

# 2 Corinthians 8 (Part 2): 6-24 - The Grace to Give

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier  
Calvary Chapel Ontario

2 Corinthians chapter 8 is where we are. We picked up the first 5 verses of this chapter last week, and we focused on those. We're going to pick it up in verse 6, and then following, read along as I read it says,

*“Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace. <sup>7</sup> But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also.*

*<sup>8</sup> I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. <sup>9</sup> For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. <sup>10</sup> And in this matter I give my judgment: this benefits you, who a year ago started not only to do this work but also to desire to do it. <sup>11</sup> So now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have. <sup>12</sup> For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. <sup>13</sup> For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness <sup>14</sup> your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness. <sup>15</sup> As it is written, “Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack.*

*<sup>16</sup> But thanks be to God, who put into the heart of Titus the same earnest care I have for you. <sup>17</sup> For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest he is going to you of his own accord. <sup>18</sup> With him we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his preaching of the gospel. <sup>19</sup> And not only that, but he has been appointed by the churches to travel with us as we carry out this act of grace that is being ministered by us, for the glory of the Lord himself and to show our good will. <sup>20</sup> We take this course so that no one should blame us about this generous gift that is being administered by us, <sup>21</sup> for we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord’s sight but also in the sight of man. <sup>22</sup> And with them we are sending our brother (whom we have often, excuse me, yes) whom we have often tested and found earnest in many matters, but who is now more earnest than ever because of his great confidence in you.*

*23 As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker for your benefit. And as for our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ. 24 So give proof before the churches of your love and of our boasting about you to these men.” (ESV)*

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, thank You so much for giving us this time to study Your Word this morning. Let the ministry of Your grace fill our hearts to teach us to help us to understand all that You have to say to us today.

We give this time to you, Father, in Jesus' name, amen.

I want to take you for just a moment back in time to imagine if you could for just a moment what it would have been like to have been a Jew living in Jerusalem or somewhere in Judea and at some point in time you came to believe that Jesus was the Messiah, the Savior. And that what he did on the cross was actually pay for the sins of all of mankind.

Now, you're a Jew, and you have been raised hobnobbing with your fellow Jews, connecting, buying and selling, living, rejoicing, celebrating, and so forth with these people. But now because you have come to Christ, there's a rift between you and your neighbors who don't believe in Jesus because you see, you've abandoned Judaism, you've abandoned Moses and the Torah. You've abandoned Abraham in their eyes. And you've walked away from all of that, and you've embraced this wacky guy who people claim was the Messiah who died on a cross, which to you as a Jew proves He wasn't the Messiah, because everybody knows anyone who's hung on a tree is cursed of God.

Now your life is very different. Your ability to connect with your neighbors is gone. Your ability to do business is all but gone. That's life for you as a Jew living in Judea. Now, imagine a famine sweeps across your land and food becomes scarce. People are starting to starve.

Now, you know what usually happens in situations when natural disasters strike, people usually band together. We've seen it right here in the United States of America when there are hurricanes, when there are earthquakes, when there are other natural disasters, and people lose their homes, lose their businesses. We used to see this in the Midwest, in Podunkville, Minnesota. If somebody lost their barn because of a fire, other people would rally around them. If somebody got sick and couldn't bring in their crop, some of the other farmers would come along and bring in their crop. People do that; they rally.

But now, remember you're a Jew living in Judea among other Jews, and because you've accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, they're not rallying to your aid. They're not coming to see how you're doing. They're not giving you any special attention in the buying and selling of whatever. And you are essentially on your own.

Well, you can see the problem that was happening in that part of the world that was facing those early Jewish Christians. And of course, Paul knew about this. He knew that the famine had not just made life difficult, it had made life impossible for Christians because there was nobody to turn to. There was no society to turn to.

Paul purposed in his heart to go around to all of the churches that he had planted and to encourage them to do what they could do to help out the Christians in Judea by putting together an offering of some support for the believers there. And the Corinthians had earlier expressed their desire to be part of this relief program. In fact, Paul says here in this section that they were the first to express the desire. They were the first ones.

Paul is now using this part of his letter to them to encourage them to follow through, because saying something, I want to help, is easy, isn't it? Following through on that can be a challenge.

Now last week, as you remember, we focused on Paul's comments about the Macedonian churches. And how they had been enabled by the grace of God to make a generous donation toward the relief efforts in the area of Judea. Paul used it as an example to fan into flame this completion of this work there in Corinth.

And what Paul talked about when he referred to the Macedonian churches in those first 5 verses is how those churches completed an act of God's grace. He called it an act of God's grace, mainly because the level of joy and generosity that came out of those churches came during a time of terrible affliction and dire poverty. That showed Paul that it was a work of God's enabling grace, that it wasn't a work of their flesh or their simple humanity. It was a work of God.

So, last week we discussed the grace of God that enables believers to go beyond their everyday human abilities. By the way, if you missed that message, as always, you can find it on our website and you can catch up. But Paul was hoping now, as he's writing to the Corinthians, he's hoping that they are going to operate in that same power of the Holy Spirit when it comes to completing

this gift that they said, we want to help with, we really want to help with this, but they had not as of yet completed.

Which is why Paul says in verse 6, if you'll look with me again in your Bible, he says, "*Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete* (those are the key words there), *among you, this act of grace.*" Titus was obviously involved. He was there when the Corinthians expressed their desire to get involved. And now, Paul had urged Titus to go back. In fact, Titus wanted to bring this thing to completion.

And along those lines, Paul says in verse 7, look at this, he says, "*...as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness...*" Earnestness, by the way, is used several times here in the ESV, it means passion, it's passion, right? It's either passion for the truth or passion for the Lord in general, or just, it's just passion, you're a passionate people. He says, "*...(as you excel in those things and) in our love for you* (he says) — *see that you excel in this act of grace also.*" Stop there.

Let me just tell you here what Paul is saying. Paul is saying, I've seen God working among you. I've seen God's power working in your midst and I've seen you excel beyond your human capability in other areas. I've seen you excel, as it relates to faith, as it relates to speech, your ability to, and part of that is even, spiritual gift of speaking in tongues. He says, I've seen you excel in knowledge. I have seen you excel in your passion for the Lord. You've excelled beyond human capability. I've seen it. I've watched it. I've experienced it.

Now what he's saying is I want to see you excel beyond your human capacity in the area of giving to by acting, responding out of generosity. In other words, Paul is saying, I've witnessed God's excellence among you in other areas. Now, I want to witness that same excellence in your heart to give.

And what's really interesting about this whole discussion, I don't know if you've caught on to this or not, I feel a little bit funny sometimes even talking about this because it sounds so over the top to talk about this excellence and the involvement of the Holy Spirit in giving, does the Holy Spirit really need to be involved in our giving?

I mean, that question comes to mind. It's just a matter of writing a check or pushing the right buttons on the cash machine or scheduling a payment on your bank website. I mean, isn't it pretty simple? I mean, what's the big deal? But you see that's the point, that's the point.

What the apostle Paul is doing in these verses here that we're reading as if we really look at him and try to understand what they really mean and what he's saying is, he is awakening us to how much we, the modern church, have reduced the idea of giving to a carnal duty that really doesn't require any activity or participation by the Holy Spirit. We don't need the Holy Spirit. Who needs the Holy Spirit? All I got to do is write a check. All I got to do is schedule a payment. Heck, I don't even know when it comes out of my account. I just, I can schedule a recurring sort of a thing, or I can do the giving, yeah, easy, no problem. You know what I mean?

We've basically, and this is what Paul is revealing in these verses, is he's revealing here to you and I how much you and I have disinvited the Holy Spirit's involvement in the area of giving. And by the way, it's not the only area where we've done that, but just it happens to be the one that Paul's talking about right now.

But over the years along these lines, I've heard Christians say, and I bet you have too. Have you ever heard somebody say to you, I wonder why we don't see the same power and activity of the Holy Spirit in the church today that they saw during the early first century of the church as recorded in the book of Acts. Why aren't we seeing that stuff? Why aren't we seeing the move of God's Holy Spirit in a dynamic and powerful way like they did in the book of Acts? Well, I will submit to you that we have our answer and I think it at least in part, it's because we've taken much of our Christian lives and we've removed one very critical element of our lives and that is the work and the power of God's Holy Spirit.

We read here in 2 Corinthians about Paul and he's talking about giving he's just talking about giving. And he's been talking, but he's throwing in all these statements about grace, the grace to do, and the power of the Holy Spirit to enable. And we're really? Aren't over spiritualizing this whole idea of just get out your checkbook and write a check? Why all of this talk about the Holy Spirit and so forth? Well, it's because, and again, I think this is why the early church walked in a greater expression of power than do we today. They invited the Holy Spirit into every area and they had an expectation that the Holy Spirit was going to be involved in power in every area of their lives, including their giving. Wow!

Spirit enabled giving. Can you imagine? Sounds like an oxymoron. But not to them, not to these people. When Paul talks about giving, he can't help but talk about the Holy Spirit's power, presence, and participation involved in that.

When was the last time you felt like the Holy Spirit empowered you to give? When was the last time you felt like the power and presence of God's Spirit moved in such a way that you gave? No, it's become a duty to us. We call it paying our tithes. I got to pay my tithes. Okay, Lord, here's your portion. It's become this thing that we don't really like to talk about. And we don't particularly like doing it. Cheerful giver? Not me. It's a duty. God wants my money, apparently.

But as an example of what the enabling grace of the Holy Spirit can do, Paul started in the first 5 verses of this chapter talking about how the believers in Philippi and Berea, and Thessalonica had been enabled to give under such incredible, difficult circumstances.

And now, what Paul goes on to do, beginning in verse 9, he's going to pull out the big gun, right? He's, now he's going to give the ultimate example of giving. Are you ready? Here we go, verse 9: *“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.”* Interesting verse, isn't it? It probably raises some questions.

When was Jesus rich? He's talking about before He became a human being on the face of the earth, incarnate as a baby born to a virgin. Prior to that, where was Jesus? He was with the Father, right? He's the word of God. He's the eternal word of God. And the richness of all things belong to Him because He is one with the Father, right? So, he says, *“...Jesus Christ, (that) though he was rich (then he goes on to say), yet for your sake he became poor...”* When did Jesus become poor? When He was born as a human being. It's funny, we tend to think being a human is so cool, for God, it's becoming poor.

In fact, Philippians tells us, for God to become a human, He has to become nothing. How's that make you feel? It says he had to literally pour himself out, and he became nothing, so that he might become a human being. (Philippians 2:7) Wow, that puts us in our place, doesn't it? Jesus became poor, by the way, these references to rich and poor have nothing to do with material wealth, you know that.

When he talks about you and I being made rich out of his poverty, he's not talking about the wealth that this world is running after. He's talking about the immeasurable riches of the inheritance that is ours through Christ, right? The part that we've only really had a down payment of through His Spirit.

But the reason that Paul is using this example is because it ought to be uppermost in our minds every time we give. And that means that when you and I see a need and we sense the Lord is directing us to meet that need, we should remember that we serve the God who willingly became poor so that others might be made rich, right? That's who we serve. That's our Lord. That's our master. That's our model. He is our model. That all of our giving ought to be done in the shadow of that understanding of the one whom we serve. And that means when I see a need, I remember. And this is nothing new, you guys—to remember what He did for us to motivate what we do for others.

I mean, why do we forgive others? Because we've been forgiven. (Ephesians 4:32) What does the Bible say about our love? We love, why? Because He first loved us, right? (1 John 4:19) Well, why do we give? Because He gave everything. (John 3:16) Same thing, right? You forgive, you love, and you give because He did it first. And He showed you the way. He showed you how. And that's why we give the way we give with such liberality and so forth.

Paul goes on, verse 10: *“And in this matter I give my judgment (he says): this benefits you, who a year ago started not only to do this work but (you guys had the first) desire to do it.”* Right? Now he says in verse 11, *“...finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have.”*<sup>12</sup> *For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.”*

Now what you can see in these verses is that Paul is urging them to complete what they had desired or expressed a desire to do. And again, I'll repeat to you that it's easy to express a desire. It's much more difficult to follow through with that desire. If I could tell you how many times somebody has come up to me and promised me that when they won the lottery, the church would really benefit.

And I—you have to understand what you're saying to me when you say that. It's like saying, when I get struck by lightning, and I expect it to happen any day now, let me tell you, it's going to be Christmas here all year long, sort of a thing. And I appreciate the heart and the desire— what's— that's behind the statement or the sentiment. But desire and completion are two very, very, different things. That's why Paul is encouraging this.

But did you notice there's a principle for giving that's laid out in verse 12 here? Look with me again there verse 12, he says, *“For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable (but, here's the qualifier), according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.”* In other words, the acceptability of your

gift, or your giving, is in keeping with what you have, and which brings up that statement we all should know, you can't give what you don't have, right?

God evaluates your faithfulness in giving according to the resources you have, not according to the resources you do not have, okay. So, that's an important thing to remember: we don't compare our giving with somebody else's because that would be assessing my need to give according to someone else's resources. I'm to give according to my resources.

And by the way, what you have, or what you've been given, is what the Lord has given you before you spend what you want out of that. You know what I'm saying? In other words, if you overspend, you can't use that as an excuse and say, well, there's just nothing to give, sorry. You understand the difference. But the idea there is that God evaluates your faithfulness according to what He's given you already. You give according to what you have and according to what the Lord has laid on your heart.

Now, Paul goes on, verse 13, look with me there: *“For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened...”* Right? I'm not telling, I'm not encouraging you to give to the believers in Judea just so they're going to be in the lap of luxury and you guys are going to be suffering. It's not why I'm saying this.

He says, *“...but that as a matter of fairness <sup>14</sup> your abundance at the present time...”* Because the Corinthians had an abundance right now. He says, your abundance should supply their lack or their need, right? So that later on, when the shoe's on the other foot, as it were, and you guys have a need, their abundance can help meet your need, right? That's what he's talking about. And then he even quotes a passage from the Old Testament in verse 15 about there being no lack.

What we learn from these verses is that the purpose of the Lord within the body of Christ is to take care of one another when needs arise. Is that— it's not hard to understand, right? The purpose of the Lord is that we would take care of one another in the body of Christ when needs arise.

Listen, you and I can't solve every financial problem. We can't help everybody, like Jesus said, the poor will always be among you. (John 12:8) That's a sad commentary, I suppose, on society, culture, and human depravity, but it's the reality. And our resources are limited. We don't have unlimited resources. But the purpose of the Lord is that within the body of Christ, when there's somebody

who's suffering, those who are walking in some level of abundance should relieve that suffering, you know? And there are exceptions even to that.

The early church really tried to walk this out. They really tried to live this idea of taking care of people, so that there was no lack. You remember in the book of Acts how people actually sold property that they owned and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet so it might be distributed evenly among the people so that there might be equality and no lack among them. (Acts 4:34-35) But even then there were people taking advantages of the situation. You got Ananias and Sapphira who took advantage of it. (Acts 5:1-11)

And then later on Paul's letters revealed to us that there were people who just naturally got lazy because they felt like, yeah, we're going to live in a commune. This is pretty cool. Somebody else will work. I don't have to. Sound familiar?

Let me show you a couple of statements that Paul made in both of his letters, both these from the letters to the Thessalonians. First for Thessalonian, Paul wrote,

**1 Thessalonians 5:14 (ESV)**

*And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle...*

*And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle...*

You're not talking about idle people outside of Christ. He's talking about believers. He says, "...admonish the idle..." That means lazy. Admonish them means to exhort them, hey, get busy, there's things to be done. There were people taking advantage of the situation of community care, right? And then in 2 Thessalonians 3:10, it says:

**2 Thessalonians 3:10 (ESV)**

*For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.*

*For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.*

Being hungry has a great—becomes a great motivator for people. But you see there were individuals, even in the early church, who didn't want to work because they thought this is a great system to get involved in because we just all, we're all just, we take care of each other, we love each other, this is great, I don't need to work. And then the idea there was then you don't eat.

But these exceptions, the things that we just looked at there as exceptions to the rule, should not keep you and I away from the principle of God's purpose that we should be taking care of one another in the body of Christ. That's the point, we should be taking care of one another.

And when you think about that fact, it shouldn't seem weird to you at all when you remember we are the body of Christ. We call ourselves that, right? The body of Christ. You know what that's likened unto? A real physical body. Think about your body. If you get hurt if I burn my hand, my left hand, my right hand comes right over to take care of it. Doesn't stop and think about it for a second.

My feet take me directly where I can find some cool running water to take care of that left hand. My feet and my other hand, and my head, and all my body goes into red alert to take care of that one member who's hurt and needing help. Now that's how your body works too, right? That's the way we're supposed to work as a body.

When I see it happening in the body of Christ, it's delightful. It really is. And I've seen it happen. Probably not enough, but it is a very, very, cool thing to watch. But our bodies are a picture of how the body of Christ ought to function. You know? When my left hand gets burned, my right hand doesn't go, yeah, it serves you right, man, I'm not helping. You're on your own pal. Don't even think about it. It's just immediate, ummm.. right there. Have you ever noticed that? You hurt your leg or something, your arm goes down, oh, you grab that thing right away.

Shouldn't we be doing that in the body of Christ when somebody's hurting and in trouble? Shouldn't we grab them, just grab them right away and just wrap our arms around them and say, oh, man, ouch, I'm here, I'm here. That's the way we ought to be functioning. Unfortunately, it's not the way we function far too often. This is what Paul's saying when he talks about equality in the body of Christ, connectedness in such a way that we're taking care of one another.

Look at verse 16: *“But thanks be to God, who put into the heart of Titus the same earnest (or passionate) care I have for you. <sup>17</sup> For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest (or passionate) he is going to you of his own accord.”* So, Titus agreed to go and help the Corinthians complete their gift.

He says, *“<sup>18</sup> With him we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his preaching of the gospel.”* And you're going, who is that? The answer is we don't know. We don't know. He is unnamed, and probably rightly

so. What do we know about him? He was famous, whatever. He was just really well known. A lot of people have guessed, but they're just nothing but guesses. There is nothing in the text that identifies him.

Then Paul says about this brother, this famous brother, <sup>19</sup> *And not only that, but he has been appointed by the churches to travel with us as we carry out this act of grace that is being ministered by us, for the glory of the Lord himself and to show our good will.* <sup>20</sup> We take this course (in other words, we bring him along, here's why, look at this, look at this, is very important) *so that no one should blame us about this generous gift that is being administered by us,* <sup>21</sup> *for we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of man.*”

Do you see what Paul's saying here in these verses? He's saying that this unnamed person, this famous unnamed person, whoever he is, who was chosen by the churches to accompany Paul, was chosen so that it would eliminate accusation or blame. You with me? And that's always important when you're handling money. See, these guys would go around to these churches and they'd gather up a pretty, probably a good sum of money to take to the people in Judea.

Well, whenever you're handling money, other people's money particularly, that they've given, it's real easy to be open to criticism. So, they brought along extra people, not just this brother, but there were others that Paul mentions as well who came along to eliminate the possibility of accusation and blame. And this is a great principle when you're doing something like that. And I want to tell you that it's a principle that we use here at Calvary Chapel.

We have multiple layers of people who are involved. When you drop your offering in the offering box or when you put it in the mail or transfer it electronically, there are layers of people between the giving of your gift and the depositing of your gift and so forth. There are money counters. We have guys who count the offering every Sunday, but they always work in pairs, never alone, nobody, so they're free from accusation, right?

There's a bookkeeper who has to show their work to other people. Here's what I came up with and so forth, and then when it comes to spending money there are again, there are layers of accountability and so forth starting with every check we write here at Calvary Chapel requires two signatures. And then there's a different bookkeeper who sees everything that goes out.

And then there are detailed expense reports that get sent to the elders showing what has been spent and why and so forth. And it's actually quite involved, but

it's necessary because when you're using the Lord's resources you got to be careful not to be open for accusation. It's just something that you got to be very careful about in order to be good stewards.

Paul finishes the chapter this way, verse 22, he says, “*And with them we are sending our brother (and this is a different unnamed brother) whom we have often tested and found earnest (or passionate) in many matters, but who is now more earnest than ever because of his great confidence in you.*” Wish we knew who that was, we don't. And then he says, “<sup>23</sup> *As for Titus (we do know, he's the guy delivering this letter to the Corinthians, he says), he is my partner and fellow worker for your benefit. And as for our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ.*”

<sup>24</sup> *So (he says) give proof before the churches of your love (in other words, in the sight of all the other churches give a proof of your love and) and of our boasting about you...*” Because we're telling, just like I boasted in front of you about the Macedonian churches, I'm going to go and I'm going to boast in front of them about you. And so, he says, give proof of that.

So, as we close out this chapter of 2 Corinthians, I need you to know something about the coming chapter. Chapter 9 continues with the theme of giving. More giving? Well, yeah, and it actually gives us more insight into what I believe is an act of worship. But I understand, I get it, I know that giving can be a touchy subject for some people.

And one of the reasons that the whole topic of giving can be a very sensitive matter is because, frankly, historically as a church, we've done it very badly. We've dealt with money issues and the gathering of money issues quite badly. I remember being in a church one time down in the south. Boy I tell you in the south, I mean this wasn't just the Bible belt, this was the buckle of the belt, right? And I went to church there one Sunday and it was pretty hooping and hollering, and they took an offering at the early, early on in the service. And later on, at the end of the service, they announced that they had taken that offering back and it wasn't enough. And so they were going to pass the plate again. Yeah! Aren't you glad that we don't even pass a plate around here?

And can you imagine them getting up and saying, we counted the offering, it wasn't enough. So, we're coming around a second time. Second skimmings, and let's do a little better this time, that was the very clear message. And the guys who I was with at that time, this was a number of years ago, we're looking at each other like, I mean, we just could not believe what we were hearing.

But listen, that stuff really sours folks, and when they come to church and there's no time even studying the Word of God, it's just one long exhortation about how you need to give more because we have a building project and we're behind, that sours people. And when that goes on and on, and on, and then we start writing letters to guilt you into giving a little more, and that sort of thing, all in the name of good stewardship, it sours people. And so what happens, Christians, they get, sort of jaded about the whole topic. I'm going to go to church, but that guy better not talk about giving, I'm out of there.

We've gotten, well, I guess what I'm saying is we've allowed the drama, and the misuse, and the noise to draw us away, to cause us to shy away from a real, true biblical understanding of giving. Can I suggest to you, people, that giving is an act of worship? And in light of that, it's important for you and I to know what the Bible has to say, not a— you see what I'm saying? We need to, when we see in a chapter and we've just gone through chapter 8, we've done with two, two messages I've pulled out of this chapter and they were both primarily about giving, although we emphasized mostly about grace last week, but still, when you look at this other chapter upcoming and you're thinking, oh man, another chapter on giving, I wonder how many weeks Pastor Paul's going to break that one up into, we're going to be talking about giving until Thanksgiving.

My point is here at Calvary Chapel anyway, we don't talk about giving unless it comes up in the word. You have never in 27 years heard us say anything from the pulpit about our financial condition, nor have you ever once heard us ask for money for ourselves in the sense of padding our own. We've asked for money to help kids go to camp. We've asked for money for other missions sort of things, but we've never asked for money for the general fund or to pay off bills or anything like that.

We just figured that's God's business and we're not going to bother you with it. We just assume, hey, I mean, we've had people come up to us over the years and say how do you give around here, anyway? They like, miss the boxes that are located around here, and we have to point them out. Well, there's these little tithe and offering boxes. They're right over there, oh, okay.

I love that. Can I just tell you that I love that? I love it that people can come to church here and not know how to give and have to ask? I'll tell you why I love it. It means they want to. It means that giving to them is a delight, and it's something that they desire to do cheerfully. And man, I tell you, I'd rather have one cheerful giver than 100 angry, sort of givers that are like, all right, here, so we're going to look forward to the next chapter.

We're going to look forward to understanding more about what God's will is in this important area of our lives. Because this is an important area of our Christian walk. God included these passages in 2 Corinthians. I didn't. And we're just coming up on it. And I promise I won't spend a ton of Sundays on it. Because I like moving on just as much as you do, believe me. But we're going to open our hearts to it. And we're going to say, Jesus, tell me what I need to know.