

## Excelling in Grace

2 Corinthians 8:1-7, 9

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Money plays an undeniably important part in our lives; the Bible has a lot to say on the topic of money.

### 3 Parts (2 Corinthians 8:1-7, 9)

#### **1. An Excellent Grace**

Raising money and mobilising churches to give to needy Christians was a big part of Paul's ministry. Through this ministry, Paul has stories to tell of God's financial provision. But here, Paul not only tells of God's provision but also His excellent grace (v.1a). This grace is the all surpassing goodness of God expressed through Jesus (2 Cor. 5:21-6:1). This excellent grace has saved our souls. We are desperately in need of God's grace for without it, all other things are in vain. God's grace will be excellent to us, as much as our neediness is exposed. Paul wants us to hear his story and be amazed at how all-sufficient and well-timed and utterly astounding the grace of God is towards us. Like Paul we must long to know now the excellent grace of God, above all things!

#### **2. An Excellent Example**

vv. 1-2 – The church in Macedonia was experiencing extreme poverty; this was a severe test of their faith in God's goodness and promises (v. 2) Yet the climax of the story is not about how God provides financially for the church, but instead with joy and generosity (v. 2). Paul highlights 3 types of generosity the church in Macedonia portrayed (vv. 3-4):  
#1 They gave within their means. Giving within your means is an act of generosity.

#2 They gave above their means. Giving above your means is also an act of generosity. However, giving below your means is not. True Christian generosity comes from a place of selflessness and joyful freedom.

#3 They had a radical desire to give despite their poverty. This kind of radical generosity does not start with our wallets but our hearts. The church in Macedonia gave themselves first to God and then to others in need (v. 5).

What is SAINTSational generosity? SAINTSational generosity is giving yourself to others, for God's pleasure.

#### **3. An Excellent Opportunity**

v. 6 – Paul presented an excellent opportunity to the church in Corinth to complete the act of grace and give, just as the church in Macedonia had. Paul responded to the concerns that the church in Corinth had – to excel in other things that seem more significant than giving – by not neglecting the matter of generosity and excelling in it (v. 7). Jesus not only called the Pharisees to major on the weighty things, but also not to neglect the less weighty matter of handling money (Matt. 23:23). Paul's purpose of the story of the Macedonian churches was not to make an example of the Macedonian church, but of God's excellent grace. It was this grace that transformed the Macedonian church.

True Christian SAINTSational generosity is born from the grace of God. Paul called for the Corinthians to act upon this grace that God had provided through Jesus (v.

9). Grace that is not acted upon, cannot be truly appreciated; grace that is not excelled in, cannot be fully enjoyed! Act and excel upon God's excellent grace and truly be satisfied by it!