

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (The Meaning of Offering I)

2 Corinthians 8:1-15

Key Verse: 8:9

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.”

[As part of the ministry of reconciliation, Paul had been collecting an offering from all the Gentile churches to take with him to give to the church in Jerusalem. His purpose in collecting the offering was for the relief of the Jerusalem church, and, to build spiritual unity between Jewish and Gentile Christians (Ro15:26-27).]

*** THE GRACE GIVEN TO THE MACEDONIAN CHURCHES (1-5)**

1. Read verses 1-2. What good example did Paul mention? (Here, "the Macedonian churches" means the Philippians and the Thessalonians.) What was their situation? How could they make such a generous and joyful offering? Why did he call their offering "the grace God has given"?

2. Read verses 3-5. How did they give in terms of their ability? (3) Their initiative and motivation? (4) What and to whom did they offer first? (5) Why is this important? What can we learn from the Macedonians about the unique characteristics of Christian giving?

*** YOU KNOW THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST (6-9)**

3. What did Paul urge Titus to do? (6) How did he encourage and challenge the Corinthians? (7) As they excelled in other ways, why did they also need to excel in giving? How might this apply to you? What did Paul intend by his encouragement? (8)

4. Read verse 9 and memorize it. On what basis did Paul urge them to give? In what respect was Jesus rich? (Jn1:1-3) How did he become poor? (Jn1:14a; Lk2:7; Php2:6-8) Why did he do this? (9b)

5. What does it mean that we are now rich? (Eph1:3,7-8) How does this grace of our Lord Jesus Christ affect our Christian life, and especially our giving?

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*** THE BIBLICAL MEANING OF OFFERING (10-15)**

6. What was Paul's advice to the Corinthians? (10-11) After making an offering pledge, why is it important to follow through with it? What kind of attitude makes the offering acceptable to God? (12)