

40 Days of Fitness

A daily devotional by Rev Garry Hardingham

DAY 37 – God loves a Cheerful Giver.

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. As it is written, 'He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever.' 2Corinthians 9:6-9

God loves a cheerful giver!

Having studied the Apostle Paul and reading in his letters the way he can be very descriptive about certain things from marriage to forgiveness and how to run a church, it seem strange that Paul would send out appeals for the financial aid of the Jerusalem church without setting an actual figure. Mind you, as the previous verses do make it clear, that while Paul wants the Corinthian Church to give cheerfully, he clearly sees his mission of raising funds as an act of benevolence and pride. *"otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we would be humiliated—to say nothing of you—in this undertaking."* Paul writes in verse 4.

However, having said this, I am not accusing Paul of putting the guilts on the Corinthian Church. Instead, what Paul does, particularly in 2 Corinthians in a number of places, is to use Jesus as, not just the Son of God, but also as the perfect example of what a Christian should aspire to. *"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich."* (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Paul wants followers of Christ to look to Jesus in terms of His love for God and us, for His compassion for our needs and His desire to share what He has. Paul hoped, that by seeing this model, believers would feel inspired as he did to look at giving not as a burden, but an opportunity to become more Christlike.

Giving never, ever comes from guilt, obligation, or compulsion.
Giving is not some religious tax that Christians are required to meet.

Jesus, who proclaims that His yoke is light, came to push aside that kind of giving, and to fulfil it with something better.

And that something better lays in the way we understand ourselves as being witnesses to the God we worship. And this witnessing includes good works amongst people in need, including the poor. *"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."* (Galatians 6:9-10)

PRAYER

Lord,
You gave freely.
You are the very model of giving.
Not for Your sake, but for ours.
You have given us the gift of existence itself
And have offered us not just life,
But life in all its fullness.
May we cherish and hold sure to this gift.
In the name of Your Son, our Saviour. Amen.