

Living Generously

Key Verse: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

—II Corinthians 8:9

Selected Scripture:
II Corinthians 8:1-15

sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity. For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will. They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem.”—II Cor. 8:1-4, *New Living Translation*

The foregoing passage challenges a common notion that one must have an abundance of resources in order to give. The Macedonians did not wait until they had a surplus; rather, they gave sacrificially even in their time

In today's lesson, Paul addresses the topic of encouraging the believers to participate in a collection for the saints in Jerusalem. His words provide valuable insights into the heart and motivations behind generosity. The apostle holds up the example of the brethren in Macedonia, who gave sacrificially, despite their own poverty, as a model for the Corinthians to emulate.

Paul writes: “Now I want you to know, dear brothers and

of want. This should cause us to rethink our own perspectives on this subject and to consider the ways in which we can contribute to the needs of the saints, regardless of our financial status. In this, we are reminded of the widow who gave a small offering but was commended by Jesus for giving all that she had.

—Mark 12:41-44

Giving should always be on a volunteer basis. All devoted Christians should be motivated to give generously because of God's grace. This must come from their own heart, otherwise it is not pleasing to God. Though the Macedonians did not have much, they desperately wanted to share what they had. They begged Paul to be able to take part. What an example of generosity!

Our Key Verse provides an even greater lesson. It reminds us that the spirit of benevolence was manifested by our Lord to the utmost degree by his humility in willingly relinquishing his spiritual life to come to earth as a man. This he did in order to give his human life as a ransom and thus purchase the entire world of mankind because of Adam's original sin.—Rom. 5:18,19; I Tim. 2:5,6

Christians understand that one of the evidences we have passed from death unto life is that we love the brethren. Additionally, as Christ laid down his life for us, we should do likewise for the brethren. In other words, we should do whatever we can to help them make their calling and election sure.—I John 3:14,16; II Pet. 1:10

The Scriptures abound with lessons illustrating the compassion that we should have towards brethren in their hour of need, as well as for the world of mankind as we have opportunity. May our lives more and more reflect our appreciation of the following exhortation from Paul: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."—Gal. 6:10