



Taking Some Time to Reconnect with God

May 29, 2020

Prayer:

O Christ, You have indeed, been raised from the dead. Therefore, let us live as though death no longer holds us hostage, putting our hope in the One who goes before us, both in death and in eternal life, our Savior, Christ. Amen.

Read: 2 Corinthians 9:1-15

2 Corinthians 9 New International Version (NIV)

¹ There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the Lord's people. ² For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action. ³ But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow, but that you may be ready, as I said you would be. ⁴ For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to say anything about you—would be ashamed of having been so confident. ⁵ So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given.

⁶ Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷ Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. ⁹ As it is written:

“They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor;
their righteousness endures forever.”

¹⁰ Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹ You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

¹² This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. ¹³ Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. ¹⁴ And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. ¹⁵ Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

Reflect:

I dare you to trust God. That seems to be what Paul is saying to the saints at Corinth. Part of this section of 2 Corinthians is a challenge to live up to the good example that they'd previously set. Part of this is flat out guilt trip. Behind all of that is a reminder that whatever we do, it's ultimately about giving thanks to God.

I've told this story before, but it fits here. I grew up with my Mom's stories about her childhood pastor, Rev. Smith. Her home church was a small, rural congregation, where money was always tight. She tells a story about a day when Rev. Smith and his family set down to the table after church and there

was no food in the house. None at all. They were people who were accustomed to sending mayonnaise sandwiches to school for their kid's lunches. On this day, there wasn't even that. As they sat down at the table, Rev. Smith started to pray, "Thank you God, for this food. Please bless it and use it to strengthen our bodies for Thy service." Before they'd finished praying, there was a knock at the door. There stood a member of the congregation with a fresh roasted chicken who explained that God had told them that their pastor needed that food on that day. What great faith Rev. Smith had to offer a prayer of thanksgiving for food that wasn't there. What great faith the person had who had listened to the Holy Spirit's nudge to take chicken to the Smith family.

Paul's ultimate statement is that that kind of faith was indeed great, but not extraordinary. It was regular, everyday trust in God that was overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. This is Paul's motivation for encouraging and cajoling the Corinthian Christians to give generously and joyfully: by living out their trust in God, it would lead both themselves and those who received their gifts to praise God. This is the indescribable gift of God Paul wants for the Corinthians—and for us: that we would be blessed by the simple act of sharing, as we receive and as we give.

Is God calling you to be blessed by a simple, specific act of sharing today?

Be Blessed:

May you find hope and peace that death has been swallowed up in victory.
Amen.