventually, these gospel and heart issues that we’ve been talking about manifest themselves in the form of percentages or dollars and cents. So, Pastor Rob, **how do I measure generosity? How do I know if I’m being generous or not?**

And the answer from the text today is simultaneously disappointing and liberating. Disappointing b/c it’s not a number. Liberating b/c it’s not a number. But also liberating because it makes much of Jesus instead of us.

But before we can talk about how to measure our generosity, we need to talk about our motives. So, first motives for generosity, then the measure of it.

Body

The Motivation for Joyful Generosity

Creation

There are two motives operating in a Christian that makes them different from other people and changes their attitude towards their wealth and their possessions. The first one comes from 2 Corinthians 9:10, and it's CREATION. Look at v. 10 with me.

(slide)

Now the one who provides seed for the sower and bread for food will also provide and multiply your seed and increase the harvest of your righteousness.

Paul connects generosity with the created order. In creation, God designed a system of giving and growth. The natural processes of planting and harvesting show how giving leads to increase, and therefore motivate us to give. Farmers around the world see this truth every season. When they sow, they act on the conviction that what goes into the ground will not return empty. Paul ties that same principle to generosity. Our giving fits God's design for life.

(slide) Giving then becomes an act of trusting the structure of creation. Not giving resists the structure of creation. God built abundance into the world, but He placed it behind the obedience of sowing. Creation is structured in such a way that the

person who holds back seed ends up with less, while the one who sows sees renewed supply. The same is true with generosity. When we share time, money, or care, we reflect the Creator's intention that goodness multiplies through open hands. Generosity is a visible expression of the created order. One of the best ways to affirm and teach the doctrine of creation is through joyful generosity.

And notice that the fruit of your generosity isn't only manifested in the mission you are giving toward. Your generosity also results in fruit in you. He says at the end of v. 10 that your generosity will "increase the harvest of your righteousness." God promises to make generosity productive for the heart as well as for the hands. Generosity produces both material blessing for the mission it seeks to support, but also spiritual maturity in the giver, and the created order around us motivates us to give. The closer you get to understanding and loving God as Creator and His creation, the more you see how it all cultivates joyful generosity.

Redemption

The second motive Paul mentions is REDEMPTION. Our redemption ... our being bought by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus ... is a primary motive for joyful generosity. We introduced this in the first message 2 weeks ago talking about generosity being a matter of the gospel, but Paul adds an interesting and inspiring aspect to this in verse 13 of this chapter.

(slide)

Because of the proof provided by this ministry, they will glorify God for your obedient confession of the gospel of

Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone.

Paul is saying the way you know you have experienced the grace of God is if you're joyfully generous. Paul is saying that if you and I need to have our giving demanded of us, then we are missing something critical about the grace of God in the work of Jesus. But if we find that we want to give generously, that is one of the few proofs we have that we really have experienced the grace of God.

Illustration – Parenting

This principle made me think of the numerous times as a parent in which one of my children has received something desirable, like a bag of M&M's, and the other child does not have anything like that. The child with the M&M's begins to enjoy his or her candy right in front of the other child, and does not willingly offer to share them. The other child politely asks for some, and the first child says "No." So the second child says to me, "Dad, tell my sibling that she has to give me some M&M's."

And when they were very, very young, I would teach them to share by making them give a few to their siblings. But we are now at the age in which I don't do that. Instead, I say, "If I make her give it to you, she won't genuinely be sharing." It's my way of pointing out to my children that I'm not after fairness b/c that's the law; I'm after grace and mercy, b/c that's the gospel. And when they do joyfully share, it's proof to them and to me that the gospel is at work in their lives.

This is what Paul is saying. If we find that we want to give generously, that is one of the few proofs we have that we really have experienced the grace of God.

(Slide - Gospel vs Moralism) I have found that while many of us are Christians at our core, we are moralists in our practice. As Christians, we deep down know that we are rich. We know that we've been adopted into the family and accepted in Christ. Deep down we know that we have a guarantee to rule and reign forever. We know that we have his holy power living in us that will inevitably overwhelm all of our flaws, weaknesses, and sadness. Deep down we believe that Jesus took everything we deserved, and now we get everything He deserves.

But too often we don't operate according to those convictions. We operate as moralists. We operate as if we believe God owes us. We've worked pretty hard. We've been good people." If joyful generosity were the only proof of grace in our lives, many of us might discover that we're moralistic deists, not grace-fueled Christians.

Do you find joyful generosity making sense? Have you truly grasped the grace of God? If we find that we want to give generously, that is one of the few proofs we have that we really have experienced the grace of God. But if we find that we are moralists, maybe we're missing the gospel entirely.

The Measure of Generosity

So we are motivated in joyful generosity by creation and redemption. So, how do we measure our generosity? As I

mentioned earlier, because there is no number, we are both disappointed and liberated. And in your life group guide for next week, I'll make sure to include some guidance for a theological discussion about tithing and how that fits into all this. But for now, from this passage, I want to help you and yours arrive at that number by pondering a few questions. (Slides)

Motivation and Desire (2 Corinthians 9:6–7)

1. Does the amount I give reflect a heart that trusts God to provide more seed for future sowing?
2. What will I reap if nothing changes about my giving?
3. When I give, do I sense reluctance or joy, duty or freedom?
4. Does my gift come from a made-up mind that rests in cheerful willingness?

Proportion and Sacrifice (2 Corinthians 8:1–5, 8:12–14)

1. Is my level of giving proportionate to the grace I have received?
2. Does this gift require a measure of faith, or is it comfortable and without thought?
3. Am I balancing generosity with responsibility so that needs are met without neglect of stewardship?

My Relationship to God (2 Corinthians 9:8–11)

1. Does my giving reflect that I see God as the one who supplies and multiplies every resource I have?
2. Is my giving helping me see God as a Giver rather than a demander?
3. Am I open-handed toward others because I trust that God will continue to provide?

Purpose and Outcome (2 Corinthians 9:12–15)

1. Will this giving lead to thanksgiving to God?
2. Does my giving strengthen the bond between me, my church, and our mission?
3. Does my giving reflect the surpassing grace of God working in me?
4. Does my generosity bring honor to God and deepen my awareness of His grace?

And this week, as you ponder these things, start walking in joyful obedience. (Slides that show how, follow me as I talk)

- Use your bank's bill pay system to send an automated check in the mail each pay period.

- Visit beechhaven.org/give and set up a giving plan to our general budget.

(Title Slide) Conclusion

Paul's appeal in 2 Corinthians 8–9 never rests on pressure or command or law. His appeal rests on Jesus Christ. He became poor so we could become rich in Him. He held nothing back so we could know what it means to live without fear. When Paul asks believers to give, he is not asking them to meet a quota but to remember a cross. The cross is where God sowed His most costly seed, the life of His Son, and where the harvest of righteousness began for us. To live by faith means to trust that this same God will supply and multiply every resource needed to do His will.

So the call to generosity is also a call to believe the gospel. The invitation to give is an invitation to trust that the One who gave Himself for you will not fail to provide for you. The gospel frees you to open your hand. It frees you to give without fear because Christ has already secured every need that truly matters.

If you have never trusted Him in that way, begin there today. Receive the grace that makes giving possible. Rest in the One who made Himself poor to make you rich in faith. Let His generosity become your confidence. Then whatever number you write, whatever seed you sow, will grow into thanksgiving to God and strengthen your assurance that His gospel is alive in you.

Prayer

Father, every good gift comes from You. Thank You for giving us life, grace, and the hope that never runs out. Teach us to trust

You as the one who provides seed to the sower and bread for food. Make us a people who give with joy, not because we must, but because You have given everything in Christ. Let every act of generosity lead others to thank You. Multiply the seed we sow, strengthen faith where it is weak, and let the harvest bring glory to Your name. In Jesus' name, amen.