



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Bible, Part 239”

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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



Our text for today is **2Corinthians 9:7**:

7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

Thank you for listening and thinking with me as we study God's Word to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

As we begin, let me communicate to you that my preaching is based upon the fact that every episode recorded in the Bible is literally true.

We live in a culture in which fantasy and fiction dominate, but we need to resist the allure of made-up stories and intellectually concocted arguments as we develop faith in the meticulously recorded factual history of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ by the eyewitnesses who were present on the scene.

We must do whatever we need to do to develop the personal faith needed to believe that the Bible is the absolute truth, and recognize that every fiction put forth by man or by the devil to contradict or minimize the impact of Biblical accounts is a lie.

The Apostle Paul, in this ninth chapter of Second Corinthians, is preparing the Corinthians to give, not for the upbuilding of their congregation, but for the sustenance of the Jerusalem church, which is under great duress. Paul tells them, in **2Corinthians 9:3–5**:

3 Yet I have sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this respect, that, as I said, you may be ready;

4 lest if some Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to mention you!) should be ashamed of this confident boasting.

5 Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go to you ahead of time, and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which you had previously promised, that it may be ready as a matter of generosity and not as a grudging obligation.

Paul wanted the prepared offering to be a gift and not a grudging obligation. That was the one thing that might keep the Corinthians from keeping their prior commitment, which had been arranged beforehand and promised.

Oh, the gifts that we give we ought not give because of a grudging obligation, which is rendered in the Old King James as the sin of covetousness. Thinking Biblically, we come to the conclusion that that which we have is from the Lord, and we have the responsibility to not hang on to that which should be given, but we should keep our obligation to the Lord God to provide for those



whom He sends to us for provision. For example, the Lord God told Israel, in **Leviticus 19:9–10**:

9 'When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. 10 And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the LORD your God.'

The poor and the stranger survive on the portion left to them by those who nominally own the land and reap the harvest. And it is important for those who reap to understand that they do so because of the blessing of the Lord. Thus, the entire harvest belongs to the Lord; He gives us our livelihood from our reaping, but He commands us to prepare a portion for the poor. The Lord Jesus Christ shows us the truth of this thinking in His parable, in **Luke 12:16–21**:

16 Then [Jesus] spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully.

17 And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?'

18 So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry." '

20 But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?'

21 "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Not even very your life is your own. As my Dad used to say, on your best day, you are sick enough to die. Even though the Lord has blessed us to have the best of medical care and the best insurance, it is only by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ that we are still here. And if the Lord gives us the resources to help the poor and we do not do so, we ought not be surprised if the Lord gives those resources to someone else. The Lord Jesus Christ tells the parable, in **Matthew 21:33–43**:

33 "Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country.

34 Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit.

35 And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another.

36 Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them.

37 Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'



38 But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.'

39 So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him.

40 "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?"

41 They said to Him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons."

42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?"

43 "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it."

We must recognize ourselves as mere vinedressers in the Lord's vineyard. Yes, the earthly deed on the property may have our names on it, but the real owner of the vineyard is the Lord. Paul wants the Corinthians to know that not cheerfully meeting the commitment that they made to give the Lord the portion of the harvest that they promised to give to the Jerusalem church might have some very negative consequences indeed.

Stewardship, with integrity, is marked by voluntary, faithful giving, proportionate to that which one has, motivated by love for the Lord God and for our fellow man, free of selfish greed and covetousness. And those who receive those offerings must handle them faithfully, so that the offerings go for the cause for which they were raised. Interestingly, giving, not saving, is the path to prosperity. Paul tells the Corinthians, in **2Corinthians 9:6–8**:

6 But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

Paul makes it clear that our gifts, to a large degree, determine our prosperity. For the Lord God will turn generosity into abundance. He tells us, though the pen of Solomon, in **Proverbs 11:24–25**:

24 There is one who scatters, yet increases more; And there is one who withholds more than is right, but it leads to poverty.

25 The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself.

Seeking after riches by withholding that with which we should bless others is not a good strategy. In fact, Solomon tells us, in **Proverbs 3:9–10**:



9 Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase;

10 So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.

The Lord Jesus Christ puts the caper on the concept, in **Luke 6:38:**

38 Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”

The Jerusalem church was in great need. The Lord has given the Corinthian church abundance. And the Lord has done so so that the Corinthian church can participate in the further extension of the great work of building the Kingdom of God by supporting the work of those on the front lines whose evangelistic efforts in the Empire keep them from supporting their families.

As Paul tells the Corinthians, in **2Corinthians 9:7:**

7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

John 3:16 informs us:

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

The Lord God loves the world in general, as John 3:16 informs us, but just imagine the blessing of being on the list of those for whom the Lord God has a particular, special love, based upon the way that we behave on planet earth. It is difficult to image a more precious position in which to find ourselves than the object of the Lord God's special love because of our generosity, knowing the depth of His generosity. As Paul tells the Corinthians, in **2Corinthians 9:8:**

8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

The Lord God gives the grace gift of His Son to all believers, but He gives all grace in all things to those that give bountifully and sacrificially, emulating the example of His Son. For the Lord God can work through the generous to support the Christian program while keeping His Son at His right hand.

The Lord Jesus Christ has done the salvific work required to save the world, but it is the Lord God's plan that we get involved with the spread of the gospel and the support of those on the missionary field. We are not all called to foreign lands, but the Lord loves those whom He can count on to support that are called. We each have our part to play, and the Lord has an abundant grace gift prepared for those that play the part of support.

Every so often, I get to watch a professional sports team claim the championship of their league. At the conclusion of the championship game, the championship trophy is given to an individual who did not score a point, and was not responsible for one single play. But he received the trophy because he paid



all the players. And without his generosity, that particular team would not be in the position to play and win the championship.

The Lord God wants us to take ownership of His church, from a financial standpoint, and support the ones on the battlefield so that they can concentrate on winning souls and doing that which needs to be done to get the message out to the world. And even if we do not personally carry the message very far, our support of those who do will be counted in our favor.

The Lord God is the actual owner of the team, but He gives us the grace gift to participate with Him so that on that Day, we will find ourselves on the platform with the championship trophy.

The Lord God gives us back the resources that we give magnanimously so as to make all grace abound to Christians who give generously. The Lord God gives us those resources back so freely and abundantly that His children will always have all sufficiency in everything. The Lord God graciously replenishes what they give so that they lack nothing; He will continuously provide the generous giver with the means of further expressing that generosity.

That is the reason for our abundance. As Paul tells the Corinthians, in **2Corinthians 9:9**:

9 As it is written: “He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever.”

Because the generous giver scatters abroad and gives to the poor, he will have righteousness in this life, and in the world to come. Paul prays blessings on the Corinthians for their gift to the ministry, in **2Corinthians 9:10–11**:

10 Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness,

11 while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.

The Corinthians are going to meet a need. While the Lord God is going to supply them with that which they need to meet the need, their meeting of the needs will cause the ones in need to thank, not only the Corinthians, but the Lord God, because, as **Psalms 46:1** informs us:

1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

The Jerusalem church knows that without the leading of the Lord, the Corinthian church would not have the wherewithal to help, nor would they have the will to help. So, the Corinthian gift is not only a gift from Corinth, but a gift from God.

There is nothing that we can do on planet earth that is more beneficial to our souls than activities that glorify the Lord God. So, when those whom we help thank the Lord God because of us, we can especially rejoice in that the Lord God is magnified.



The Corinthian gift magnifies the Lord, as Paul tells them, in **2Corinthians 9:12–14**:

12 For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God, 13 while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal sharing with them and all men, 14 and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you.

First of all, the needs of the Jerusalem saints will be supplied. Secondly, the Jerusalem saints will recognize their reason to be thankful to the Lord God for the provision. Thirdly, the Christian ministry of the gentile Corinthian church will be proven to the Jerusalem church, who will glorify the Lord God because of Corinthian's confession of the gospel of Christ, the spreading of which is why the Jerusalem Church is in such need. **1John 3:17–18** tells us:

17 But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? 18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

Finally, the Jerusalem church will have another reason to meet the Lord in prayer, and there is no better occupation for saints anywhere than to be in constant communication with the Lord God.

The gift of the Corinthians, when made, will tangibly demonstrate love for their fellow believers, that mark of genuineness which will stimulate both churches to move closer to the Lord, both from the standpoint of need and benevolence. **1 John 4:20–21** informs us:

20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

21 And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.

Both churches will help one another become more filled with the Holy Spirit as they each rely on His provenance to meet their own needs as well as the needs of the other. The teamwork required to both spread the gospel, and finance the spread of the gospel gives both churches a place to participate in the plan of the Lord, brings thanksgiving and glory to the Lord God, and cements a special loving relationship between each of the churches and the Lord God, whom Paul praises for His allowing the gift to each church of participating on His program and gaining His love. Paul says, in **2Corinthians 9:15**:

15 Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

To be on the Lord's program is a great gift. To participate from abundance, as the Corinthians are doing, is wonderful. The Jerusalem church is



under great duress, with others taking care of them, while the Corinthians are experiencing the very best, from a financial standpoint, that they can experience. Yet the Lord God has seen fit to allow both of them to participate equally in building the Kingdom of God, the Corinthians by being givers and the Jerusalem church by being recipients of the Corinthian churches' largesse.

But the actual indescribable gift was given out on a hill called Calvary, where the Lord Jesus Christ looked at the retched state of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Corinthians, and of all mankind from the sin of Adam to the sin of the last man to ever sin. And as the Lord Jesus Christ looked out across that vast vista of sin, He decided to give us the gift that would absolve us, once for all, for all the sins that we have committed.

Mankind was in a worthless state. The one truism was that no one, from the first man Adam to the last man, was worthy of the Kingdom of God. Oh, there were some that the Lord could use to spread the news of His kingdom, and some that had great faith, but ultimately, even those men were flawed and sinful. The nature of sin was ubiquitous and pervasive, as Paul tells us, in **Romans 3:10–20**:

10 As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one;

11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.

12 They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one."

13 "Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "The poison of asps is under their lips";

14 "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness."

15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood;

16 Destruction and misery are in their ways;

17 And the way of peace they have not known."

18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

By the law is the knowledge of sin. Our nature is that of sin. And the Lord God is too holy to look upon sin without His wrath coming upon the sinner. The Lord tells His chosen people, Israel, in **Ezekiel 18:20, 30–32**

20 The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

30 "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways," says the Lord God. "Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin.



31 Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel?

32 For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,” says the Lord God. “Therefore turn and live!”

Ultimately, however, there was no turning. Ultimately, both the father and the son had guilt to bear. Ultimately, as Paul tells us, in **Romans 3:23**:

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Our condemnation is complete. It matters not that which we do, because the ubiquitous nature of our sinfulness is beyond the righteousness of the Lord God to stomach.

Oh, I love how the Old Preacher used to tell the story. The Lord sent prophets, priests and kings to the earth to try to redeem man. But no one was found worthy to go down and redeem man.

The angel that stood before the Lord God’s throne said, “Well, what about old Noah? You loved Noah and kept him and his family on the ark when you destroyed the sinners in the world. Maybe Noah is worthy to go down and redeem man.”

The Lord God said, “Yes, I loved Noah, but after the flood was over, Noah got drunk and lay naked in his tent. So, Noah was a drunkard, and a drunkard is not worthy to go down and redeem man.”

The angel said, “Well what about old Moses. You gave him the Ten Commandment on Mount Sinai, and he led the children of Israel to the Promised Land. Maybe Moses is worthy to go down and redeem man.”

The Lord God said, “Yes, I loved Moses, I loved him with all my heart. But before I made him lead the children of Israel, he snuck up and killed the Egyptian who was abusing an Israelite. So, Moses was a murderer, and a murderer is not worthy to go down and redeem man.

The angel said, “Well what about old David. He was the sweet singer of Israel, and a man after your own heart. Maybe David is worthy to go down and redeem man.”

The Lord God said, “Yes, I loved David. I loved him with all my heart. But one night, David went up on the roof and watch another man’s wife taking a bath. And David sent for the woman and got the woman pregnant. So, David was an adulterer, and an adulterer is not worthy to go down and redeem man.

The search was made in heaven. The search was made on earth. The search was made under the earth. And no one was found worthy to go down and redeem man.

Finally, God’s only begotten Son Jesus stepped out from behind a burning altar. He looked at the condition of mankind and said, “Father, if you will prepare me a body that will shed forth blood and water, then I will go down and redeem man.”



Jesus got on the train of nature, travelled through forty-two generations and got off in a little town that they called Bethlehem. Jesus was born into the world of a virgin so that he would not have the sin nature of mankind. The Holy Ghost overshadowed her so that Jesus might be called the Son of God.

The Jesus began His ministry. He made the lame man walk. He made the dumb man talk. He made the deaf man hear and the blind man see. And then one day, He found Himself down in the Garden of Gethsemane, with the sweat falling from His brow like great drops of blood.

He looked up to heaven and said, "Father, I see that on yonder mountain, there is a Cross prepared for Me. If there is any way that I can redeem man without going to that Cross, let this cup pass from me, but nevertheless, not My will but Thy will be done."

And pretty soon, Jesus heard the soft sandaled footsteps of the ones to lead Him to the Cross. So, they took Jesus down to old man Annas. And from Annas to Caiaphas. From Caiaphas to the Sanhedrin. From the Sanhedrin to Pilate. From Pilate to Herod and from Herod back to Pilate again.

Pilate held Him up in front of the people and said, "Who will you have, Jesus who is called Christ, or Barabbas?" And the multitude cried for Barabbas. "Then what shall I do with Jesus?" They said, "Crucify Him."

Oh, Pilate turned Jesus over to the soldiers, who whipped all the skin off of His back, and they tied a Cross upon Him and marched Him up the Via Dolorosa to the place of the skull that they call Golgotha and Calvary.

They stretched Him wide.

They hung Him high.

He suffered and bled as they watched Him die.

Then, they dropped Him low.

And shoved Him into a borrowed tomb.

But I just came here today to let you know that the guards had no power over the Lord Jesus Christ. Even the grave had no power over the Lord Jesus Christ. Death itself had no power over the Lord Jesus Christ. Because three days later, when no one expected to see Him; three days later when no one was looking for Him; He got out! He got out! He got out of the tomb.

He raised His hands and said, "All power in heaven and earth is in My hands.

The Lord Jesus Christ became the indescribable gift that is able to redeem man. He's got the whole world in His hands. He's got you and me, brother, in His hands. He's got you and me, sister, in his hands. Oh, there is just something about those hands.

Because I have a bruise, He has the Balm of Gilead in his hands.

When I have a condition, He's got the cure, in His hands.

When I have a fault, He's got the fix, in His hands.

Oh, there is just something about those hands.



And the greatest thing about those hands is that they hold the indescribable gift of salvation, as the Lord tells us in **John 3:16–17**:

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Oh, we thank God for His indescribable gift. For when we were too evil to live and too mean to die, the Lord Jesus Christ sent His Holy Spirit to change us. He saved my soul; He made me whole. He brought my feet out of the miry clay and put them on the rock to stay.

And I am secure in my salvation, because it is not because of the works of righteous that I have done, but because of His amazing grace, which He showed me on Calvary's Cross, where He suffered, bled and died to pay the penalty that I owe for the sins that I have committed.

It is a blessing to work on the Lord's program in whatever capacity we are given, but the greatest and most indescribable gift is the gift of salvation itself, provided by the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. And having received this gift, let us thank God at every occasion, and persevere as we participate on His program. And as we participate, let us sow bountifully, as Paul tells us, in **Galatians 6:9**:

9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

Let us not lose heart, but let us sow whatever we have, looking forward to the harvest of our eternal soul promised by the Lord Jesus Christ.

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