

## Sunday Morning Message

December 9, 2018

### *The Unspeakable Gift*

Text for Today's Message – 2 Corinthians 8 & 9

Congregational Reading – 2 Corinthians 9:11 - 15

#### Introduction

*"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." (2 Corinthians 9:15)*

The Christmas season is a time for giving. The roads are crowded and the stores are all packed with people who are buying gifts to give to their friends and loved ones for Christmas. This is actually a wonderful time of the year; and although the pace of the season can be overwhelming, and the commercialism can certainly get out of hand, I think it is actually good for us to spend a little time focusing on being a blessing to others.

2 Corinthians 8 and 9 is the longest passage on the subject of giving in the New Testament. The Apostle Paul is encouraging the church at Corinth to participate in an offering that he was collecting for the poor saints back in Jerusalem. Apparently, because of the intense persecution of believers in Jerusalem, many there were suffering financial hardship. Paul wanted to ease their burden as much as was possible.

Read 1 Corinthians 16:1 – 3; 2 Corinthians 8:1 – 15; 9:1 - 15

Paul stated in these concluding verses of 2 Corinthians that the financial gifts given by the saints of Corinth will not only relieve some of the burden and supply some of the needs of the saints at Jerusalem, but it will be prompt the recipients of the gifts to praise and thank the Lord. (v. 12) They will not only thank God for the gift itself, but will also thank the Lord for the fact that God had saved these Gentiles in Corinth and was using them to be a blessing to others. (v. 13) This praise will then produce prayer from the recipients of the gifts – the saints at Jerusalem – for the grace of God, which was working through the saints in Corinth.

Paul makes a final statement in thanking God for this unspeakable or indescribable gift of grace. The gift referred to in v. 15 that Paul was thanking God for was the gift of grace, which had not only saved the people in the church of Corinth, but also continued to work through them to be a blessing to the people in Jerusalem.

*"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:8-10)*

Notice, that the only reason the saints at Corinth were able to give at all was because God had already abundantly given to them. The ability to give is a grace (2 Corinthians 8:7), which was only available because God had manifested His grace and love toward them by saving them. We love God because He first loved us and gives us love. We give because God first gave to us and gives us grace to give.

The giving that God is talking about here is not giving to relieve guilt, or giving out of necessity or compulsion. It is prompted by the working of the Holy Spirit within us, and is supplied by the provision already given to us by God along with the assurance and promise of future blessing, because, as Paul told the Philippians:

*"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."*

(Philippians 4:19)

But all of this giving begins with, and is only possible because of the gift that God gave us through His Son. He is the unspeakable or indescribable gift.

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* (John 3:16)

*"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

(Romans 6:23)

During this Christmas Season:

## **I Receive the Gift**

Christ offers the free gift of Himself, and with it eternal salvation to all who will receive Him:

*"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:"* (John 1:12)

*"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."* (Revelation 3:20)

## **II Reflect Upon the Unspeakable Gift**

When God gave His Son, He gave us a lot:

### **A His Person**

*"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much*

*better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."*

(Hebrews 1:1-4 KJV)

## **B His Propitiation**

The gift of the Baby in the cradle cannot be separated from the gift of salvation offered through the Cross.

*"And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John 2:2)*

*"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:10)*

## **C His Presence**

*"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." (Hebrews 13:5)*

## **E His Provision**

God provides for His own.

*"I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." (Psalm 37:25)*

## **F His Purpose**

God gives all of His children a purpose for living. God wants to use all of His children for His honor and glory. And with a purpose comes a promise:

*"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)*

## **III Rehearse the Gift to God and to Others**

Reflection begins with thinking and begets thanksgiving (Psalm 100)

### **A Thank God**

### **B Thank the People that God has used. (Luke 6:38)**

### **C Tell Others About the Gift**

## **IV Reciprocate the Gift**

**Give back to God and to others. Learn to be a giving person.**

*I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. (Acts 20:35)*

### **A Give to God's Purpose**

When you give your tithes to the church it advances God's purpose. It helps to communicate the gospel to the lost world around us. Your gift provides a means for the Word of God to be taught. It also provides a place for God's people to serve and be strengthened.

### **B Give to God's People**

Be a blessing to the people around you. Giving proves the sincerity of your love. We are commanded to love people so we are commanded to give to people. Do something really radical this year: find somebody to give to who cannot give back to you. Learn to be a giving person. God is very giving, and we are supposed to be like Him.

He gave us the unspeakable gift – the gift of Jesus Christ, His Son.

#### Illustration

Long ago, there ruled in Persia a wise and good king. He loved his people. He wanted to know how they lived. He wanted to know about their hardships. Often he dressed in the clothes of a working man or a beggar, and went to the homes of the poor. No one whom he visited thought that he was their ruler. One time he visited a very poor man who lived in a cellar. He ate the coarse food the poor man ate. He spoke cheerful, kind words to him. Then he left. Later he visited the poor man again and disclosed his identity by saying, "I am your king!" The king thought the man would surely ask for some gift or favor, but he didn't. Instead he said, "You left your palace and your glory to visit me in this dark, dreary place. You ate the coarse food I ate. You brought gladness to my heart! To others you have given your rich gifts. To me you have given yourself!"

The King of glory, the Lord Jesus Christ, gave himself to you and me. The Bible calls Him, "the unspeakable gift!"<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sermonsearch.com/sermon-illustrations/797/the-unspeakable-gift/>