
The Offering; An Act Of Worship

(Mal 3:7-12)

2 Cor 8:1-8

I. ***Given Joyfully*** Vv.1-2

- A. They had “abundance of their joy” at the opportunity to give.
1. Their great joy was not a result of the abundance they had to give
 2. They gave out of a “great trial of affliction” and from “deep poverty [rock bottom destitution]”
 - a) We are not sure what the severe trial was
 - b) It may have been a religious or political persecution that resulted in an inability to find work which led to their extreme poverty
 - c) The trial may have been the extreme poverty which was a result of poor economic circumstances
 - d) It didn’t matter, they gave joyously, grateful for the opportunity to give.
 3. ILST: Several years ago Ted Turner gave a multi-million dollar donation to the UN. When you read about Ted Turner’s gift to the UN, the articles read pictured him as absolutely giddy over the gift he had given. Turner’s gift did not press him like that of the Macedonians. Never the less, Turner believes in the UN. He believes we live in a world economy and he supports the idea of a global village. He believes the only vehicle to accomplish the goals of establishing that one world approach geo-politically is the UN. And so he gives joyously to what he believes in

4. ILST: A mother wanted to teach her daughter a moral lesson. She gave the little girl a quarter and a dollar for church “Put whichever one you want in the collection plate and keep the other for yourself,” she told the girl. When they were coming out of church, the mother asked her daughter which amount she had given. “Well,” said the little girl, “I was going to give the dollar, but just before the collection the man in the pulpit said that we should all be cheerful givers. I knew I’d be a lot more cheerful if I gave the quarter, so I did.”

(Contributed to Sermon Central by Glenn Queener)

- B. APLC: We live in trying times financially, of some in this room today it might be said that you live in “deep poverty”. Others of you it might be said of you that you are “in great trial of affliction.” But, like the Macedonians in our text, God has given you and me the opportunity to give to a cause greater than any other on the face of the earth, certainly a greater cause than the UN. When you give to God and his work you give to a cause whose work will last forever.
 1. If you were ever going to give money away joyously I would think it would be to the church.
 2. When was the last time you gave money away joyously?
 3. Do you put your offering in the plate joyfully or do you do it grudgingly?
- II. **Given Willingly** Vv. 3-4
- A. Giving should be done willingly.
 1. Verse 3 says “*they were* willing of themselves.”
 - a) In 9:2 it says “I know the forwardness of your mind”

- b) This phrase means 'ready and willing' They were ready and willing to give
- 2. The telling part of this passage is found in 8:4
 - a) From that verse we learn that these believers actually *"begged [them] to let them have the joy of giving their money"*
 - b) When was the last time you not gave with a smile on your face but you stopped the usher in the aisle and had he wait while you wrote your check?
 - c) When was the last time you mailed in our dropped off you offering BEFORE GOING ON VACATION? – most of us, I am of all most guilty of this, either forget to or simply think, "I'll make it up when I get back"
 - d) These people were ready a year in advance to give their offering; that is excitement
- 3. Warren Wiersbe on this verse says:

It is possible to give generously but not give enthusiastically. "The preacher says I should give until it hurts," said a miserly church member, "but for me, it hurts just to think about giving!" The Macedonian churches needed no prompting or reminding, as did the church at Corinth. They were more than willing to share in the collection. In fact, they begged to be included! (2 Cor. 8:4) How many times have you heard a Christian beg for somebody to take an offering?

- 4. Their giving was voluntary and spontaneous
 - a) It was of grace, not pressure
 - b) They gave because they wanted to give and because they had experienced the grace of God.

- c) Grace not only frees us from our sins, but it frees us from ourselves
- d) The grace of God should not only open your heart but it should also open your hand and your wallet
- e) Your giving is not the result of cold calculation, but of warmhearted jubilation!

B. The opposite of willing giving is”

- 1. Giving begrudgingly
- 2. Giving out of guilt
- 3. Giving out of fear
- 4. Giving from manipulation
- 5. Giving as a ritual
- 6. Illustration: The story is told of the missionary who asked a new convert, “Pablo, if you had a hundred sheep, would you give fifty of them to the Lord’s work?”

“You know I would gladly give them,” he replied.

“Pablo, if you had fifty cows, would you give twenty-five to the Lord’s work?”

“Of course, I would be more than happy to do that,” came the confident reply.

Once again the missionary asked, “Pablo, if you had two pigs, would you give one of them to the Lord’s work?”

“That’s not fair!” Pablo said, “You know I have two pigs.” Pablo was no longer willing.

(Contributed to Sermon Central by Susan Blader)

III. **Given Submissively** Vv. 5-6

- A. Paul says that the Macedonians didn’t do as he expected,
 - 1. Instead, they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to him and the other leaders

2. Sometimes, as hard as it is to let go of our money, sometimes the easiest thing to do is give a little and ease the conscience.
3. What's a twenty-dollar bill going to hurt or even a fifty
4. Paul says that the Macedonians didn't just give some money
5. They gave money generously, beyond what they had to give.
6. But more than that, they put themselves at the disposal of both God and Paul and God's representative.
7. One of the reasons the finances of the church are the most touch of all issues is because as fallen people we don't trust God's chosen representatives
 - a) When there is a financial crisis the first question everyone asks is – are we spending too much and are we spending wisely
 - b) The real question that should
8. Now I'll admit that there may be good reason
 - a) They not only gave generously, they gave completely as they gave themselves

IV. ***Given Purposefully*** Vv. 7-9