

“THROUGH THE BIBLE”

PASTOR SANDY ADAMS

2 CORINTHIANS 7-9

In this past Sunday's sermon I used the phrase, “upset the apple cart.” When I got home my wife wondered if any of the younger people even knew what it meant. *How long has it been since you've seen an “apple cart?” Why would upsetting one be a problem?* It got me thinking about other out-dated terms we commonly use... “turn the channel” or “dial a number” or “roll up the window” or “hang up the phone...” when was the last time you literally “hung up a phone?” This got me thinking about one other term that Bible readers often use, but probably no longer understand. It's the word “holiness.” We read about it throughout the Scriptures, but seldom talk about it in everyday life. Sadly, a lot of pastors no longer address the subject. Yet “holiness” is Paul's theme at the end of chapter 6, and again at the beginning of chapter 7. According to 2 Corinthians every Christian should live a holy life.

Verse 1, “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” The word translated “holy” means “special or sacred to God.” Often, we think of “holiness” as an intrinsic quality. What's “holy” is better or purer than what's not. But that's not the right use of the word. In the OT the bowls and utensils used in the Temple were considered “holy” - not because they were made from special metals, or because of a specific design. Their construction could've been the same as any other vessel, but what made them special was their dedication to the Lord's service. It was their *consecration* not *composition* that made them “holy.”

Once there was a mom who thought her household rules would carry more weight if they were written like OT laws. Surely her kids would obey biblically-sounding commandments. Here's a sampling... “Of the beasts of the field, and of the fish of the sea, and of all foods that are acceptable in my sight you may eat, but not in the living room. Of the hoofed animals, broiled or ground into burgers, you may eat, but not in the living room. Of the cloven-hoofed animals, plain or with cheese, you may eat, but not in the living room. Of the cereal grains, of the corn and of the wheat and of the oats, and of all the cereals that are of bright color you may eat, but not in the living room. Of frozen dessert and of all frozen after-meal treats you may eat, but absolutely not in the living room. Of the juices and other beverages, yes, even of those in sippy-cups, you may drink, but not in the living room. Neither may you carry such therein. Indeed, when you reach the place where the living room carpet begins, of any food or beverage there you may not eat, neither may you drink. But if you are sick, and are lying down and watching something, then may you eat in the living room.” Obviously, except for a few, very special occasions that living room is off-limits.

I'm sure this mom's living room is constructed out of the same materials as every other room in her house, but she's dedicated the living room as a special room for special functions - and therefore what's allowable in other rooms are not allowable in the living room. This is how you should understand “holiness.” Your life is God's living room - you're the place where He continues His work, and lives out His life. And He's very picky about what happens in His living room! What goes on in another room - in another person's life - isn't as important! But as a Christian you're special to God - not because you're intrinsically better or different than your peers - but because you're His child - your life and

all that you are is dedicated to Him. Thus, anything that defaces the beauty or purity of your life, and tarnishes its witness becomes off-limits!

Paul continues, "Open your hearts to us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have cheated no one." Talk about "holiness" in the way a person carries out their ministry - here's an example... Every minister should be able to say: "I've wronged no one, I've corrupted no one, I've cheated no one."

Remember, in chapter 6:11 Paul confessed that his heart was wide-open to the Corinthians. He'd been honest and straight-forward - *no hidden agendas*. Now he calls on them to return the favor. He knows they're criticizing him and talking behind his back. He wants them to put away the duplicity! Verse 3, "I do not say this to condemn; for I have said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together." The believers in Corinth had betrayed Paul, and it broke his heart. He loved them. He was willing to *die for them* or *live for them*.

He says, "Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my boasting on your behalf." Paul had bragged of the Corinthians to other churches. They were a powerful church - filled with the Holy Spirit! But while Paul was proud of them, they had been criticizing and questioning him. Paul was a pastor who cared for his flock - but the fickle sheep were bleating about their pastor. This was a *ba-a-a-a-a-a-d* scene!

Yet Paul still takes heart, "I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation. For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears." It's a bit sobering to hear the fearless Apostle Paul admit to a little fear and trepidation... "Inside were fears..." At times even the courageous apostle was afraid. It's been said, "Courage is not the absence of fear, but the willingness to trust God in the midst of fear." In other words, "when your knees knock kneel on them."

"Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus..." I love the title Paul gives to God - "*who comforts the downcast*." This word "*downcast*" was used by shepherds. Whenever a plump sheep fell on its back, and couldn't right itself on its own, it was referred to as "*downcast*." Apparently Paul was so distressed - "*outside were conflicts, inside were fears*" - he needed help to get up, and God met his need by sending him his friend, Titus. Often, God washes and bandages our wounds... He restores to us hope and perspective... He gets us back on our feet... through the encouragement of a friend.

God comforted Paul by the coming of Titus, and the news he brought. "And not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more." Paul was in Macedonia when Titus brought news of the Corinthians' reaction to his previous letter, 1 Corinthians. Though Paul had rebuked them for their divisiveness and carnality, many in the church at Corinth repented, and took heed to Paul's instructions.

He says in verse 8, "For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it." When I was a naughty kid my dad would lay me over the bed, pull off his belt, and whip my rear until it hurt. And he would always say, "Sandy, this hurts me more than it hurts you." I never believed him... Until I became a parent! Now I know it's true. And guess what I said to my kids when I had to spank them? Yep, "Son, this hurt me more than it hurts you." It's an agonizing ordeal to discipline someone you love. This is how Paul felt when he wrote 1 Corinthians. Nobody likes it when their sin is exposed. Nobody relishes a reprimand. A good rebuke hurts. It might even make you angry at first. You might try to dodge it with excuses, or recoil with criticism of the rebuker. This was how some folks in Corinth had responded. Paul

knew the risks he was taking by reprimanding the Corinthians, but he had no regrets. Paul wasn't worried about Paul. He didn't need to be liked. His ministry wasn't a popularity contest. Paul's only interest was the glory of God and the health of the Church.

Hebrews 12 teaches us that a parent who refuses to discipline their child really doesn't love that child. Paul loved the Corinthians enough to hold them accountable for sin. *He was willing to risk his friendship with them to help salvage their fellowship with God.* Real brothers love that way, and do that kind of stuff! Be glad we have some pastors willing to do the same.

Paul continues, *"For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing."* The Corinthians were sad for a season, but after the sting of the spanking subsided, the discipline worked. Paul's truth and love led to their repentance.

Verse 10, *"For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death."* Notice there're two types of sorrow over sin - *godly sorrow* and *worldly sorrow*. It reminds me of the man tormented by a haunting secret. He worked at a lumberyard. One day he went to confession, and admitted to the priest he'd been stealing wood. The priest asked him how much... He said, *"Enough to build me a house, my son a house, my two daughters houses, and a small cottage up at the lake."* The priest was shocked, *"My son, this is a serious offense, I'll have to think of a severe penance. Have you ever thought of doing a retreat?"* The fellow got excited, *"No, but if you can get the plans, I can get the lumber!"* *That's not godly sorrow!*

Worldly sorrow is being sorry you got caught, or sorry you'll be punished. It tries to escape the consequences of the sin, and avoid the punishment. It produces crocodile tears, but no real desire to change. *Worldly sorrow* is a self-centered sorrow. It's a self-pitying sadness - a *"woe is me"* kind of sorrow. Whereas *"godly sorrow"* is God-directed and God-honoring. You're sorry you broke the heart of God, and thumbed your nose at His authority. You offended God. Godly sorrow accepts the consequences of my actions. It doesn't buck or resent proper punishment. It seeks not only forgiveness, but the opportunity and power to change. Godly sorrow yields real repentance.

Paul continues, *"For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter."* If you want to discern if a person is truly repented use this checklist... *Is there a diligence to do the right thing - a desire to rebuild a reputation - a hatred of sin - a fear of God - a willingness to do whatever it takes to overcome - a passion for God - a longing to make things right.*

Once a Sunday School teacher asked the kids, *"Who can tell me what you have to do to gain God's forgiveness?"* A boy answered, *"First you've got to sin."* Sadly, I know some adults with the same attitude. *They sin to be forgiven, or they're forgiven so they can sin.* There's no true repentance - no desire to break the cycle. Either they're enjoying sin, or crying for forgiveness, but there's no *"godly sorrow."* *Do you really want to overcome what's dragging you down?* Understand without *real repentance* there can be no *real forgiveness*. This is what Esau discovered. Hebrews 12:17 says of Esau, *"he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears."* A flood of tears is no substitute for a repentant heart. Remember also Judas. Matthew 27:3, tells us, *"Then Judas... seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver."* Judas was sorry he'd betrayed Jesus, but it was not a sorrow that caused him to face

up to what he'd done. Rather than seek God's forgiveness and restoration. Judas sulked off in his sorrow and tried to avoid the consequences of his actions by committing suicide.

Verse 12, "Therefore, although I wrote to you, I did not do it for the sake of him who had done the wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you." Remember the original incident in Corinth that had provoked the church discipline. A man and his father's wife were living together in blatant immorality. *And the church was proud of their tolerance.* Paul says, "No way. Either these people repent or you kick them out." A church body can no more tolerate unrepentant sin than the human body can tolerate cancer. Leave it alone - ignore it - and it'll destroy you. Certainly, Paul confronted the couple out of love for them. *But that was not his only motivation.* Paul also loved the Corinthian church, and he knew this kind of compromise would destroy its witness. He was looking out for the church's best interests.

"Therefore we have been comforted in your comfort. And we rejoiced exceedingly more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I am not ashamed. But as we spoke all things to you in truth, even so our boasting to Titus was found true. And his affections are greater for you as he remembers the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him. Therefore I rejoice that I have confidence in you in everything." The Corinthians had lived up to Paul's confidence in them. They'd received his rebuke with "godly sorrow." He also thanks them for their kindness toward Titus.

Chapter 8... Once there was an infant playing on the carpet. She picked up a quarter, stuck it in her mouth, and swallowed. The mother saw what had happened and went hysterical. She screamed to her husband, "Quick, call 9-1-1, my baby just swallowed a quarter." The husband responded, "Forget 9-1-1, call the pastor... he can get money out of anybody!" Well, in the next two chapters Pastor Paul's intent is to get money out of the Corinthians. He teaches on giving. Paul's epistle becomes a fundraising letter.

Famine had hit Judea. The region had fallen on hard times. Believers in Jerusalem were *hungry and hurting*. And Paul saw their need as an opportunity to bridge the gap between Jewish and Gentile Christians. Paul wanted to collect an offering from the Gentile churches for Judea. The Gentiles had a debt to the church at Jerusalem they needed to acknowledge. The Jewish Church had sponsored the missionaries that brought the Gospel to the Gentiles... The love these Gentiles could now show the Jews would be a way to reciprocate the kindness. The Jews would be impressed with the genuineness of their faith and love. Paul had already collected an offering in Macedonia. He uses it as an example to inspire the Corinthians!

Verse 1, "Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality." First, Paul doesn't call their monetary offering a *gift*, but a *grace!* Receive the spiritual favors of grace, and you'll want to return it in a tangible way. *Giving responds to grace.*

It reminds me of the family that attended a church that took the offering just before they took communion. Dad would always give the kids a dime to put in the collection. One Sunday the youngest boy, who was new to the adult service, went to receive communion, when his mom gently whispered, "Son, sit back down you're not ready to take communion yet." With a loud voice the boy protested, "Why not, I just paid for it!" And sadly, that's how many Christians think it works. God's favor can't be purchased or earned. It's a free gift. If your offering is an attempt to buy God's pardon, or blessing, or favor - then put it back in your wallet! God's grace is *unwrought, unsought, un-bought!* Here's the point,

you don't give to get - you give to show gratitude! Giving is a response. God has been so good to us, our giving to Him is our way to say thanks.

And apparently the Macedonian churches - Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea - were all grateful for God's grace. Even though times were tough they were generous. The Greek phrase in verse 2 translated, "*deep poverty*" is graphic. It meant "*rock-bottom destitution.*" "*As poor as dirt.*" It was used for a beggar with nothing going for him, and with no hope of improving his lot. Though the Macedonians had very little they still gave generously. It just goes to show if you wait until you can *afford to tithe* to start - you'll never start! As a matter of fact, statistics show that poor people are proportionately more generous than rich people. In 2001 a study done by a group called "*Independent Sector*" showed that folks making under \$25,000 a year, gave away 4.2% of their income to charity. While \$75,000 a year wage earners gave just 2.7%.

It proves a person's willingness to give isn't as much about *what's in their bank account*, as it is *what's in their heart*. **Giving is more about faith than finances.** Your amount in your bank account might effect the amount you can give, but it should never effect your willingness to give, or the regularity of your giving. Remember the widow's mite... What impressed Jesus wasn't the size of the woman's offering, but the amount that was left afterwards. *She gave all that she had.* She didn't just tip God. The lady gave sacrificially. This is what impressed Paul about the Macedonians.

Verse 3, "*For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.*" The Macedonians weren't pressured or badgered into giving-they asked Paul if they could give! It blesses me when someone approaches us and asks, "*You guys don't pass the plate, so how do I give an offering around here?*" I think you're doing it right when folks have to ask how they can give an offering!

"*And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.*" Note, the priorities of the Macedonians. Before they gave money to God, they first gave themselves. Too many folks try to buy God off with a few bucks. They do enough to pacify their own conscience. They give, to get God off their back and leave them alone. Here's the problem... God could care less about your money until you give Him your heart, and mind, and soul, and strength. He wants you - not your money. Yet on the flip-side how can you say you've given all to God if you're not even willing to give a tithe of 10%. In Medieval times when armies were converted to Christianity many of the soldiers were baptized holding their right hand out of the water. It was a way of saying they were giving everything to the Lord - except their sword-hand - just in case they had to fight and kill. Today, it seems people are baptized holding their wallet out of the water. They're willing to give to Jesus every area of their lives - except their finances!

Verse 6, "*So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well.*" Paul had commissioned Titus to collect the offering. "*But as you abound in everything in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us - see that you abound in this grace also.*" The church at Corinth prided themselves in their use of spiritual gifts. But so what if they spoke in tongues, and healed, and discerned spirits - if they were greedy and stingy. On occasion you'll find a Christian who excuse away his responsibility to give to God financially. He'll say, "*Well, it's just not my gift.*" Paul disagrees. Giving is everyone's gift. It's our response to God's grace. We are all called to open up *our hearts* and *our wallets*...

Verse 8, "*I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others.*" His mention of the

Macedonians was to stir them on. But there's another example Paul brings up... "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich." If you won't follow the Macedonian's example - what about the Jesus. Our Lord made Himself *materially poor* that we could be *rich spiritually*. Talk about giving!

"And in this I give advice: It is to your advantage not only to be doing what you began and were desiring to do a year ago; but now you also must complete the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to desire it, so there also may be a completion out of what you have." Christianity and tennis this in common - a good serve requires a good follow through! Good intentions aren't enough. *Could'a, would'a, should'a* - doesn't cut it. A year earlier the Corinthians started taking up an offering for the Jews in Judea, but had never finished. It reminds me of the pastor's son who heard words at church like *justification, sanctification, glorification, reconciliation* - all these "ations..." One day his teacher asked, "Who can define the word '*procrastination*'?" The little boy answered, "I'm not sure what it means, but I know my church believes in it!" God wants us to obey... *not just dream about it, or talk about it, or plan to do it...* but to actually obey! Let's not be an obedient church not a procrastinating church.

Verse 12, "For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have..." In other words, don't get hung up on the amount of your offering. What's most important is "*a willing mind*" - a sincerity. Give regularly and sacrificially and God is please whatever percentage or amount that turns out to be.

"For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened; but by an equality..." This is the genius behind the simple tithe. Everybody gives a different amount, but the same percentage. Yet everybody is commanded to give, not just one wealthy benefactor. Paul doesn't expect the Corinthians to give it all. He's collecting an offering from every Gentile church. Here's God's wisdom in action... If *everybody* gives their share, then giving isn't a burden on *anybody*. So here's the question... *Are you giving your share?*

Once an ole country pastor needed to boost the church revenues. He stood up just before the offering was taken and announced to his congregation... "Before we pass the plate I just want to ask the person who stole Brother Harvey's chickens not give their offering. *God doesn't want a thief's money.*" Needless to say, for the first time in months everyone in the church chipped in, and donated their offering. This is God's financial plan... *Everybody chips in!*

God is after an equality in our giving "that now at this time your abundance may supply their lack, that their abundance also may supply your lack that there may be equality. As it is written, "He who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack." Paul quotes Exodus 16:18. Sometimes I can give more than you. At times you can give more than me. But if we all give our share then it all balances out. There might end up a time when Corinth is in need. Then it would be the responsibility of the Church in Jerusalem to give... Right now the roles are reversed.

Verse 16, "But thanks be to God who puts the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus. For he not only accepted the exhortation, but being more diligent, he went to you of his own accord. And we have sent with him the brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches, (we're not sure who this brother was - perhaps Luke, maybe Timothy) and not only that, but who was also chosen by the churches to travel with us with this gift, which is administered by us to the glory of the Lord Himself and to show your ready mind, avoiding this: that anyone should blame us in this lavish gift which is administered by us - providing honorable things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but

also in the sight of men.” “And we have sent with them our brother whom we have often proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, because of the great confidence which we have in you.” Whoever this praise-worthy brother was his job was to accompany the offering to Jerusalem with Paul. It was a security precaution. If something happened along the way - if the money was lost, or stolen, or it sunk in a shipwreck - Paul didn't want anyone accusing him of having absconded with the collections. *Paul made himself accountable.* I like what Bible Commentator Charles Hodge writes here, "It was not enough for the Apostle to do right, he recognized the importance of appearing right... We are bound to act in such a way that not only God, who sees the heart and knows all things, may approve of our conduct, but also that men may be constrained to recognize our integrity." Paul was wise to create procedures that safeguarded the integrity... *So are we!*

Verse 23, “If anyone inquires about Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker concerning you. Or if our brethren are inquired about, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ. Therefore show to them, and before the churches the proof of your love and of our boasting on your behalf.

Chapter 9, “Now concerning the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous (unnecessary) for me to write to you; for I know your willingness, about which I boast of you to the Macedonians, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal has stirred up the majority.” Paul was shrewd. In the previous chapter he uses the generosity of the Macedonians as an example to Corinth. But when he was in Macedonia he used the Corinthians' good intentions as an example to them. He finds something commendable in both churches.

“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; lest if some Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to mention you!) should be ashamed of this confident boasting. 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...” Paul wants to avoid an embarrassing situation, and a poor witness. He doesn't want to show-up in Corinth with the Macedonians and there be no offering. He's been *talking up the church at Corinth*. Now he's concerned about the Corinthians *letting him down*...

And he's also concerned about the attitude behind their giving... “that it may be ready as a matter of generosity and not as a grudging obligation.” Paul doesn't want anyone to *give with a grudge*. If after all God has done for you, if you have to force yourself to write the offering check... *just keep your filthy money. Give because you want to, not because you have to.*

Verse 6, “But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Your offering is like a seed. *Plant or invest* in God's work, and it'll yield spiritual rewards. In reality none of us can give anything to God. He already owns all we possess. Our giving is our opportunity to invest and participate in God's purposes. It's been said of money, “*You can't take it with you - but you can send it on ahead!*” You lay up treasure in heaven, by giving it to God's work here on earth. And verse 6 adds an important principle. *The degree to which you give is the degree to which you get.* Sow sparingly, reap sparingly - in other words, *give a little, get a little.* But sow bountifully, and you'll reap bountifully - that means, *give a lot, and you'll get a lot.* Don't forget, you reap in proportion to what you sow.

“So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.” Giving needs to be *personal, volitional, cheerful.* A pastor should never lay a trip on his people and put a dollar amount on their giving. We're under grace, not law. We all should be led by the Spirit in our giving. A pastor should never pressure or manipulate folks to give as if God needs their money or His purposes will fail if they don't give. It's true, they might miss out on a blessing, but God can supply whatever He needs. God wants you and I to

be “a cheerful giver.” The phrase could literally be translated, “a hilarious giver.” God wants us to give with a smile on our face. This is why the best approach for a pastor is to stress God’s grace and the blessings we’ve received. When a believer knows how much God has given to them, they’ll *look for opportunities* to give to Him.

It’s been described... “There’re three types of givers - the **flint**, the **sponge**, and the **honeycomb**. The *flint* has to be struck to give. The *sponge* has to be squeezed. But the *honeycomb* gives by oozing out. The sweetness is the overflow of what’s inside. It’s wrong for a church to hammer or squeeze its folks for money. If people are being fed God’s Word they’ll be fruitful. They’ll produce their own sweetness. Their giving to God will be a natural response to the work God is doing in them. Paul’s strategy in Corinth was to simply trust God. **He kept calm and collected...**

Verse 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.” Despite how some preachers have painted Him, God has never been on the verge of bankruptcy. He is and will always be capable of supporting His own work.

“As it is written (he quotes Psalm 112:9): “He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever.” Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you **havDISE** sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God. For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God” The offering being collected will not only meet the church’s physical needs, but it’ll bless them spiritually. It’ll cause the Jews in Judea to be grateful to God.

This should be the motivation behind all our giving - not only to meet a physical need, but to glorify God... Verse 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, and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you.” Corinth’s gift to the church at Jerusalem was an answer to the Jews’ prayers for the Corinthians. They’d been praying for the love and growth of the Gentiles. Now this offering is an answer to their prayers.

Paul concludes Chapter 9, “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift! How fitting that Paul wraps up his discussion on giving by reminding the Corinthians of the greatest gift... God’s “*indescribable gift*” is Jesus!