

THE CHURCHES OF MACEDONIA GIVE US AN EXAMPLE OF HOW WE ARE TO GIVE

Sermon by Donald Townsley

INTRODUCTION

1. Churches of Macedonia: Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea
2. The subject of giving of our means to support the work of the church is a subject that must be preached on from time to time.
3. Many Christians become slack along this line from time to time, and have to be reminded of their duty.
4. It is going to take everything every member can possibly do to carry on the program of work in this congregation.
5. I can think of no better place to start studying the subject of giving than to start with the example of the churches of Macedonia.

I. THEY GAVE UNDER VERY UNFAVORABLE CIRCUMSTANCES

1. They were in much affliction (vs. 2).
 - (1) Paul said the people of Thessalonica received the word in much affliction -- I Thess. 1: 6; 2:14.
 - (2) These afflictions arose from persecution.
2. They were in deep poverty (vs. 2).
 - (1) They were very poor.
 - (2) Even though very poor, they were able to make a liberal contribution.
 - (3) Joy and poverty together poured out a rich stream of liberality.
 - (4) People who have to suffer the most for the gospel, as a rule, are the most liberal.
3. The poor widow's mites pleased the Lord -- Mark 12: 41 - 44.

II. THOUGH AFFLICTED AND POOR, THEY GAVE LARGELY -- vs. 3

1. They gave "*beyond their power*".
2. They gave beyond their ability to give.
3. Beyond what could have been expected.
4. They gave bountifully as Paul taught in 2 Cor. 9: 6 - 7.
5. The modern curse of the church is small giving.

III. THEY GAVE VOLUNTARILY -- vs. 3

1. Compulsory giving is no worth to the giver -- 2 Cor. 9:7.
2. Voluntary giving is the only kind of giving the Lord wants and will accept -- Ex. 25:1 - 2.
3. This rules out all kinds of methods to raise money that compels people to give against their will.
4. God loves a cheerful giver -- 2 Cor. 9:7.
5. There must be first a willing mind -- 2 Cor. 8:12.

IV. THEY GAVE WITHOUT AN URGENT APPEAL.

1. They gave of their own accord.
2. They did not have to be preached to or begged.
3. They wanted to do it on their own.

4. Sometimes we have to be reminded to do our duty -- 2 Cor. 8:10; 9: 2 - 4.

V. THEY BEGGED FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF GIVING -- vs. 4

1. Verse 4: "*Begging us with much entreaty for the favor of participation in the support of the saints*" -
-NASV
2. Giving, to them, was a privilege, a gain -- not a loss-- Acts 20: 35.
3. Giving was not a thing to be avoided, but a thing to be sought.
4. This privilege was "*the grace of God*" -- 2 Cor. 8:1.

VI THEY GAVE WITH MUCH JOY -- vs. 2

1. Their joy arose from the hope and promises of the gospel.
2. When we give with joy, our giving pleases God -- 2 Cor. 9:7.

VII. THEY GAVE THEMSELVES AS WELL AS THEIR MONETARY CONTRIBUTION-- vs. 5

1. They first made an entire consecration of themselves and all that they had to the Lord.
2. They kept back nothing.
3. Christianity to them was not a mere profession.

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