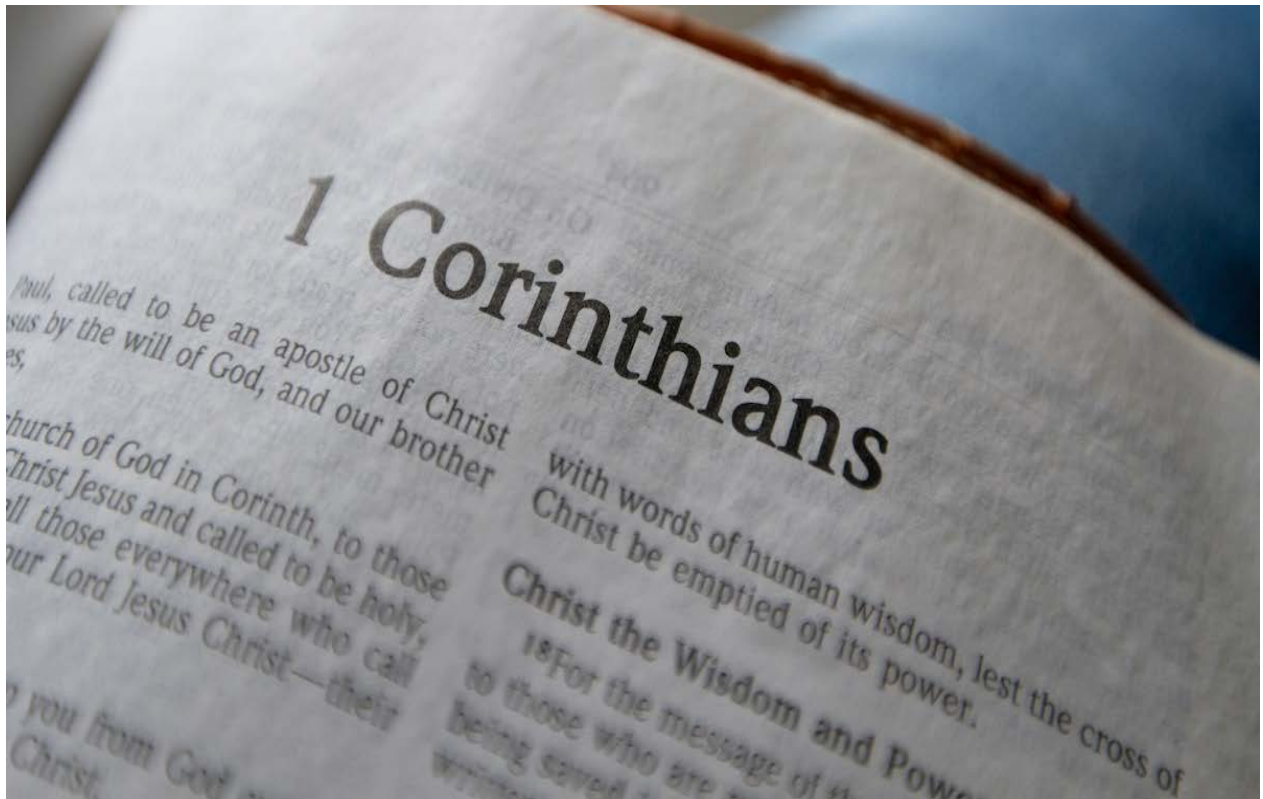


Indescribable!

2 Corinthians 9

1 and 2 Corinthians Part 26



T. M. AND SUSIE MOORE

A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

Indescribable!: 2 Corinthians 9
1 and 2 Corinthians Part 26
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Introduction to *2 Corinthians 9*

Paul neither threatened nor cajoled the Corinthians. He wrote as if he knew they would do what they had promised. Grace was once again abounding in Corinth, and Paul sought to channel some of it to meet an urgent need.

The Corinthians had returned to the Yes Path in Jesus, and Paul encouraged them to keep on it, looking to God to supply a sufficiency of grace for all their needs. God, He assured them, has all the grace they will ever need, and will cause it to abound to them if only they believe and obey. No good work will be denied them as they take every next step along the Yes Path with Jesus.

And that same grace is available to us every day.

If you find these studies, or any of our other resources, helpful, we hope you will consider making a contribution to help support our work. You can do so by using the donate button at the website or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 103 Reynolds Lane, West Grove, PA 19390.

We hope you find this study instructive and helpful to equip you for your walk with and work for the Lord. Thank you for joining us.

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1 Willingness to Zeal...

Pray Psalm 86.16, 17.

Oh, turn to me, and have mercy on me!
Give Your strength to Your servant,
And save the son of Your maidservant.
Show me a sign for good,
That those who hate me may see *it* and be ashamed,
Because You, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.

Sing Psalm 86.16, 17.

(Andrews: *Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven*)

Turn to me, LORD; be gracious to me;
grant me Your strength; save Your servant, LORD!
Let me a sign of something good see;
shame all who hate me beneath Your Word.
LORD, be gracious to me, LORD, be gracious to me,
for You help me, sovereign Lord!

Read and meditate on 2 Corinthians 9.1, 2.

Preparation

1. What is the subject of these two verses?
2. What did Paul know about the Corinthians?

Meditation

Nothing good happens in our lives apart from the grace of God. Paul wanted the Corinthians to follow through on a commitment they made a year earlier to take up a collection for the saints in Judea. At that time, they indicated they were willing to do so.

Notice how grace works: They were *willing*. Only God can make us *willing* to do what pleases Him (Phil. 2.13). Paul rejoiced in their willingness and even boasted about it to other churches.

Now Titus and two others were coming to collect that gift and take it to Jerusalem. He took this action because, according to Titus' report concerning matters in Corinth, their *willingness* had matured to *zeal*. That's a grace notch far above merely being willing. Paul wanted to capitalize on Titus' report concerning their zeal, so he wrote a second letter and gave it to Titus and two others who would receive the gift from the Corinthians and take it to Jerusalem.

And see how these two verses, like the lips of King Jesus (Ps. 45.2), drip with the grace of God. Paul reminds them that their gift is a ministry to the saints (v. 1). He didn't even need to mention it—"it is superfluous for me to write to you"—because he knew they would do what they had promised. He knew their "willingness" and had boasted about it to the Macedonians (v. 2), which, in turn, moved them to prepare a gift. And he commended their zeal as having had a positive effect on "the majority", not only in Corinth but beyond.

Grace doesn't work on our schedule. It takes time sometimes. God's time. But if we keep seeking it day by day, and spreading the grace God gives us to others, soon enough grace will accomplish its good work.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

When sanctification is our goal, everything that happens in our life is training for the next thing. In many ways, it is how “we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8.28). We miss much if we only apply this verse to calamities; for it is true of all things that happen, good and bad.

Paul asked Titus to visit with the Corinthians, to check up on their progress from willingness, to zeal, to doing. It was as much a learning opportunity for Titus as it was for those he visited. Paul later wrote a letter of encouragement to Titus, after he had become a shepherd of his own flock. As they had this shared memory of the work in Corinth, these words were a reminder of how grace works: Jesus gave Himself for us, to redeem us from every lawless deed to purify for Himself His own special people, “zealous for good works” (Titus 2.14). “Remember how zealous the Corinthians were?”

“Arise, for this matter is your responsibility” (Ezra 10.4). These are the words Ezra used to encourage the children of Israel to get back on the right path of following God. You were willing, then became zealous, now do what you said you would do.

Nehemiah, encouraged his Jerusalem fellow wall-builders, who were willing to build and zealous to build, with these words: “You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach...Let us rise up and build” (Neh. 2.17, 18).

Throughout the history of God’s people, it seems, either the temple, or the wall, or the church needs rebuilding. So, people of grace—willing and zealous—are always in demand for getting the work done. “The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this” (2 Ki. 19.31) through us, His people.

We never want to be the recipients of Paul’s words of exhortation: “For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God” (Rom. 10.1-3).

Willingness and zeal without knowledge are merely zealous froth. Our zeal must be grounded in Jesus Christ and the work that He has planned for us to do. “For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Phil. 2.13).

Ezra, Nehemiah, Paul, and Titus have shown us God’s willing and zealous way. May we arise to our responsibilities, through God’s zeal, and do them with the utmost grace. Remembering all we have experienced and learned, for good, because we are called according to His purpose to do so.

Perhaps, by so doing, the majority may be stirred up for their own good works (2 Cor. 9.2).

For reflection

1. What would be an example of “willingness” maturing to “zeal” in your life?
2. Where does willingness come from (Phil. 2.13)? What can you do to be more willing to follow Jesus?
3. How does God use us in the lives of others to help them be more willing to obey the Lord?

When we would have others do good, we must act toward them prudently and tenderly, and give them time. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on 2 Corinthians 9.1-5*

Pray Psalm 86.7-15.

Pray for patience as you wait for the grace of God to move you forward in your walk with and work for Him.

Sing Psalm 86.7-15.

(Andrews: *Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven*)

When in my trouble, LORD, I call You,
You answer me; there is none like You!
There are no works like Yours, and all whom
You have created shall worship You.
LORD, be gracious to me, LORD, be gracious to me,
all shall glory give to You!

For You are great, You wondrous do;
You are the only and sovereign LORD.
Teach me Your way, let me give heed to,
with all my heart, Savior, all Your Word!
LORD, be gracious to me, LORD, be gracious to me,
praise Your Name forever, LORD!

Great is Your mercy, LORD, toward me;
You have delivered my soul from hell.
Though dreadful foes and threats arrayed be,
You will Your grace and Your mercy tell!
LORD, be gracious to me, LORD, be gracious to me,
slow to anger, loving well!

2 ...to Doing

Pray Psalm 33.1-5

Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous!
For praise from the upright is beautiful.
Praise the LORD with the harp;
Make melody to Him with an instrument of ten strings.
Sing to Him a new song;
Play skillfully with a shout of joy.
For the word of the LORD *is* right,
And all His work *is done* in truth.
He loves righteousness and justice;
The earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.

Sing Psalm 33.1-5.

(Truro: *Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns*)

Sing with rejoicing in the LORD, for praise becomes His righteous ones!
With harps and songs raise grateful words, and let new songs of praise be sung!

Joyfully shout! His Word is true; He does His work in faithfulness.
His love prevails the whole world through; the LORD loves truth and righteousness.

Read 2 Corinthians 9.1-5; meditate on verses 3-5.

Preparation

1. Why did Paul send the brethren ahead of the time of his impending visit?
2. What had he been saying about them?

Meditation

We need all the help we can get if grace is to grease the gears of our soul and get us moving on the Yes Path with Jesus. Paul understood this very well.

He reported to the Corinthians that he had been boasting about them, about how, according to Titus' report, the grace of God was beginning to work among them again. He had especially been boasting of them to the Macedonian churches, which had already made their offering to the needy believers in Judea (vv. 2-4). He did not want the Corinthians to be embarrassed, should some Macedonians accompany him on his visit, so he was sending Titus and two others to get their gift ready and thus to justify his boasting.

What they had been willing to do a year earlier and now were zealous to do, according to Titus, Paul urged them to get busy and do it. They should let the grace of God have its full power in them. Grace made them willing. Grace matured willingness to zeal. And grace would lead to their making a generous gift—from the heart, and without any sense of obligation (v. 5). That grace would rejoice the suffering believers in Judea.

Grace is the lubricant that refreshes our soul so that it moves us to the good works for which we have been saved (Eph. 2.8-10). We must daily, and throughout the day, come to the throne of grace to find mercy and grace to help in all our times of need, which are all the times of our lives. Grace can make us willing and zealous, and grace can move us to doing.

Then, by grace and full of love, we will give God the thanks and praise which are His due.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.

“For the LORD gives wisdom...” (Prov. 2.6).

“The LORD by wisdom founded the earth;
by understanding He established the heavens;
by His knowledge the depths were broken up,
and clouds drop down the dew...” (Prov. 3.19, 20).

“Keep sound wisdom and discretion;
so they will be life to your soul
and grace to your neck” (Prov. 3.21, 22).

God’s wisdom, understanding, knowledge, discretion, and grace “can make us willing and zealous” and “move us to doing” His will and work. It also exposes Whom to “blame” (2 Cor. 8.20) for our good works—so “all the thanks and praise which are His due” will be rightfully given to Him.

But to do these good works God’s way, we must “be ready” (2 Cor. 9.3, 5) “in season and out of season” (2 Tim. 4.2). “To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven...” (Eccl. 3.1); and we dare not be found “unprepared” and therefore “ashamed” (2 Cor. 9.4).

Without question we are to “honor the LORD with [our] possessions, and with the firstfruits of all [our] increase” (Prov. 3.9). And we should be working hard and diligently, to save our brethren a trip to our house, to exhort us ahead of time to do the good works that we have already willingly and zealously promised to do. We should just go on ahead and do them. Without the extra nudge.

God instructed us through Solomon:

“Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due,
when it is in the power of your hand to do so.
Do not say to your neighbor,
‘Go, and come back, and tomorrow I will give it,’
when you have it with you” (Prov. 3.27, 28).

We have all been blessed beyond measure with earthly and spiritual goods—that we have with us. Goods and kindnesses that need to be shared with others, by and through the grace of God.

What is grace? It is the unmerited divine assistance given to humans for their regeneration and sanctification. It is a virtue that comes from God; and a state of sanctification enjoyed through divine assistance. It is the strength that causes us to get up and go and do His will.

This quality of grace should encapsulate our hearts, souls, minds, and strength. It is the impetus that drives us from willingness, to zeal...to Doing.

For reflection

1. We’re not saved *by* works but *unto* them. Explain.
2. What opportunities for doing the Lord’s will do you expect to have today? Are you prepared to do them?
3. How can believers encourage one another to love and good works (Heb. 10.24)?

The duty of ministering to the saints is so plain, that there would seem no need to exhort Christians to it; yet self-love contends so powerfully against the love of Christ, that it is often necessary to stir up their minds by way of remembrance. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on 2 Corinthians 9.1-5*

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Pray Psalm 33.13-22.

Review your daily schedule before the Lord. Call on Him for the grace you need to be willing, zealous, and busy about doing the work He has appointed for you.

Sing Psalm 33.13-22.

(Truro: *Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns*)

God from His throne looks down on men; He knows our works and made our hearts.
Let not Your Church, let none depend on strength or skill or human arts.

God watches those who fear His Name, who hope upon His grace and love:
He keeps their souls from death and shame who trust in Him Who reigns above.

God is our Helper and our Shield; upon us let Your grace descend!
We hope in You; to You we yield; we trust in Jesus to the end.

3 Sow Bountifully

Pray Psalm 126.6.

He who continually goes forth weeping,
Bearing seed for sowing,
Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing,
Bringing his sheaves *with him*.

Sing Psalm 126.6.

(Truro: *Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns*)

They who in tears of sorrow sow and cast their seed on every hand,
with joy shall reach their heav'nly home, and bring the harvest of their land.

Read 2 Corinthians 9.1-7; meditate on verses 6, 7.

Preparation

1. How does Paul want us to “sow”?
2. With what disposition of heart?

Meditation

In the context, Paul has giving in mind, specifically, the gift promised by the Corinthians for the material relief of the brethren in Judea. He wanted the Corinthians, willing and zealous for this work, to do it cheerfully and bountifully. He gave no across-the-board guideline but said all should give as the Lord moved them in their heart.

His focus here was on gifts and offerings, but the principle applies to all good works. The more we do good works, doing them in and with the Spirit, the more spiritual fruit we shall realize—righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit, both in those we reach with God’s grace and in our own souls. We must not grow weary of doing good works, or of devising new works that seek the Kingdom and righteousness of God (Gal. 6.9, 10). If we will cheerfully, energetically, and consistently do good and speak truth, our sowing of Kingdom seed will turn this barren world into a glorious wheat field of the Lord. Let us be diligent sowers, be it ever so difficult or sorrowing. And let us take up new endeavors for serving those around us with the grace and goodness of the Lord. If we will, we may expect glory and honor to come to Jesus more consistently, as His grace spreads through us to a grace-starved world (2 Cor. 4.15).

The world desperately needs our sowing. The Corinthians were called to sow bountifully out of the sorrow they had known from Paul’s rebuke. We, out of sorrow for our sins and our feeble efforts thus far, weep with gladness to know that God still entrusts us with good Kingdom seed. Let us daily seek His renewing grace, that we may go in obedience and joy to sow for the Lord’s harvest.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Do you ever have those days when what you do seems not very pleasing to the Lord?
I mean, how could you be pleasing Him, when you cannot even be pleasing to yourself?
You might even be the tiniest bit angst-ridden and discouraged, as everything seems to have gone woefully wrong, leading you to be a little blue, bordering on mildly depressed.

Well, take heart! “God loves a cheerful giver”! (2 Cor. 9.7)

Yep. We can turn things right around in our own minds by doing good—cheerfully.

Serving, giving, tithing, offering, rejoicing in the Lord for the good of others is a quick trip to joy. It doesn't change our circumstances; it just changes our minds.

God feels very deeply about the poor. Those poor financially, and those poor in love and care. So, He has tasked His children to tend to His children.

“For the LORD will greatly bless you...only if you carefully obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe with care all these commandments...” (Deut. 15.4, 5).

And one of those commandments was this one: “If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs” (Deut. 15.7, 8).

Willingly and cheerfully and completely and bountifully.

“You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand” (Deut. 15.10).

“Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away” (Matt. 5.42). “But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?” (1 Jn. 3.17). Well, it doesn't. That's why we want to sow bountifully.

“So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity” (2 Cor. 9.7).

How exciting is this? We know how to lift ourselves out of the doldrums, and simultaneously be pleasing to the Lord! All it takes is a little cheerful giving and bountiful sowing to those in need.

For reflection

1. How's your “giving”? What did you give of the grace of God yesterday? What will you give today?
2. How is that giving of ourselves to others can lift us out of life's doldrums? What's at work in this?
3. Whom will you encourage today to sow God's grace bountifully in their world?

If we had more faith and love, we should waste less on ourselves, and sow more in hope of a plentiful increase. Can a man lose by doing that with which God is pleased? Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on 2 Corinthians 9.6-15

Pray Psalm 126.1-5.

Pray for revival. Pray that God's people will sow His grace far and wide, in all their acts of love and words of truth. Pray that God will renew churches everywhere so that a great harvest of souls may be brought into them.

Sing Psalm 126.1-5.

(Truro: *Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns*)

When God restored our fortunes all, we were like those who sweetly dream.

Our mouths with joy and laughter filled, made Him our constant song and theme.

Then the astonished nations said, “The LORD has done great things for them!”
Indeed, great things our God has done, Whose Name we praise, Amen, Amen!

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Restore our fortunes, LORD our King! Let grace like flowing streams prevail.
All they with tears of joy shall sing who sow while yet they weep and wail.

4 Boundless Grace

Pray Psalm 52.8, 9.

But I *am* like a green olive tree in the house of God;
I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever.
I will praise You forever,
Because You have done *it*;
And in the presence of Your saints
I will wait on Your name, for *it is* good.

Sing Psalm 52.8, 9.

(Warrington: *Give to Our God Immortal Praise*)

But as for me may I be seen in God an olive ever green!
Ever in God, most kind and just, shall I with joy and gladness trust!

Thanks evermore to our Savior be raised! His faithfulness be ever praised!
Here with Your people, loving God, I wait upon Your Name, so good!

Read 2 Corinthians 9.1-9; meditate on verses 8 and 9.

Preparation

1. What does Paul say about God's grace?
2. Why does God do this for us?

Meditation

We have been redeemed and saved in Jesus Christ for good works, which God has ordained from of old—the good works of His Law. Giving to relieve the needs of others is a good work, but here Paul shows that he was using the Corinthians' promised gift as a synecdoche, one facet of good works used to represent the whole of them. As believers in Jesus Christ, we are to be zealous for good works (Tit. 2.14; 3.1, 8, 14). We must not grow weary in doing them (Gal. 6.9, 10), for it is by good works that we prove the resurrection of Jesus Christ, contribute to the progress of His Kingdom, and make known the glory of God, Who is at work within us willing and doing according to His good pleasure.

God would not command us for such works if He did not also intend to give us the wherewithal to perform them, namely, the will, strength, and resources needed for lives of good works. Smell the glorious bouquet of promises packed into the vase of these two verses:

- God is powerful (*δυνατεῖ*, *dunatei*, like dynamite!)
- all grace will abound to us
- always, without fail
- sufficiency, just exactly what we need
- abundance, overflowing and refreshing
- every, not just some
- endures forever: issuing in increasing and lasting righteousness

As we invest our time and strength for good works, God will provide for us as. Plan carefully and continuously for good works. Commit your work to the Lord in prayer throughout the day. Make the most of the time allotted to you for them. Be diligent and faithful in doing good and serving others, and God will grant you sufficiency in all things. Thank and praise Him daily for this promise and for His faithfulness.

And, as you do, bask in the endless and refreshing joy of His Presence in and through you.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

The psalm that Paul taps to explain the method through which God chooses to be “able” to make all grace abound (2 Cor. 9.8) shows how we can become useable for this purpose.

“Praise the LORD!

Blessed is the man who fears the LORD,
who delights greatly in His commandments.
His descendants will be mighty on earth;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.
Wealth and riches will be in his house,
and his righteousness endures forever.
Unto the upright there arises light in the darkness;
he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.
A good man deals graciously and lends;
he will guide his affairs with discretion.
Surely he will never be shaken;
the righteous will be in everlasting remembrance.
He will not be afraid of evil tidings;
His heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.
His heart is established;
He will not be afraid...” (Ps. 112.1-8).

This is the person who has:
dispersed abroad,
who has given to the poor;
and whose righteousness endures forever... (Ps. 112.9).

There is a way to become this blessed person, and it is only through the grace of God, the work of the Holy Spirit, and our desire to “work out [our] own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2.12).

“Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD!
Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with the whole heart!
They also do no iniquity; they walk in His ways” (Ps. 119.1-3).

God is able to make all this happen, through His boundless grace, which He freely shares with us; thus, we will share with others boundlessly, willingly, cheerfully, completely, and bountifully.

Because we want to be just like our Father.

“Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I AM holy’” (1 Pet.1.13-16).

From this “abundance” boundless grace flows “for every good work” (2 Cor. 9.8).

For reflection

1. How should we approach the Lord to receive a greater abundance of His grace?
2. How do you expect to know the grace of God at work in your life today?
3. How do you expect to spread that grace to others today?

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He is able to make all grace abound towards us, and to abound in us; to give a large increase of spiritual and of temporal good things. He can make us to have enough in all things; and to be content with what we have. God gives not only enough for ourselves, but that also wherewith we may supply the wants of others, and this should be as seed to be sown. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on 2 Corinthians 9.6-15*

Pray Psalm 52.1-7.

Give thanks and praise to God, Whose grace abounds to us despite our sinfulness and unbelief.

Sing Psalm 52.1-7.

(Warrington: *Give to Our God Immortal Praise*)

Why do the mighty boast in sin? God's love endures, it knows no end!

They with their tongues vain boasts repeat, and like a razor, work deceit.

Men more than good in evil delight, and lies prefer to what is right.

They utter words both harsh and strong with their devouring, deceitful tongue.

God will forever break them down, uproot, and cast them to the ground!

He from their safety tears them away, no more to know the light of day.

The righteous see and laugh and fear, and say, "Behold, what have we here?"

Such are all who at God conspire, and wealth and evil ways desire."

5 Coin of the Realm

Pray Psalm 132.8-10.

Arise, O LORD, to Your resting place,
You and the ark of Your strength.
Let Your priests be clothed with righteousness,
And let Your saints shout for joy.
For Your servant David's sake,
Do not turn away the face of Your Anointed.

Sing Psalm 132.8-10.

(Finlandia: *Be Still, My Soul*)

Arise, O LORD, come to Your resting place;
Your holy Presence meet with us in might.
Clothe us with righteousness in Jesus' grace,
and we will shout to Your divine delight!
For David's sake, turn not away Your face,
but look upon us in Your holy light.

Read 2 Corinthians 9.1-11; meditate on verses 10, 11.

Preparation

1. What should be the fruit of the “seeds” we “sow”?
2. Why does God “enrich” us?

Meditation

In the Kingdom of God, the coin of the realm is grace. God is the Banker, and He holds for each of us who believes an infinite account to draw on in lavishing His grace on the people in our Personal Mission Field. We look to Him to “enrich” us from His grace vault “for all liberality” as we invest God's grace in others unto righteousness. We are called, like Paul, to spend and be spent for the souls of others (2 Cor. 12.15).

To put it rather more crassly, and in more familiar terms, grace in all its forms is the “getting and spending” in which we are daily employed. Grace comes to us via prayer, the Word of God, His “with-you-always” Presence, and by every act of obediently emptying ourselves for others. We draw on grace by faith, but we will never draw it down; for trusting in His promises, we will always have a “sufficiency” (v. 8) for every need.

And we “spend” grace in varying amounts, depending on the opportunity and the need before us. Not our needs: God Himself is attending to those continuously. But the needs of those around us, to whom we are sent as grace-spreaders. We do not store up grace; it has already been stored up for us so that we may abound in it. We spend grace and, having spent, we are renewed in grace unto more grace abounding in more righteousness, like a river of living water flowing from our soul.

And thus the Kingdom of God comes and makes progress on earth as it is in heaven.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.

God supplies seed to the sower.

God supplies bread for food. (2 Cor. 9.10)

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning” (Jms. 1.17).

“For the Lord is the great God, and the great King above all gods.
In His hand are the deep places of the earth; the heights of the hills are His also.
The sea is His, for He made it; and His hands formed the dry land.
Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.
For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture,
And the sheep of His hand” (Ps. 95.3-7).

He made everything. And He made us.
And He gives us grace to sustain us.
But not just us, His grace covers everyone and everything.

And everything God does and gives is in abundance.
He says that when we obediently give, His grace makes our obedience flourish: “Try Me now in this...if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it” (Mal. 3.10); and we are “abundantly satisfied” (Ps. 36.8).

Most of all, we are satisfied and gratified because His grace covers our sins. As Paul wrote about his own salvation: “And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 1.14).

And why is it that we have been abundantly enriched by Him?
So that we can, with liberality, be grace-spreaders in our Personal Mission Field (2 Cor. 9.11).

And who gets the “blame” (2 Cor. 8.20) for all these good grace works? Jesus, only, Jesus.

“Now unto Him Who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen” (Eph. 3.20, 21).

*Marvelous grace of our loving Lord, grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt,
Yonder on Calvary’s mount out-poured, there where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.*

*Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace, freely bestowed on all who believe;
All who are longing to see His face, will you this moment His grace receive?*

*Grace, grace, God’s grace, grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God’s grace, grace that is greater than all our sin.
(Julia H. Johnston, 1911)*

For reflection

1. How will you “spend” the grace of God for His glory today?
2. Has anyone spent His grace on you lately? How? Have you thanked them? Thanked the Lord?
3. How would you explain how the grace of God works through our good works to a new believer?

*Let us endeavor to copy the example of Christ, being unwearied in doing good, and deeming it more blessed to give than to receive.
Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on 2 Corinthians 9.6-15*

Pray Psalm 132.13-18.

Thank the Lord for choosing you, saving you, giving you His Spirit, and sending you into your world as His righteous ambassador and witness.

Sing Psalm 132.13-18.

(Finlandia: *Be Still, My Soul*)

God dwells among us, and He will forever,
to meet our needs and clothe us with His grace.
He has to us sent Jesus Christ, our Savior—
Beloved, eternal light and resting place.
His foes are banished from His Presence ever,
but we shall reign with Him before His face.

6 Grace Indescribable!

Pray Psalm 48.1-3.

Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised
In the city of our God,
In His holy mountain.
Beautiful in elevation,
The joy of the whole earth,
Is Mount Zion on the sides of the north,
The city of the great King.
God *is* in her palaces;
He is known as her refuge.

Sing Psalm 48.1-3.

(Cwm Rhondda: *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*)

Great is God, now greatly praise Him in the city of the LORD!
Holy she, His lovely mountain, great and glorious by His Word!
God her King is great within her, He, her Stronghold ever sure!
He, her Stronghold ever sure!

Read 2 Corinthians 9.1-15; meditate on verses 12-15.

Prepare

1. What is the result when grace spreads?
2. Why should we especially give thanks to God?

Meditation

Paul called the work of giving to relieve the needs of poor saints in Judea a *λειτουργία*, *leitourgia*, that is, a liturgy, a form of worship. All the ways we give of ourselves to others are liturgies of worship to the Lord. We worship God when we do good works by directing all attention to Him, Who is the giver of all gifts and Who brings forth the fruit of good works in His people.

Further, Paul wrote that the *way* this ministry (*διακονία*, *diakonia*, service) was administered was important, because the goal of all ministry is that God receive thanks and praise. The “administration” of this gift—collecting it, receiving it, transporting and delivering it—because it was full of grace and worship, would bring “many thanksgivings to God” (v. 12). Paul was already anticipating how the believers in Judea would respond to the Corinthians’ great show of grace (v. 14): They would glorify God, which is precisely what the spreading of His grace is intended to do (2 Cor. 4.15).

But all God’s grace in all kinds of giving are but tokens and representations of the “indescribable” grace of God in giving us the gift of His Son (v. 15). His grace is the source, template, and end of all the grace He grants to us and spreads through us, for it all testifies to His unfathomable love in Jesus Christ.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

There are not words in human language to explain God’s many gifts to us—creation and redemption—which are “indescribable” (2 Cor. 9.15).

So we may as well just get out of the way, and not even try to compete for blame for these gifts that remain without adequate description. Since every good and perfect gift is from God. Always. (Jms. 1.17)

Anything that we do that is good and helpful—uplifting, or of a joy-bringing or grace-spreading nature—is all of God. And no other. The church who benefitted from the Corinthians’ gift, longed *for* them because of the grace of God *in* them (2 Cor. 9.14). They didn’t long for them because they were awesome folks, they appreciated them because they allowed the awesome God to work through them.

The Judean church also glorified God for the Corinthians’ obedience to Him, because they followed His commands for life, work, and service (2 Cor. 9.13). They knew of their belief in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, now they knew of their actions to back up their beliefs. They knew for certain that they were not taking on the Name of the Lord their God in vain (Ex. 20.7).

It should be our goal, that whatever we do in our Personal Mission Field, would cause someone to be thankful to God.

As an aside: it is good manners to thank a person who does us a kindness; that person God has tapped on the shoulder to show us His love. So, if we are the recipient of someone’s gift, we should thank them properly. And it is not wrong for us, if we do a kindness, to also appreciate being thanked. But the focus of everyone’s thanks should be toward God because all goodness is from Him!

“Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever.
Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable.
One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts.”

“The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy.
The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works.”

“All Your works shall praise You, O LORD, and Your saints shall bless You.
They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and talk of Your power,
to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom.”

“The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food in due season.
You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.
The LORD is righteous in all His ways, gracious in all His works.
The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth”
(Ps. 145.2-4, 8, 9, 10-12, 15-18).

And God, in His indescribable grace and mercy, allows us to participate with Him in His good works! (1 Cor. 3.9; Eph. 2.10)

“Thanks be to God!” (2 Cor. 9.15).

For reflection

1. How do you respond to people who spread the grace of God to you?
2. How does showing grace to others help to fulfill our calling to the Kingdom and glory of God?
3. Whom will you encourage to be a spreader of God’s grace today?

Blessed be God for the unspeakable gift of his grace, whereby he enables and inclines some of his people to bestow upon others, and others to be grateful for it; and blessed be his glorious name to all eternity, for Jesus Christ, that inestimable gift of his love, through whom this and every other good thing, pertaining to life and godliness, are freely given unto us, beyond all expression, measure, or bounds. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on 2 Corinthians 9.6-15

Pray Psalm 48.4-14.

Pray that God's grace will fill you, your churches, and churches throughout your community and the world so that grace will spread throughout the earth and God's Name will be magnified.

Sing Psalm 48.4-14.

(Cwm Rhondda: *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*)

Earthly kings, amazed and wond'ring, look upon the Church with fear.
See them flee in dread and anguish, knowing that the LORD is near.
For the city of the Savior God will keep forevermore!
God will keep forevermore!

For Your grace and lovingkindness we proclaim Your matchless worth!
As Your Name is, great and boundless, let Your praise fill all the earth.
Let Your people sing rejoicing for the judgment of Your truth;
for the judgment of Your truth.

Walk about the blessed city, see her beauty, see her power.
Count her ramparts, filled with glory, look on every mighty tower.
Tell her glory to the nations: God will guide her evermore;
God will guide her evermore!

7 Grace Abounding

Pray Psalm 128.1, 2.

Blessed *is* every one who fears the LORD,
Who walks in His ways.
When you eat the labor of your hands,
You *shall be* happy, and it *shall be* well with you.

Sing Psalm 128.1, 2.

(Fountain: *There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood*)

How blessed are they who fear YOU, LORD, who walk within Your ways!
Rejoicing in Your bounteous Word, they prosper all their days!
They prosper all their days, they prosper all their days!
Rejoicing in Your bounteous Word, they prosper all their days!

Review 2 Corinthians 9.1-15; meditate on verse 8.

Preparation

1. What is God able to do?
2. What does that do for us?

Meditation

As we have seen from the beginning of this study of 1 and 2 Corinthians, the Corinthians had misunderstood what it means to be saved. No sooner had Paul moved on from them, after nearly two years of ministry, than false teachers arrived, drawing followers to themselves, promoting the primacy of their “tribe”, splitting the churches in Corinth into competing groups, and unleashing a blight of self-interest into the Christian community. This had led to various other problems—compromises with the world, winking at scandalous sin, taking advantage of one another, abusing the Lord’s Supper, making a circus out of worship, and more.

The grace that flowed through Paul’s preaching and teaching became like spoiled manna in the souls of the Corinthian Christians. Things got so bad that they knew they had to do something. So they sent a team to Paul, seeking his counsel.

In 1 Corinthians he addressed their issues firmly but lovingly, calling them to repent and be renewed in the grace of God. They sorrowed at his rebuke, but they received it and immediately began to set matters in order, so that grace began flowing through them once again. In 2 Corinthians, having heard a good report from Titus, Paul celebrated their progress and called them to press on, specifically, in fulfilling a promise they had made to take a collection for the relief of Judean believers.

In so doing, Paul neither threatened nor cajoled. He wrote as if he knew they would do what they had promised. Grace was once again abounding in Corinth, and Paul sought to channel some of it to meet an urgent need. The Corinthians had returned to the Yes Path in Jesus, and Paul encouraged them to keep on it, looking to God to supply a sufficiency of grace for all their needs. God, He assured them, has all the grace they will ever need, and will cause it to abound to them if only they believe and obey. No good work will be denied them as they take every next step along the Yes Path with Jesus.

And that same grace is available to us every day.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

And God is able
(even when we are profusely giving:
goods, care, concern, love, and
words of comfort and encouragement)
to make all grace,
as much as we need,
abound to us,
so that we,
always having
all sufficiency
(always having just enough—
we cannot outgive God)
in all things,
so that we may have an abundance
for every good work—
to continue giving—
because we will never run out of God's amazing,
abounding grace.
(2 Cor. 9.8)

During a time of drought and famine, God sent Elijah to the home of a widow who, God said, would provide for him. When he got to her house, he found that she was in dire straits. She said to him, "As the LORD your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die."

But Elijah knew the LORD his God, and believed God, that this woman could show him grace and hospitality. So, Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son. For thus says the LORD God of Israel; 'The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth.'"

She trusted what God said to her through Elijah, and she obediently did what she was told to do. And sure enough, "The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke by Elijah" (1 Kgs. 17.9-16). Grace miraculously abounding.

"There is one who scatters, yet increases more; and
there is one who withholds more than is right, but it leads to poverty.
The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself" (Prov. 11.24, 25).

"Give, and it will be given to you:
Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom.
For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you" (Lk. 6.38).

Best, then, to err on the side of abundance.
For God "has all the grace we will ever need, and will cause it to abound to us if we only believe and obey."
Just like the obedient widow of Zarephath—abounding grace to her, in her, and through her.

For reflection

1. The more you show grace, the more you know grace. Explain:

Indescribable!: 2 Corinthians 9

2. What opportunities will you have today to draw on the boundless sufficiency of God's grace?
3. We must not take the grace of God for granted. How should you acknowledge God's grace to and through you?

If we had more faith and love, we should waste less on ourselves, and sow more in hope of a plentiful increase. Can a man lose by doing that with which God is pleased? Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on 2 Corinthians 9.6-15

Pray Psalm 128.3-6.

Thank God for the grace He abounds to you daily, in your walk with Him, your family, your church, and throughout your community. Ask Him to use you to spread His grace throughout your Personal Mission Field today.

Sing Psalm 128.3-6.

(Fountain: *There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood*)

Their homes with happy children bloom who fear Your holy Name;
their tables and their every room declare Your glorious fame!
Declare Your glorious fame, declare Your glorious fame!
Their tables and their every room declare Your glorious fame!

O LORD, from Zion send Your peace, and prosp'rous make our ways;
thus may Your blessings e'er increase upon us all our days!
Upon us all our days, upon us all our days!
Thus may Your blessings e'er increase upon all us all our days!

Indescribable!: 2 Corinthians 9

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. What are some ways that Christians can “give” and spread the grace of God?
2. What principles for such giving did Paul offer in this chapter?
3. Do we need to worry that God might run out of grace? Why does He cause His grace to abound to us?
4. How does grace work through you to result in God being praised and thanked?
5. What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned from this part of our study of 1 and 2 Corinthians?

For prayer:

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Thank you.