



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC Grace for Good Works: 2 Corinthians 8 & 9 **SPEAKER** Pastor Ng Hua Ken

THEME Abounding Grace for Good Works **DATE** 4 & 5 February 2017

MESSAGE SUMMARY

BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

2 Corinthians 8 and 9 encourage us to give generously, and to do it with a cheerful heart. In these chapters Paul reminded the Corinthian churches of their promise to collect the offering for the needy believers in Judea by using the generosity of the Macedonian churches and the Lord Jesus Christ as examples. The Macedonia churches, despite being poor, gave joyfully. Similarly, Jesus “though He was rich, yet for your sakes became poor” (2 Cor 8:9). From these, we can see that not only does God love a cheerful giver, but His grace will always abound such that we will have sufficiency in all times to abound in good works (2 Cor 9:7-8).

HOW DO YOU LOOK AT GOD IN YOUR LIFE?

1. Two types of giving

In 2 Cor 9:5-7, two types of giving are put into contrast. The first type would be one in which we give as an exaction, **sparingly and reluctantly** (under compulsion). In contrast, the second type is one in which we give **willingly, bountifully and cheerfully**. The essence of both is our attitude. Bad giving comes from a heart that wants to hold back while good giving comes from a heart that knows the truth that our God is God who blesses bountifully, and that our gift back to Him should in turn be a bountiful blessing to others (John Piper). We must also remember that we should hold on to everything loosely except for the Word of God and our relationship with the Holy Spirit. When we hold loosely to the things we are blessed with, we will not only be able to give generously and joyfully, but will also be able to find our freedom.

2. Two types of hearts

The two types of giving then reveal the two types of hearts a person can have. The first type would be one that sees God as a Taker – a demanding God. **A person with such a heart will also feel drained and depleted when he looks at God.** On the other hand, the second type would be one who sees God as the Giver/Supplier and not demanding, but deserving. **A person with such a heart will feel replenished by God.** 2 Cor 9:6-10 illustrates the second type of heart and who God is. God not only gives us these seeds – i.e. blessings – but also increases our harvest of righteousness when we give generously to meet the needs of others. When we see God for who He is, we will have a greater willingness to be a blessing, borne out of a heart of thanksgiving. We will also find joy in seeing God meet the needs of others, and love will be shared among those who give and receive.

CONCLUSION

2 Corinthians 8 and 9 remind and encourage us to give generously, with joy. We should always give willingly, bountifully and cheerfully. This type of giving comes from a heart that knows the truth that God is a bountifully blessing God and that our gift back to Him should in turn be a bountiful blessing to others. Not only is God the Giver who bountifully blesses us but He is also the One who increases our harvest of righteousness.

The results of all these are freedom, thanksgiving, joy and love which further results in giving glory to God.

Our types of giving and heart reveal the biggest issue of our lives: How do we look at God in our lives? Always remember that we do not belong to ourselves; our lives were bought with a price (1 Cor 6:19-20). So be like the Macedonian churches that submitted themselves first to God, and then blessed bountifully in thankfulness towards Him – thus giving God the glory He deserves.

QUESTIONS

Recall the times in which you *blessed* or *were blessed* by others.

- A. How did you feel on those occasions? Why do you think you felt that way?
- B. How did such instances help you better understand the character of God?

Our attitude towards giving reveals how we see God – as a *Giver* or a *Taker*. In your interactions with those around you, would you say that you're more of a giver or a taker?

In what way can you bless others? Commit yourself to living out God's word by outlining some practical steps you would like to take to bless others over the next one month.