

RockPointe Church Small Groups

Kingdom Moments Sermon Series

Lesson 4: Faithful Stewards - Obeying His Direction - Fall 2019

2 Corinthians 9:1-15

MAIN POINT

As we become joyfully generous, we experience God's grace in ways that bring us joy and Him glory.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Who has been extremely generous with you? What's one example of their generosity?

Why do you think they were so generous? What did their generosity show to be true about their character? Do you think they enjoyed being generous? How do you know?

Jesus told us that the way we spend our money is a clear indication of the condition of our hearts. In other words, we will spend according to what we love. But the wonderful news is that generous and joyful giving is not the end. In fact, when we become joyfully generous, we experience God's grace in ways that bring us joy and Him glory.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ Matthew 6:19-24.

What do you think it means to store up treasures in heaven? Why are we so tempted to store up treasures on earth instead?

Why do you think Jesus chose money to be the primary competitor to God in our hearts?

What does serving the master of money feel like? How does it affect your faith?

What are some ways we might try to serve both Jesus and money?

You can't have it both ways, according to Jesus. Eternal values and treasure on earth are mutually exclusive; one cancels the power of the other. Because our money reveals where our heart is, money and the things it will buy will always be the primary

competitor for our love and devotion. One of the solutions to serving money is very simple: invest it elsewhere, specifically in heaven. When we practice joyful generosity, we will find that our hearts align more and more with the mission of Jesus. That's one of the reasons Paul wanted the church at Corinth to invest in heaven.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 Corinthians 9:1-7.

What do these verses suggest about how to give if we are going to be excellent in giving? What would motivate you to give eagerly and with zeal?

In what ways does our church contribute toward a “ministry to the saints”?

Paul did not want the Corinthian Christians to give out of embarrassment, dread, fear, or guilt. Instead, he wanted them to see their giving as a ministry. Paul had used the Corinthian church as an example. The Corinthians' zeal stirred up most of the Macedonian believers to the kind of giving described in 2 Corinthians 8:1-5. So he encouraged them to give, but neither he nor anyone else would force them. Again, Paul hoped to lead the Corinthians to give as a ministry and to set a positive Christian example.

What words in these verses describe the attitude about giving that God will honor? What words describe attitudes God will not honor?

What is the result of giving reluctantly or under compulsion? What is the result of giving generously and cheerfully?

How do you interpret the promise of good return for your giving?

Paul was not saying that we give so we can get rich. On the contrary, when one's giving is an expression of God's grace, God may provide more to the giver, who then will be able to give even more. In the end, God expects His people to invest their financial resources in ways that will endure for eternity, and do so joyfully. As the passage says, God loves a cheerful giver because He is a cheerful Giver. In fact, Paul's appeal to the Corinthians to help poor believers in another land was actually an opportunity to learn firsthand the delight that accompanies the grace of giving.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 Corinthians 9:8-15.

What is God's purpose in providing the giver everything he/she needs?

How is thanksgiving and glory to God produced by your giving?

Have you had the experience of receiving a generous gift given in the name of God? What was your response?

Have you had the experience of giving a generous gift in the name of God? Without giving specific details of the person, what was the response of the recipient?

The Macedonian believers had proved themselves to be genuine believers by giving despite their affliction and poverty. The Corinthians would prove the genuineness of their faith in Christ by giving out of their abundance. Generously giving to the needy saints would cause them to glorify God. We would expect them to praise God for the Corinthians' generosity. However, they first would praise God for what the generosity signified, namely, obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ. Generous Christian givers live out their confession that Jesus Christ is Lord.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What is one thing you can do this week to help you chase money a little less and God a little more?

How are you going to refocus your resources in order to give more generously?

What practical changes do you need to make to your lifestyle in order to embrace that call?

Make a long-term plan with your family or someone else who can hold you accountable to giving. As a part of that plan, look for room in your budget for eternal investments.

PRAYER

Pray that God would continually remind your group that all we have comes from Him and can be used to bless others. Pray that His kingdom work would be the guiding focus of how you use your resources.

COMMENTARY

matthew 6:19-24

6:19-20 Jesus emphasized the fleeting value of worldly wealth. The larvae of the moth could quickly destroy valuable fabrics that were treasured by the ancients. The word rust is literally "eating." It can refer to the pitting of metal coins or to vermin that ruin valuable food stores.

6:21 Jesus taught that a person's heart truly belongs to what it most treasures. Since a disciple is to love God with all his heart (22:37; Dt 6:4), love for material possessions and riches is a subtle form of idolatry (Col 3:5).

6:22-23 In Jewish writings, a good eye represented a generous attitude and a bad eye a stingy, miserly attitude. The bad eye (an improper perspective on wealth) results in a deep internal darkness, a moral blindness that diminishes the ability to see and pursue what is good.

2 corinthians 9:1-15

9:1-5 This section explains that Paul wanted to spare the Corinthians the embarrassment that would happen if their pledge went unfulfilled and others learned about it.

9:2 The Macedonians lived in the province north of Achaia, the province in which Corinth was located. Evidently what Paul had written in 1Co 16:1-4 had met with an enthusiastic pledge from the Corinthians. He had learned about this and boasted of the Corinthians' zeal to the Macedonian churches. This had become a factor in the generous offering for Jerusalem that Paul had already received from Macedonia (8:1-4).

9:4 Paul appealed to the Corinthians' sense of integrity to keep their promise of a generous gift.

9:5 Paul intended to arrive in Corinth after Titus and the two brothers arrived, by which time the collection would be ready for him to take to Jerusalem. This is in fact what happened, as noted in Rm 15:25-27 (which was written from Corinth). The phrase a gift and not... an extortion may be translated literally as "a blessing and not a [matter of] greed." In other words, the giving was to be done because this would benefit others, without the givers thinking of getting back something material in return.

9:6-15 These verses contain the most explicit passage in the NT on stewardship. Because no individuals or places are named, the passage is easy to apply broadly.

9:6 The words sparingly... sparingly... generously... generously state a principle that is proverbially true, based on common agricultural experience. Here it is applied to financial matters, but see Lk 6:38; Gal 6:7-9.

9:7 Christian stewardship, like other good works, flows ideally from a heart of love for God and others rather than from a sense of duty (Mt 22:37-40).

9:8 A form of the Greek word for "all" is used four times here, translated as every grace... every way... everything you need, and every good work. A closely related word is translated always.

9:9 This quotation of Ps 112:9 is taken from a song about those who fear the Lord by living lives of righteous obedience to Him, extolling them to give to the poor.

9:10-11 These verses return to the agricultural metaphor of verse 6, emphasizing God's sovereignty in providing for the material needs of believers (seed) as well as for their spiritual needs (righteousness).

9:12-13 The impact of the Corinthians' gift to the poor believers in Jerusalem would go far beyond Jerusalem. Other congregations would learn about it and praise God for the generosity of the Corinthians. Christian stewardship is one important way to acknowledge the truth of Christ's gospel before others. For other instances of Paul's use of "confess" or confession, see Rm 10:9-10; 1Tim 6:12-13.

9:14 An added incentive for giving is that other believers will offer prayers for those who give generously, because generous giving is evidence of the grace of God already at work in such people.

9:15 His indescribable gift refers to God's Son, Jesus. Giving ought to be an expression of appreciation to God for sending Jesus (Jn 3:16).