***Grace Giving
Romans 15:30-33
RO190-01***

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Romans 15:22-29. Our subject is "To Rome By Way of Jerusalem," Segment Number 5. The apostle Paul, during the years of his ministry, had always wanted to teach God's word, particularly the doctrines relating to the Church Age in the city of Rome, the center of the Empire. There was a spiritually thriving community of Christians in Rome. They were scattered throughout the city, in various house churches, each of them with a single elder pastor-teacher leading that congregation. This body of believers had not been the direct product of Paul's ministry, but what was the result of his ministry to others who had gone on to Rome ahead of him. Paul's pioneer missionary work in other parts of the Empire kept him from being able to realize his dream of teaching the Word in Rome.

**Historical Background**

Paul had gone to Corinth to pick up a contribution that they had promised to make to the Jerusalem relief fund. This fund was being gathered by Paul from his Gentile churches in order to relieve a famine condition that existed in Jerusalem. While he was in Corinth, Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome this letter that we call the Book of Romans. He wrote them to tell of his plans, finally, to visit them. Paul indicated in this letter, however, that he must first go to Jerusalem to deliver the relief fund that he had been gathering from the various Gentile churches. Having fulfilled that duty, he looked forward to traveling to a whole new field of missionary ministry in Spain. And on the way to Spain, he told the Roman Christians he planned to stop over in Rome.

Previous to writing to the Roman Christians from the city of Corinth, Paul had written to the Corinthian Christians themselves to encourage them to gather their contribution, which they had promised to the Jerusalem relief fund, and to get this done before he arrived in Rome with the party, which was accompanying him to transmit these funds to the leaders in Jerusalem.

The comparatively prosperous Corinthian Christians had indeed expressed a desire to contribute, but for a whole year very little was done about it. So, in the letter of 2 Corinthians, which he sent ahead of him to the Christians in Corinth, in chapters 8 and 9 of 2 Corinthians, Paul gives specific instruction for raising funds to finance God's work in the Church Age. And his point was this is how they were specifically to go about raising funds for the Jerusalem relief fund.

**Summary of Grace Giving**

There is a right way to collect offerings in the Church Age and there is a wrong way. There is, in other words, a "Grace" way and there is a "Law" way. The offerings of Christians must always reflect the principle of grace freedom which governs the age in which we live. It is very important for Christians to know the Doctrine of Grace Giving, important for their own personal spiritual growth, and it's important for their own eternal rewards. Give money to God in the wrong way, and you've shot yourself in the foot relative to being rewarded eternally for it. Give money to God in the right way, the grace way, and you have stored treasures in Heaven that will never be denied you for all eternity. One of the great ministries of all of us as Christian priests is the privilege of engaging in the sacrifice of our substance to the Lord whom we love. So, we begin this morning with tying up in a summary, what Paul has taught on the principles of grace giving in 2 Corinthians, chapters 8 and 9.

1. **Tithing Has No Part in Grace Giving**

Tithing has no part in grace giving. This is demonstrated, for example, in Romans 6:14. Romans 6:14 says, "For sin shall not be master over you, for you [you Christians] are not under law, but under grace." Paul says here that 'you Christians do not operate under the principles of the Law.' What's he talking about? He's talking about the Old Testament Mosaic Law of tithing, 'You Christians do not operate under the tithing system. You operate under a totally different system. It's called grace.' Therefore, tithing has no part in Christian giving.

This is also reinforced in 2 Corinthians 3:7-13, where we read, "But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones," what was the ministry of death? What was a ministry that God had, an agreement with people, that always led to death and that God wrote down in tables of stone? You know. It was the Mosaic Law. It was specifically the Ten Commandments. In the Ten Commandments is lodged all the principles relative to the Old Testament tithing system.

[Continuing in 2 Corinthians 3:7-13,] Paul says, "If the ministry of death in letters engraved on stones came with glory so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was." When Moses came down from the mountain, receiving the Law of God engraved on these tables of stone, his association with God caused his face to glow in such a way that people couldn't even look at him. And it was a fading glory. So, as you know, Moses covered his face. We're not really sure whether he covered it entirely because it was such a brilliant that it was hard for people to look at him or because he didn't want people to notice that the glory was fading out. It was not a permanent position of glory. 2 Corinthians 3:8 says, "How shall the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory?" How shall God the Holy Spirit working under grace principles be less glorious than the Mosaic Law was?

[Continuing in 2 Corinthians 3:9,] "For if the ministry of condemnation [And that's all the Law did, it just condemned you, it never gave you a way out. If the Ministry of Condemnation,] has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory. [The ministry of grace righteousness.][10] "For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory on account of the glory that surpasses it." By comparison, Paul says, 'The Mosaic Law had no glory. The glory of the Grace Ages is so infinitely greater. What Christians have is so far beyond anything that the Jews enjoyed, it's not even worth comparing them.

2 Corinthians 3:11 says, "For if that which fades away was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory." The glory of the Mosaic Law, such as it had, fades away. The glory of Grace Age teaching remains. [2 Corinthians 3:12-13] "Having therefore such a hope, we use great boldness in our speech, [13] "and are not as Moses, who used to put a veil over his face that the sons of Israel might not look intently at the end of what was fading away." Moses didn't want them to see that the glory of God relative to the Mosaic Law was a fading glory.

Now, the whole point of all this is the apostle Paul saying, 'I want you people under the Church Age and under the blessings of grace to understand, that whatever was true and glorious, wonderful about the Mosaic Law system with all the principles of God's righteousness indeed that that principle and that system taught us, it is passe. Forget it. Don't take anything over from the Law into Christianity.

That being the case, you are now confronted; if you want to be a tither as a principle of God's way of giving in the Church Age, you are going to have to find a verse in the New Testament that says, "Christians should tithe." When you find it, please let me know. I have searched for it vainly, and I know quite a few preachers that I would like to pass that verse on to, to encourage them to be tithers because they think that's all God requests of us is responsibility as his stewards for everything he gives us under a grace system of relationship.

1. **Love for Money is Root of Evil**

An emotional love for money is the source of all kinds of evils. This is indicated to us in 1 Timothy 6:10, where we read, "For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang." Do not misquote this verse as ignorant people of the world usually do by saying 'money is the root of all evil.' That is not true. That is not what the Bible says. The Bible is explicit. It's your emotional attachment love to money, your emotional attachment love to money.

Notice what I said, not up here in your head, but that getting sweaty all over when you think about being rich, about sending in that thing you got through the mail where tomorrow you could be so rich, so soon, so quick if only you sent it. When you get it, your hands shake as you tear it open and quickly fill it out and put the seal on whatever else you're supposed to do. And you run right down to the post office, you don't even trust the postman to handle it out of your box, and you drop it in yourself, and then you go home and sit by the phone and wait. That's love of money.

You must be square with God and recognize that the desire to get rich is the other side of the coin of being greedy. The desire to be rich is the other side of the coin of greed. God says, 'It's a very dangerous thing.' God wants you to work. He wants you to save. He wants you to prosper. And He wants you to understand yourself as His steward, who is carefully handling His money and dealing with it with integrity. And in the process of it, you might discover that He gives you an awful lot of money to handle. You might discover that your integrity is honored by His entrusting vast sums to your particular stewardship and therefore you will have vast responsibilities to account for it. But it is a very great privilege that gives you a high level of storing treasures in Heaven above what other believers perhaps can do. But when you fall in love emotionally with money, when you fall in love with the idea of getting things, then you are on the first stage of undermining your capacity to practice grace giving.

1. **Grace Giving is not Hindered by the Adverse Circumstances**

Grace giving, Paul has indicated, is not hindered by the adverse circumstances of life. That sets very ill with a lot of Christians. There are many Christians who say, 'Boy, am I ever going to give to the Lord's work just as soon as...' then they have some adversity, some problem, something they have to get out of the way, something they have to do, something they have to correct. No, in 2 Corinthians 8:2, the apostle Paul contradicts that. In speaking of the Macedonian Christians who were on the poverty side, Paul says, "that in a great ordeal of affliction [they were persecuted as Christians, in the midst of their persecution,] their abundance of joy [their happiness of being born again and going to Heaven] and their deep poverty [They didn't have a great deal. They weren't just poor; they were deeply poor.] overflowed in the wealth of their liberality." In spite of the adverse circumstances of their lives, because they understood the principle of grace giving, they gave in a maximum way of what they could with what they had right out of their poverty.

They did not say, someday when my ship comes in, some day when God prospers me, some day when God blesses me, someday when I finish paying for my car and for my house and for my boat, other things, then I'm going to really do things for the Lord. That is a self-deceit that Satan will use to rob you of enormous eternal blessings. Don't fall for that. The time is now. For us in this particular point in history, it is a very short time and now is very short indeed. Grace giving is never hindered by your adverse circumstances of life. And of course, the widow who gave out of her poverty and to the extent of giving all of her livelihood is the prime classical example of this principle.

1. **Grace Giving Must be Voluntary**

Grace giving must be voluntary. If it is not voluntary, it is not grace giving; its legalistic giving. 2 Corinthians 8:3 said says, "For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability they gave of their own accord." Not of accord of the preacher who got you emotionally high, not of the accord of some con artist who threatened you, who told you that God would do terrible things to you if you did not give, not as a result of somebody who made you feel that you had to do something that your heart really wasn't in, grace giving must be voluntary. And a local church organization is responsible to see to it that it does not pressure people with percentages of giving, that it does not even pressure people with offering plates, that it does not in any way interject itself between the believer and his God. He is the priest. He is his own priest, and he deals with himself and his money before God directly. It is no one else's business what he does, and no one else is to be interjected as a pressure point on that believer.

1. **Grace Giving is a Privilege**

Grace giving is a privilege which is to be eagerly sought. If you are a spiritual Christian, you will eagerly seek it. If you are not a spiritual Christian, you will not eagerly seek it. Which is why preachers like to work with the tithing principle. Then it doesn't matter whether you're a spiritual Christian or not, it doesn't matter whether you're walking in temporal fellowship with the Lord. All that matters is putting you under the obligation that you better fork over 10%. But if you're going to operate under the grace giving principle, then you have to have born again Christians who have been taught the Word of God and who have been carried to maturity and who understand the principle of confession of known sins to maintain their spiritual status. 2 Corinthians 8:4 says, "begging us [speaking of these poor Macedonian Christians, begging us] with much entreaty for the favor of participation in the support of the Saints," begging for to have a part in the Jerusalem relief fund because they were grace oriented believers and they couldn't wait to help out their fellow Jewish Christians in Jerusalem.

1. **Grace Giving Begins with Giving Yourself to God**

Grace giving begins with soul giving to God. 2 Corinthians 8:5 indicated that. And Paul says, "And this [this giving of these Macedonians,] not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God." First, they presented themselves that 'Here we are Lord, my life is yours. You use it to your glory.' Because they did that, Paul says 'They were useful to me in God's work.' No local church leadership can do anything in the Lord's work except with people who have first given themselves to the Lord. Until people give themselves to the Lord, they're not going to be out there in your various organizations serving the Lord. And the people we have to constantly plead with to come out to the organizations to use their gifts and their abilities are those who have a big chunk of themselves that they are holding in reserve and they're hanging onto with both fists. When you have placed your life and your soul in God's hands, then we're not going to have to beg you to come out and serve the Lord in the areas of your capacity; you're going to be elbowing your way to be up front to do it. Grace giving requires soul giving first, then the grace giving will follow.

1. **Grace Giving Depends Upon Holy Spirit's Guidance**

Grace giving depends upon the believer functioning daily under the grace system of perception. 2 Corinthians 8:7, Paul says, "But just as you abound in everything, [spiritually. In what? Well,] in your faith, in your utterance [the things you say], and knowledge [of doctrine], in all earnestness [your diligence of serving God and living a godly life] and in the [mental attitude] love [that] we inspired in you." How did Paul inspire this, by telling them stories, by entertaining them? No, he did this by teaching them doctrine and they believed it. And the result was that these people used the grace system for learning spiritual things on a daily basis. The result was that they grew into spiritual maturity. When they had that, Paul says, since you have this, [continuing in 2 Corinthians 8:7] "see that you abound in this gracious work [of grace giving] also." And you will! When a Christian uses the means of studying the Word of God each day, in some respect, you will grow in your capacity to handle your money, to handle God's money as his steward in a proper way. And all that you have is God's money.

If you find that you seldom read the Bible during the week, if you find that you could drive constantly across town without ever slipping a tape into your tape recorder to play, to use the time profitably and learning something about the Word of God, then you need to stop and think about this. If your spiritual feeding goes only from Sunday to Sunday, you've got some big vacuum spaces. You've got some big spiritual starvation places in between. That's what this verse is all about. These people in Macedonia were very devoted students of the Word of God. They paid attention and they didn't have the full canon of Scripture that we have, but such as they had, they appreciated and they were feeding upon the Word of God on a daily basis. The result was they knew how to handle their money.

1. **Grace Giving Demonstrates Genuine Love for God**

Grace giving is a test of the genuineness of a Christian's love for God. 2 Corinthians 8:8, Paul says, "I am not speaking this as a command, [because this is grace giving, not tithing giving,] but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also." Paul says, 'I'm using the example of the Macedonian Christians, who just displayed such earnestness with serving God with themselves and their money, that you might demonstrate your love for God in the same way.' Paul says, 'I want to encourage you by what the Macedonian poor folks have done, as the Macedonians, when they heard of your desire to give in a very substantial way, were inspired by you. Grace Giving will test just how serious you are about your love for God; because I guarantee you, if your love is for money, you will not have a love for God and you will be very stingy in comparison to what you possess.

1. **Christ is Our Example of Giving**

The Lord Jesus Christ on the cross is the example for grace giving. He is the pattern for our grace giving. 2 Corinthians 8:9, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich." When you give to the Lord's work, remember that you're a little poorer, right, you're a little poor in the money you've given away, but you have enriched others spiritually enormously by what that money is accomplishing. You thereby in turn, have enriched yourself eternally. You never lose with God.

1. **Doctrinal Orientation Means Always Desiring to Give**

A believer priest who is oriented by doctrine to grace giving will always have the desire to give, even if he has nothing to give. That is very important that you understand this. Yes, there are times when you will have very little, maybe if anything, to give, but the desire to give should never be absent. Paul says, [in 2 Corinthians 8:10,] "And I give my opinion in this matter, for this is to your advantage, who were the first to begin the year ago not only to do this, but also to desire to do it." In the case of these Corinthians, they had the money to give, they just weren't keeping their desire. But the point Paul is making is that the first thing to remember is that your desire to be honest with God's money is always number one.

1. **Grace Giving Provides to Completion**

Grace giving seeks to carry through on financing that which the Lord leads a Christian to cover in a specific project. Grace Giving seeks to carry through on financing, which the Lord leads a Christian to provide for a specific project. 2 Corinthians 8:11, here as we've indicated, the Corinthians got all excited about helping the starving saints in Jerusalem, but then they never did anything about it. When was the last time in your recent history that you have expressed a desire to see something really done in Berean Church that needs financing and done nothing about it, waiting for that better day? Paul says 11, [in 2 Corinthians 8:11] "But now finish doing it also; [you intended to do it. God has laid this burden on your heart, now get on with it!] that just as there was the readiness to desire it, so there may also be the completion of it by your ability." God doesn't want you to do more than He supplies you to do with, but don't kid yourself, when you've got it, you can do it.

1. **God Provides Ability to Give**

Grace giving is out of funds on hand from God, not from pledges of possible future funds. 2 Corinthians 8:11, he says, "Completed by your ability." And of course, we've already seen in 1 Corinthians 16:2 says, "On the first day of every week let each one of you put aside and save, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come." Paul is talking about the same fund here. He gives a little more information. He says, 'Every week when you get your income, set something aside for God's work, in this case, this fund. When I get there, it'll be ready to be given. So, you give it on the basis of what you have. That's why we resist the idea of asking people to make pledges. The Bible, I think, does not tolerate, does not allow, does not permit under grace giving for you to make a pledge about something that you're going to do down the line that you don't know whether you will have it or not. That is presumption. You do know what you have and you work on that basis.

1. **God Wants Our Intention**

Grace giving places the emphasis on the spiritual status of one's soul rather than on the amount given. 2 Corinthians 8:12, "For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a man has, not according to what he does not have." "If the readiness is present," God says, 'That's what counts with me.' It's according to that, not according to what you do not have that you cannot give. Your intention is what God wants.

1. **God Wants Us Helping Other Believers**

Grace giving seeks to equalize the supply of necessities of life among believers, but not to impoverish thereby any giver. Yes, God doesn't think it's right for some Christians really to come upon hard times so they do not have the necessities of life. And grace giving should enable the local church body to come through, such as out of our Fellowship Fund, to be able to help the believer who has that kind of need for food and shelter and clothing. That's what He's talking about. 2 Corinthians 8:13-15, beginning at verse 13, "For this is not for the ease of others and for your affliction, but by way of equality." Paul says, 'I'm not asking you to make life very pleasant, easy for somebody else while you yourself suffer one.' [continuing with 2 Corinthians 8:14,] "at this present time your abundance being a supply for their want, that their abundance also may become a supply for your want, that there may be equality; [Now that your flush, you need to help them. Sometimes when you're in need and they have, then they will reverse that kindness.] 2 Corinthians 8:15 says, "as it is written, 'HE WHO gathered MUCH DID NOT HAVE TO MUCH, AND HE WHO gathered LITTLE HAD NO LACK.'" Referring to the gathering of manna in the wilderness.

1. **God's Money Handled With Integrity**

Money given by Christians through the local church to the Lord's work must be handled so as to be above question before God and man. And Paul was very careful about wanting to handle the funds so that nobody had any doubt that when they gave money to the Lord's work, that's where it went. When they gave money to a specific cause, it got to that cause it was not sidetracked someplace else. 2 Corinthians 8:20-21, "taking precautions that no one should discredit us in our administration of this generous gift; [21] "for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." That's a self-evident principle.

1. **Giving Encourages Others to Give**

Of grace giving, Paul says that the zealous practicing of grace giving by one group of believers encourages others to follow the example. In 2 Corinthians 9:1-2, that's the very thing that happened. Paul says, "For it is superfluous for me to write to you about this ministry to the saints; [2] "for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the Macedonians, namely, that Achaia [which is where the province in which Corinth was located,] had been prepared since last year, and your zeal has stirred up most of them." Paul says, 'I heard your desire to give, your intention, your promise that you were going to give a substantial sum to the relief of the saints in Jerusalem. I went up to Macedonia and I told those poor Christians about it. They became so excited they said, "That's wonderful. What generosity!" And that encouraged them to be as generous as they were able to be in spite of their poverty.' So, Paul says, 'When you practice grace giving zealously and people see you coming through and hear about God's supply, they may not know that you individually are doing it, (We keep those matters private between us and the Lord.), but when they see that God's people are indeed providing the sums of money, then that is a great blessing and an example for others to follow. It's an encouragement to one another.'

1. **Shamed Giving Is Not Grace Giving**

Giving under the pressure of one of embarrassment, robs the donor of God's blessing and prevents the gift itself from being a blessing. 2 Corinthians 9:4-5 Paul says, "Lest if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to speak of you) should be put to shame by this confidence." Paul says, 'I hate to come now that I've been bragging about you, and we come and see that you didn't get the offering together. 2 Corinthians 9:5 says, "So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren that they would go on ahead to you and arrange beforehand your previously promised bountiful gift, that the same might be ready as a bountiful gift, and not affected by covetousness." Paul says, 'I don't want to come and have to be making speeches to try to get you excited and stirred up to give. I want to come and find a gift already there because you gave it freely.' If it's not given freely, it's not grace giving. And if it is not grace giving, you're not going to be blessed by God for what you gave and what you give is not going to be maximized in blessing in the Lord's work. It's very important that what you give is given in the right way.

1. **Legalism Reaps Legalism/Grace Reaps Grace Blessings**

Paul says what is given in the spirit of legalism, reaps legalism. What is given in the spirit of grace, reaps grace blessings. That's what he means in 2 Corinthians 9:6, "Now this I say, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully." What does he mean by that? If you sow sparingly, because all you have to do is 10%, then you will reap sparingly in terms of eternal blessing. But if you will sow beautifully, because it all belongs to God, then the result will be you will reap the grace blessing of maximum multiplied eternal rewards and blessings. This verse does not mean that the more you give to God, the more money He will give to you. It has nothing to do with that at all. He is talking about spiritual blessings throughout this passage.

1. **God Loves a Cheerful Giver!**

The decision for grace giving is made in the Christians mind free of resentment or sense of compulsion, which is the only kind of giving that God accepts. 2 Corinthians 9:7, "Let each one of you do just as he has purposed in his heart; [That is, in your mind,] not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver." Grace giving is the only kind of giving which is pleasing to God. If somebody has squeezed it and forced it out of you, it's not pleasing to God and He doesn't want it. He wants what you are willing to hand over as a Christian who has already given your life to Him and now, you're willing to give your treasures as well.

1. **God Provides Abundantly!**

God is constantly able to supply the spiritual believer with a super abundance of both spiritual and material capacity to produce divine good, a super abundance of both spiritual and material capacity to produce divine good. Lots of Christians have been blessed by God with material capacity, but without having the spiritual capacity to let go of it. 2 Corinthians 9:8, "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, [He's talking about the grace of being supplied with material possessions.] that always having all sufficiency in everything, [that you have more than you need for your life, more than you need for your immediate future, maybe even your distant future,] you may have an abundance for every good deed." You'll also discover that you have an abundance that you're willing to release for divine good deeds.

1. **God Multiplies Your Giving**

God supplies the Christian as His steward with funds to be sown as seed in God's work to produce the harvest of divine good righteousness. 2 Corinthians 9:10, "Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, [as a result of that seed] will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness." Now here you have a verse that does suggest you play square with God, with your money, and you will demonstrate that you are a faithful steward in little things. And indeed, the Bible says, 'I will then entrust you to be a steward of greater things, of greater possessions.' Here he says in this verse, 'indeed, that I am the one who will supply you with the funds for you to sow in God's work, to produce a crop of divine righteousness and blessing through divine good works. And those of you who are faithful in this, I will increase the harvest of your righteousness. That is the harvest of your own eternal rewards.' Because the more you have, the more you can give; the more you give, the more you store your treasures in Heaven.' It's a very simple, orderly principle.

1. **Thanks Goes to God!**

Grace giving draws forth thanksgiving to God which the donor may never hear from those blessed by his gift. 2 Corinthians 9:12, "For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God."

How many people can we imagine who have thanked God for the Word of God through the Berean Tape Ministry that you have supplied? See that you have gone out and sown! And when they come here, they just want to grab us and hug us because they have received an eternal investment that they found nowhere else. What did they get? They got the Word of God. It was seed that you have sown in the form of providing the funds and the result was enormous thanksgiving has gone to God.

We get the letters all the time. People just sit down, total strangers. Sometimes you can see their handwriting is shaky because they're old folks. There's an access to the Word of God and they're thanking God for the people at Berean Church that have opened up to them, for the first time in their lives, the great understanding of Church Age doctrine.

Our man in the Kentucky state prison, Jack Smith, when he calls, he always ends up his conversation when he calls, as he does regularly chat, he says, "Now, I love you all. I just love you, Dr. Danish. I love all those people at Berean Church, and I want them to know it." What's he talking about? He walked into a prison library. He starts looking across some tapes they have there and sees the tape from someplace in a place called Irving, Texas, called Berean Memorial Church. He spent 50 years roaming around in religious denomination, which was indeed dedicated and true to the Word of God, understood how to get to Heaven, but that's all they do. And he sits down and listened to this and the fireworks explode in his soul as he cannot believe that for the first time in his life, he has now found what he's been looking for in a true deep explanation of what the Word of God has for him. And did he ever blossom out? He just exploded in spiritual development. He understands the principle of grace giving starts with giving yourself. He loves to reiterate that he wakes up in the morning, as he did in one recent letter again, he wakes up, looks at God, says, "Sir, I am your servant. Please use me this day. What doors will you open to me? I am anxiously waiting for your directives." That is a principle of giving yourself so that you can give what you possess. The result of thanksgiving, an expression of love that comes back to you, is because you have made this financial investment. Three more points.

1. **Generous Grace Giving is Obedience to God**

Generous grace giving is a proof of a Christian's obedience to the will of God and of the genuineness of his profession of his trust in Jesus Christ. It's one thing to talk; it's another thing to put your money where your mouth is. 2 Corinthians 9:13, "Because of the proof given by this ministry [What ministry? The handing over of your money Corinthians. That's what I'm talking about. Because of the proof given by this gift that you've given, they will glorify the poor saints in Jerusalem who are starving.] will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all." Yes, you tell us that you are born again. You tell us you love the Lord. You tell us that there's no one more important in your life than this marvelous person who has brought you eternal life as a pure gift that you never deserved, that this person who has opened up to you, the deepest, most intimate kind of walk with God, that you are so rejoicing because you enjoy the freedoms of grace, and then you're stingy with your money. Paul says, 'When you are generous with your giving, you are demonstrating the genuineness of your trust in Christ and all of the things for which you are praising Him.' It then does not have a hollow ring.

1. **Grace Giving Causes Affectionate Beneficiaries**

Grace giving draws forth the affection of the beneficiaries toward the donor, as we have just indicated. 2 Corinthians 9:14, "while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you." What does Paul mean? These people in Jerusalem are just going to wish they could come up and put their arms around you and hug you for what you've done for them. You've given them physical life. And Paul says, 'That's right for you to do that, because after all, they gave you spiritual life. It is through these Jewish brethren that the gospel came to you.'

1. **God is Our Example!**

God is the ultimate example of grace giving. 2 Corinthians 9:15, "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!"

This is a great area of divine viewpoint truth, and it behooves all of us in these final days of the Age of Grace to take it to heart. It is the best thing, the smartest thing you can do for your own personal enriched eternity.

**Paul Delivers the Relief Fund**

So, back in Romans 15:28-29, Paul concludes this section. In Romans 15:28 Paul says, "Therefore, [Here's a conclusion.] when I have finished this." And Paul is using a word here, which means to complete something. Here, he's talking about some point in time after his trip to Jerusalem personally. He says, [continuing in Romans 15:28,] "when I have finished this, and have put my seal." Put my seal, the word "seal," put my seal, looks like this in a Greek Bible, it's "sphragizo," s p h r a g i z o, and this word means "to certify the amount of a fund," and also suggests "getting a receipt for it."

So, when he says, "when I have put my seal on this fruit," he is indicating that at some point he is going to deliver this money. This is in the aorist tense indicating a point and interesting that it's in the middle voice indicating that it's going to be for his benefit. When it's middle voice, it's his benefit. Paul is again indicating 'I'm going to certify that the amount that was given was this. They are going to give me a receipt indicating that that's the amount I gave them.' And Paul is going to have the benefit of personal integrity that anybody who wants to see, 'How much did you deliver of what we gave you?' he'll say 'Here is the certification. Here's the evidence of what was deposited with those believers.' He makes the seal, the official handing over of this Jerusalem relief fund.

In Acts 21, we have the record of his doing that. That's what's so grand about the Bible. The Bible is so consistent with itself. It's not like all that crazy nonsense of the Book of Mormons that they can't even find a place on the face of the earth of the geography that's in the Book of Mormons and no consistency between the books. Here in Acts 21:18, Luke, who accompanied Paul on this trip, was one of the men that came with him to deliver this money, indicates this official handling over.

Acts 21:18, "And now the following day [after they arrived in Jerusalem,] Paul went in with us to James, [James was the leading pastor-teacher in Jerusalem of the apostolic group, went in with us to James] and all the elders were present." Then it goes on to explain how they greeted one another. Then Paul explained what he had been doing in missionary ministry, what had happened among the Gentiles and so on. It is, of course, though he doesn't refer to it here, it is on this very occasion that he also handed over the funds and had a certification of the amount and a sealing of a receipt. He delivers the money to them.

**Paul Falsely Accused**

We also had this referred to in Acts 24:17 where he says, "Now after several years I came to bring alms to my nation and to present offerings." See, here in the Book of Acts, Luke describes the historical progression of delivering this money. This was the occasion, of course, when he did deliver the money, of the false accusation by the Jews that Paul was bringing Gentiles into forbidden areas of the temple.

You remember that the temple was surrounded, as we showed you a few Sunday nights ago, by the Court of the Gentiles. The Gentiles could approach the temple that far. Then there was the Court of the Women. The women could go that far. And then there was the Court of the Men. The men could go that far. Then there was a Court of the Priests, and that was right up there against the temple in the ministry area.

And, along come these Asian Jews, where Paul had been so effective with the gospel. They were here celebrating the special festival event, they're in Jerusalem from Asia. And they hear that their old nemesis, Paul, the former Pharisee who has been winning Jews and Gentiles in their part of the world in droves to Christianity, is there in Jerusalem. So, they accuse him of bringing Gentiles into the forbidden areas of the temple grounds; totally false, totally untrue. It was their way of trying to bring death to Paul, because you remember that we told you that at the wall that separated the Court of the Gentiles from the other court areas, there was that sign that said 'any Gentile that walks beyond this point will bring death upon himself.' And the Romans, in order to accommodate the Jews and to get secure their good will, agree that they would make that a capital crime. You couldn't execute unless the Romans agreed. The Romans said, 'we will agree that anybody who violates that warning, any Gentile that crosses that barrier into your sacred precinct there, we will execute.' So, what they were after, you see, was the same thing they did to Jesus, they wanted to kill Paul.

And so they accused him of doing this and they did this as a result, on the occasion when he brought this offering in. A riot, of course, ensued, and Paul had to be taken into protective custody by the Roman authorities who at the time didn't know what in the world was going on. But they saw that if they did not grab this man, the mob was going to tear him limb from limb. So, the authorities arrested him to take him into protection. The result was, what, 2 years in jail? Things became so hot in Jerusalem that they had to send a military detail of over 400 men starting late at night and get him out of the city and take him to the seacoast town on the Mediterranean Sea, Caesarea. (I've been to Caesarea, it's a lovely town.) The Romans Caesars had a summer residence they built there on those beautiful, clear waters of the Mediterranean. So, they took him.

For 2 years he's in Syria trying to get cleared of these false charges against him. You can imagine what discouragement must have been in the heart of Paul as he sat there, having done this kind thing, taking his time and his energy to gather this fund, now having brought this for the explicit purpose of trying to unite Hebrew and Gentile Christians and also to demonstrate to the unbelieving Jews what unity Jesus Christ creates between Gentiles and Jews who previously hated each other by nature. Here he finds himself falsely accused, did a good thing, and it all blows up in his face. Do you ever do that? You ever serve the Lord with great sincerity? You ever make an effort and as a result of it, you get the short end of the stick?

But God did not forget his man. Luke records for us in Acts 23:11 that in the midst of all this, the Lord appeared in a vision to Paul one night. Notice what he says. "But on the night immediately following, [that is, after they brought him in to the barracks to protect him,] the Lord stood at his side and said, 'Take courage; for as you have solemnly witnessed to My cause at Jerusalem, so you must witness at Rome also.'" Now, wasn't that encouraging? Wasn't that nice for the Lord to say, 'Paul, I know you want to go to Rome. I know you have your heart set on this. And I agree, you, My apostle to the Gentiles, who knows more about grace Doctrine than anybody else, you should go to the seat of the Empire, and you should have a chance to spend time teaching the Christians there because those Christians are going to radiate every place in that empire.' That night, God said, 'Paul, you're in a tough position now, but I want to assure you I'm going to carry you through this and you're going to end up in Rome.' I'm sure his heart was encouraged, but he had no idea what was going to happen in the meantime. He might have gulped if he had realized what was going to ensue before he ever landed in Rome.

As it was being dragged on for 2 years, and next time we'll look a little bit at what Paul did here. We have strong reason to suspect that he was trying to appease the Jews and he took a legalistic vow, performed a sacrifice, and took part in something that was Jewish custom. It was alright to do, but not probably for him to do. The result was it was an act of accommodation that brought about the raids that ended up in his spending 2 years in Caesarea. Finally he felt he was going nowhere, although he was on the very verge the officials there said of releasing him, he appealed to Caesar. He said, 'I'll go to Nero, and let Nero hear my case in Rome.' Once he did that, they had to send him there. They sent him in chains, but they had to send him. He was a Roman citizen and this was the right of appeal that they had to respect. Although they said among themselves, 'had he not done that, we would have released him.'

**Spiritual Service Sometimes Results in Material Rewards**

So, Paul says in Romans 15:28, "Therefore, when I have finished this, [collecting this fund] and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs," and I think that's an interesting word. The word is "karpos," k a r p o s. That's the word for something that is the product of a seed you plant. Here he's referring to the Jerusalem relief fund of the Gentile churches as a 'fruit.' Paul views their contribution as 'spiritual fruit' which has been produced by their faith in Jesus Christ. This monetary gift was the outgrowth of the gospel of grace salvation, which the Jews have planted among the Gentiles. The Jewish Christians now are receiving back the produce of the gospel seeds sown among them. The fruit of the Jerusalem relief fund is an expression of the love and the fellowship that now existed between Jewish and Gentile believers who had not always been on good terms.

Spiritual service, you see, sometimes does result in material benefits, and that's what you have here. Your spiritual service may sometimes result in God giving you material rewards for your service. This financial fruit in their time of famine certainly demonstrated the result of Paul's missionary work among the Gentiles. The Gentiles understood what they owed the Jews.

So, the Jewish relief fund was certified, sealed as a fact, and it sealed the fact that Jews and Gentiles were now partners in the body of Christ. Paul says when I've done this, [continuing in Romans 15:28] "I will go on, [meaning that he was to depart. He was going to get on his way in the future. I'm going to go] by way of you [by way of you believers in Rome] to Spain."

**Paul Expects To Bring Romans the Blessing of Doctrine**

In Romans 15:29, Paul declares his expectation. He says, "And I know that when I come to you," The word "know" here is the Greek word "oida, o i d a, which is "known by intuition or by information from God." Here it is by his knowledge of how he's worked with God and been blessed in the past. He says, [continuing in Romans 15:29] "I know that when I come to you, I will come, [I'm going to arrive in Rome. It's going to be to my benefit and to yours because I'm going to come] with the fullness." And the word he uses is the Greek "pleroma," a very favorite word of his, p l e r o m a, which indicates a maximum of something.

What's he going to come? He's going to come with the maximum, "the fullness of the blessings of Christ." He means the benefits of happiness. I'm going to come to you with a maximum of the blessings of Christ. What is he going to come with? What would he bring to them that would give them the maximum blessings of Christ upon them? Only one thing, Church Age doctrine. What he was referring to, he said, 'When I sit down with you and I start explaining some of the doctrines you have not fully learned and understood, and which I've gotten indications back that there's some confusion on, you're going to hit the ceiling with excitement as you realize what it is to be a privileged member of the body of Christ.

Paul is not promising that he will bring the blessing here. He's promising that Jesus Christ through him will bring this blessing. The Roman Christians, after all, are members of the royal family of God in Christ Jesus. They're entitled to the rich blessings of knowing the full purpose of God for them. This is what Paul in Acts 20:27 indicated, as he was leaving the Ephesians Christians he said, 'I've given you the full council of the Word of God.' And in his ministry, it was his habit to tell his associates again and again, teach people the Word of God.

Notice, for example, 1 Timothy 4:13. Whatever else you do, teach people the doctrines of Scripture. 1 Timothy 4:13, Paul says, "Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching [or to doctrine]." 2 Timothy. 4:2, the last letter he was to write, knowing he was about to die, he reiterates this to Timothy again. 2 Timothy 4:2 "preach the word; [That's the motto of Dallas Seminary. Preach the word.] be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction," which is the word for doctrine. In Titus 1 when writing to Titus, Titus 1:9 Paul says, "holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, [the doctrine] that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict." Paul says, 'Deal with people on the basis of what God has said, not on the basis of what you feel and think. One more, Titus 2:1 says, "But as for you, [Titus] speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine."

So, the apostle Paul knew how to bring blessing to people. He brought it through the Word of God. Paul himself expects to be a recipient of blessing when he joins these believers. He expects, in fact, to fulfill what he really said at the very first part of Romans, the very first chapter. Romans 1:11, and the Lord has made it clear he's going to be able to fulfill this desire, in Romans 1:11 he says, "For I long to see you [you Roman Christians] in order that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established." What's he talking about? That I may impart the stability of doctrine in your souls. Paul's ministry was regularly attended by divine blessings on himself and on others because he operated within the Word of God and therefore, he could say without hesitancy, 'when I come to you, I come with the blessings of Christ, which are wrapped up in Scripture and doctrine. And when I bring you that, you will again find what it is to enjoy the deepest walk with the Lord and the finest blessings that you have ever known.' What a wonderful heritage that all of us who know the Word can share with those who do not.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)