



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

2 Corinthians 8: 10-15

Summer 2025

"Grace Giving"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Seth, and good morning. We are in 2 Corinthians chapter 8, and we're going to look at verses 10 through 15. And I think just as reading over it, (if you're not familiar with the passage, if you weren't here last week, or even if you were), just to begin reading it...it's a little difficult to understand what Paul is speaking of. So I thought perhaps it would be good to give just a brief overview.

This chapter begins a new section in the book, and Paul is taking up the matter of the poor saints in Jerusalem who were suffering under the conditions of a famine. And he had taken up a famine relief, (or began this project of a famine relief, and he mentions that in verse 10), and how the Corinthians *had been* enthusiastic in it and *had been* very engaged in supplying for that gift that would be taken to Jerusalem and to the apostles to help the poor in Jerusalem. But they had been lacking in their enthusiasm of late.

And so, in the beginning of this chapter, (what we covered last week), were two incentives for regaining that enthusiasm among them. He gave the *first* example of the Macedonians, who were poor, but they gave, 'begged him', (vs4), to be a part of this ministry and gave, "beyond their ability". (vs3). And then the *second* example in verse 9, is Christ and how 'He made Himself poor in order to make them rich through His offering. '

Now, what he does now, (in the passage we'll look at *today*), is to give some principles of guidance on how they are 'to *give*'—what the principles are. The *first* one is, 'One should give according to what he has, not according to what he doesn't have.' In other words, 'If one has much, they should give much. If one doesn't have much, then they aren't expected to give very much into this fund.' And, 'If one has nothing, well, one isn't expected to give anything.' And what's interesting about that is, 'He says that if there's the desire to give, but not the funds or the means to give, God counts that as the gift.' So, He's so gracious that He sees one's desire as sufficient in and of itself.

And that's really the *second* point, the *second* principle is, 'It is to be done with joy, with gladness. That's what's to motivate our giving.'

So, 'Done in proportion to what one has, but done out of great joy to do so'—and they had that joy at the beginning, but they seem to lack it now. So with that, I'll read the text beginning with verse 10;

<sup>10</sup> I give *my* opinion in this matter, for this is to your advantage, who were the first to begin a year ago not only to do *this*, but also to desire *to do it*. <sup>11</sup> But now finish doing it also, so that just as *there was* the readiness to desire it, so *there may be* also the completion of it by your ability. <sup>12</sup> For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what *a person* has, not according to what he does not have. <sup>13</sup> For *this* is not for the ease of others *and* for your affliction, but by way of equality— <sup>14</sup> at this present time your abundance *being a supply* for their need, so that their abundance also may become *a supply* for your need, that there may be equality; <sup>15</sup> as it is written, "HE WHO *gathered* MUCH DID NOT HAVE TOO MUCH, AND HE WHO *gathered* LITTLE HAD NO LACK."

2 Corinthians 8: 10-15

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word and bless our time of study in it together. Let's look to the LORD in prayer.

Father, we thank You for this time to be together; and it is, (as I often say), a great privilege to be with Your people and to be engaged in this; reading the Scriptures, considering their meaning and how they apply to us. We pray that You would give us insight into that. We pray for the ministry of the Holy Spirit, that He'd help us to see the meaning of the text and also, how it applies to us and that we may respond well to it. It is a privilege to be a part of Your ministry in every facet of it—and an opportunity to be a help to others who are in need.

And we pray that we would have that desire; it's the heart of a Christian, the heart of a child born of God; so we pray that You would cultivate that within us, LORD. And may we be an active people, not only hearers but, 'doers of the Word', as Mark, (*Newman*), reminded us of being in his lesson this morning. That's very much what Paul is talking about here in the text to the Corinthians, to be 'doers as well as hearers'.

And LORD, we are so thankful that we can come to You and the throne of grace and intercede for those who are grieving and those who are in difficulty—and we think of those grieving families, some in our own neighborhoods whose children were lost in the flash flood in central Texas, we pray for them. We pray for others, LORD, who as they learn of the situation of their children or their loved ones, that You would encourage them. Some, many, are Your children and we pray that You would bless them with encouragement—and even give them the ability to be a good witness for You at a most difficult time.

We thank You for Your grace, and we know Your love is for us, regardless of the circumstances of life and may we understand that more and more, and live to Your glory.

And we pray Your blessing upon us as we continue this service and as we sing our next hymn, and then as we consider the great text that's before us.

We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

(Message) One of the great stories of Christian history is found at the very beginning, in Acts 2, and Luke's account of the birth of the church. We read of the Holy Spirit, 'coming in wind and fire', (vs3-4), people 'speaking in tongues', (vs4), Peter, 'preaching and 3,000 souls responding to his call to repent'. (vs41). So, a remarkable story about the miraculous—that Peter, (who just weeks before had denied Christ three times), could preach so fearlessly. It was a miracle! The Holy Spirit had changed him...but multitudes of people were changed. That's what the Holy Spirit does in the new birth and the ongoing progressive work of sanctification; He changes people. It is supernatural.

And that miraculous work was evidenced in the days that followed. The people worshiped together, and they cared for one another. The world, I suspect, had never seen anything quite like it. Luke wrote in Acts 2: 44&45, that, "...they had all things in common", and, "...they *began* selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need." Now, that's a miracle that people would become selfless.

But when a person is born again, Paul tells us that he is, "a new creation". We considered that not long ago in, (2Cor), chapter 5, verse 17, "...behold, new things have come." And the fact that people can give up their money and give up their possessions is proof of that.

Martin Luther described the heart of man as, "naturally curved in on itself", naturally self-absorbed. But grace changes that fundamentally so that people are no longer 'self...ish', but 'self...less' ...the heart is turned outward toward God and people. That's what happened in Jerusalem in Acts 2.

It's what happened later, 20 years later, in Macedonia. Paul described how out of "their deep poverty", (vs2), they gave to help others—to help those saints in Jerusalem who had fallen on hard times.

Famine in Judea had impoverished them. The Macedonians helped, but they not only gave...they gave gladly. Paul recounts that in verse 4, how they, 'begged him to

allow them to participate in this relief effort.' They gave voluntarily, joyfully, and abundantly, "beyond their ability", he said. (vs3). Their giving was unusual...their selflessness was not. I say that because grace changes people so that they put God first, and the things of God first, and the people of God first.

Now, that doesn't mean that self-interest is dead in the life of the believer; it's not. We're being sanctified; we are not perfect—and we will not be perfect this side of the grave. And so, sometimes that self-interest surfaces in the heart of the Christian—as it did in Corinth where their hearts were showing signs of 'curving in'.

A year before they had been eager, they had gotten involved with Paul's project of mercy. They had put money aside and they were preparing a large gift to be taken to the apostles in Jerusalem. —But something happened.

Paul doesn't really say what it was. It may have been the influence of these false teachers that Paul will deal with later. They'd come in and they'd had an open hand and said, (I suspect), 'You know, you need to take care of us. We are ministering and we're to be taken care of!' Whatever it was, their enthusiasm, (that of the Corinthians), had dwindled and they were 'lacking' in their effort to help the needy.

Paul has been addressing that here in chapter 8. It is a delicate subject, this subject of giving, it is for us here, we don't speak on this alot, but it was a delicate subject for the Apostle Paul as well. So, he wasn't heavy-handed; he didn't enforce his will by invoking apostolic authority. He could have done that; he could have said, 'Now listen! As an apostle I require this of you, you began it...you must complete it!'

But he doesn't do that. Instead, he used encouragement and examples. The Macedonians were one, but the greatest of all examples is the one that he gives in verse 9, when he referred to Christ and what He had done; "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." That's the grace of God, and he reminds them of that. So now, in light of that, he tells the Corinthians, "I give *my* opinion in this matter..." (vs10a).

Now in verse 8, he said, "I am not speaking *this* as a command...". And now, he says, "I give my opinion." (vs10). He didn't mean that, 'he was uncertain about what he was about to say', that, there's any uncertainty about his instruction. He knew *exactly* what they should do...but he didn't want to 'command' them to do it; he did not want to command them to give this gift.

The Macedonians, "*gave* of their own accord", (vs3b), freely, *willingly*. The Lord Jesus came into this world *willingly*. He sacrificed Himself voluntarily out of love...not out of compulsion, not because He had to. He *desired* to do that, to save His people. And that's the way giving is to happen; it can't be forced. In Romans chapter 13, verse 10, Paul wrote that, "...love is the fulfillment of *the* law." That is 'the main spring'—that is the *impetus* of the Christian life and Christian action; 'Love moves us...correctly'.

And that's what he wanted to see *active* in Corinth as it had been a year earlier. He said, "...this is to your advantage...", (not only to do this), "...but also to desire *to do it*." (vs10b). Giving, being generous people, is always 'to our advantage'. (vs10a). It's always, 'for our good to do good'; it promotes our own moral and spiritual growth. By acting in obedience to what we know to be true we develop spiritually. By acting as Christ acted, making sacrifices, we become more and more like Christ.

They had started to do that. They had started well...but like we so often do, they failed to follow through with their commitment. They had put, 'their hand to the plow' eagerly, joyfully—but then at some point they'd looked back...they were hesitating. So Paul told them, in effect, 'Keep the promise that they had made by completing the work that they had begun a year earlier.' That's what he says in verse 11; "But now finish doing it also, so that just as *there was* the readiness to desire it, so *there may* also *be* the completion of it by your ability." In other words, 'They were to follow through on what they had begun and fulfill the promise that they had made, the commitment they had made.'

But Paul didn't want the collection to be an oppressive burden on them, so he gives the Corinthians some principles of giving in these verses. He wrote in verse 11 that

he wanted them to complete their giving, "by their ability", (vs11b), or, 'according to their ability'. That's the standard that he set for the Macedonians; he said in verse 3 that they gave "according to their ability". He then added that they went, "beyond their ability." (ibid.)

But that's not 'the standard' for Christian giving. That was a mark of unusual grace that he witnessed among the Macedonians, and Paul wasn't suggesting that the Corinthians follow the Macedonians in that example. We are to give 'according to our ability', whatever that may be. He explains that in verse 12: Giving is to be proportional, "according to what *a person* has...", and that is to be voluntary, willing giving. —And really, that is what is most important...giving is to be done *willingly*. It is not the amount given that is important, but the spirit, or the disposition, in which the person gives that is of great importance. Verse 12; "For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what *a person* has, not according to what a person does not have.

The "readiness", the *willing disposition* is what must be present in the giver. So again, Paul couldn't command that. He could only hope to instill a readiness in them through the examples that he gave...like that of Christ. There's no value for the giver in a gift that's given reluctantly. It must be given joyfully. We're to give like the widow in Mark 12 gave, who gave her two copper coins—it was all that she had, but she gave willingly, gladly. It wasn't to impress anyone that was there. No one saw it in all of the temple; if they saw anyone, it was the rich people giving these large amounts. The only One that saw what she did was the Lord Himself, and it pleased the Lord. It pleases God when we give with that attitude—a *desire* to give, a *gladness* in giving.

So, the value of her gift was calculated not by the size of it, but by her heart—by the *readiness* of her giving, the willingness to give and the amount that she gave was given in proportion to what she had...which wasn't much. God knows what we have and God sees our heart. A small gift from one person may show a much greater willingness to give than a large gift from another person.

'Willing giving' and 'proportional giving' are the standards here. So if a person has little, a lot is not expected. No one is expected to give according to what he does not

have. Paul says, 'And if he has nothing, then he's not expected to give anything.' (12b). Those poor saints in Jerusalem weren't expected to give in their present condition...they couldn't; they had nothing. But even in that condition, if the heart is right, if the willingness to give or, "the *readiness*" is present, that counts with God and that is acceptable.

Dr. Johnson put the principle like this, "For the wealthy, the willing," (that is the willingness to give), "is measured by the deed." (It's measured by the gift given.) "For the poor the *willingness* is accepted for the deed, that is in place of the deed." So, 'If you have something you should give proportionally to that. If you have nothing but you *desire* to give, God counts that as the gift.' It shows the importance He places upon our hearts, our thoughts, our motivation. It's great; it's a gift to Him when it's a motivation out of love.

Giving should be joyful, not burdensome. And Paul wanted to assure the Corinthians that he didn't want the relief for the saints in Jerusalem to be a hardship for them in Corinth. He explains that in verse 13; "For *this* is not for the ease of others *and* for your affliction, but by way of equality—" Meaning, 'so that the poor will be equally supplied with the necessities of life.' Or to put it another way, 'Equally free from want', that's the purpose of this. What Paul was doing was reassuring the Corinthians that the wealthy were not being called to impoverish themselves in order to enrich the poor. That would solve no problem. That would just shift the burden from Jerusalem to Corinth.

The whole project was for the purpose of lifting people out of their poverty and need, 'Putting them on their feet', so to speak. It is a Christian duty to help those in need. Again, that is part of being 'a new creature in Christ.' A child of God will want to help those in need...help all people in need for that matter. It's not that we can do that, but that should be our desire.

But that has special application to those who are brethren...that is, to those who are believers, to the people of God. The church is to have priority in these matters.



And that is the explicit instruction of the Apostle Paul. In Galatians chapter 6, verse 10, he says, "...let us do good to all people...", (we ought to be known as generous and kind people to everyone) "...and especially..." he says, "...to those who are the household of faith."

That is our first concern, our brothers and sisters—not to give permanent welfare but to help get them out of their difficulties until they can manage for themselves—help get them to where they can provide for themselves...and then help others. In fact, that's exactly what Paul counsels in Ephesians chapter 4, verse 28, where he's telling the Ephesians, 'Stop stealing.' That's basically what he's saying to people in the church; 'If you're stealing, stop it; and what you need to be doing is working with your hands and gaining self-sufficiency in that way.' But then he makes the point, 'So that you can contribute to others in need.' So, it's very important that the believer be a working individual who is making money, and saving money in order to use it to help others. That's what Paul is saying here. That's what he told the Ephesians to do.

And that's the encouragement that Paul gives here in verse 14, where he indicates that someday the roles may be reversed and those in Jerusalem may give help to those in Corinth; "...at the present time", he says, 'the Corinthians abundance was to be supplying the need of the Jerusalem Christians.' But he then explains that the reason for that was, "...so that their abundance also may become a *supply* for your need, that there may be equality..." (14b). In God's providence and by His grace, the Corinthians were at that time enjoying prosperity and the Judean saints were not.

That could change, and when it did, the Corinthians would need the help of others. Specifically, the Judean Christians would need to come to the aid of the Corinthians—and that's as it should be. People who receive help should be ready to return help when they have that opportunity and they have the means to do it.

But how could the Corinthians, (or anyone for that matter), expect help from others when they themselves were unwilling to help those in need when they had the means to do it? It's only reasonable to help others—but more than that, 'It is the

Christian thing to do.' It is God's way; it always has been. His desire is that His people be equally free from want.

And Paul makes that point. He illustrates that from the Law in verse 15 by quoting Exodus chapter 16, verse 18, and how the people gathered manna. "...as it is written, 'He who *gathered* much did not have too much, and he who *gathered* little had no lack.' " (vs15).

Exodus 16 is the story of how God provided for His people in the wilderness. He brought them out into the desert, out of slavery, 'in the iron furnace' as it is called, into the Sinai Desert—from out of slavery, into a place where there was no food, no water. And so, having brought them there, He provided for them, provided everything they needed.

He provided water, miraculously. He provided food, miraculously. Every morning the people would get up and they would find this, "fine flake-like thing, fine as frost" all over the ground. (Exo 16:14). When they first saw it, they said, "*manho*". which is translated, "What is this?" And so, they called it *manna*. And every day, every morning, everyone would have enough. Everyone would go out and gather it up, and some would gather more than others.

Young people would go out and gather. They had the energy that the older people didn't, and they would gather up more, say than the older people did who weren't as strong as the younger ones...but then, when they all gathered what they could, they put it together and it was equally measured out so that everyone got, "an omer of manna a day". (ibid.) Each family had enough so that no one was lacking. All were provided for...there was equality.

Here's the point: God doesn't want any of His people starving; and He provides for them. He provided for them miraculously in that way. He provides for them really just as miraculously today, but He does so through His people. And Paul said that, "This is to your advantage" to provide.

When people hoard their riches, it is to their disadvantage, just as it was with the *manna*. If you remember the story, they first gathered it, and then some gathered a lot and began to hoard it, and they discovered the next morning that it was all rancid. You couldn't do that; you had to live day by day according to the LORD's provision...there could be no hoarding. And so too with riches, they can go 'bad'; they can corrupt the person who holds them too tightly.

Some weeks back, (I'm going to illustrate that point), we studied chapter 3, verse 18, which says, 'That as we look upon Christ, as we think on Him, we are transformed from glory to glory.' What we worship leaves its mark on us. And as we see Christ in the Scriptures, as we reflect deeply on Him, we're changed...we are! It may be incrementally, but we're changed, and we're transformed gradually into His likeness. Whatever we reflect upon, whatever we worship, affects us—it transforms us negatively or positively.

I referred in that lesson to a story by the American writer of the early 18th century, Nathaniel Hawthorne. *The Great Stone Face* is the story that he told. It's not a true story, (but his story), about a mountain overlooking a village that the face of the mountain had the impression of a man's face. And there was a legend in that village that a man would come to that town, that village, whose face resembled the face on the mountain...and he would bless the village. The protagonist of the story is a boy who was fascinated with that face in the mountain, and he would look at it every day, and day after day he'd reflect on it and he'd wonder if the stranger had come that would have 'The Great Stone Face' and it would be a blessing to the town.

In the story, many people came, (and I didn't cover this in that earlier illustration), but many people came and many of them showed some promise. One was a young merchant. He was very successful; 'everything he touched turned to gold' and he amassed a great fortune. But it became clear that his interest was not in the benefit, or the blessing, of the village. He had set his heart on gold. He built a large house, rode in a nice carriage, and hoarded his money. Eventually he grew old, and his 'god', (gold),

forsook him. He lost his fortune, lost his house—and in the end, he is described as, 'a small man', 'a hard man', 'whose skin was yellow like the gold that he worshiped'.

It's not a true story. It's a story, like a parable, with a moral. And the moral of the story is: 'The things we set our heart on will affect us. They will transform us into what we worship, either good or bad.'

John Wesley said, "When I have money, I get rid of it quickly, lest it find its way into my heart." There's some wisdom in that. It's not wrong to have money; it's not wrong to be rich; God blesses people in that way. Hard work, industry, wisdom, frugality; these are virtues that oftentimes result in wealth—and wealth provides self-sufficiency. Self-sufficiency is not self-indulgence. Self-sufficiency means you don't depend on others. In fact, you have what Paul counseled those Ephesians in Ephesians 4, (verse 28), 'substance, surplus, to bless others with.'

So, it's a blessing to be wealthy. It's a blessing to live in a nice home with fine things. That's not wrong, and this passage is not advocating an 'equality' that makes riches unlawful.

When it becomes a sin is when those who are prosperous withhold the help that they can give with the riches that God has given them, and instead they use it for their own pleasure. That is when, 'the manna goes foul', when riches corrupt the soul.

Everything we have is a gift of God. Everything. In 1 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 7, Paul indicated that with the rhetorical question, "What do you have that you have not received?" The Corinthians were boasting about themselves—and who they were, and what they had...and he's saying, "What do you have that you haven't received?"

It's a rhetorical question; and the answer to that is, 'Nothing!' There isn't a thing I have that God hasn't given to me. So, since God has given to us, (and lavishly given to us), who are we to withhold on the things that have been given to us when there's a need that others have?

Our possessions are a divine trust. Now they're ours...if we've earned them, they're ours. We've earned them by God's goodness and grace; and so, we're to use them properly and wisely. But that is how we're to respond: To use what we have to His glory and for the benefit of His people, in proportion to what we have. And I would add this, (and I think it's important to add this), 'How that is done, how the believer dispenses with his or her gifts or possessions, is between the individual and the LORD. It's a personal matter. The Holy Spirit will give a person such direction, and that's between them and the LORD, not us.

Giving should be in proportion to one's possessions, and it should be done willingly, voluntarily. It is "the readiness", (*vs11*), to give that is essential; the disposition, the willingness that is important.

But it's God's will that we care for one another. All through the Old Testament, God lays great stress on being merciful and being helpful to the weak, to the poor, to the needy. Moses continually instructs Israel to take care of 'the alien, the orphan, and the widow', and it seemed to be a formula for those who are in need, in desperate need. In Deuteronomy chapter 15, verse 7, he told them, "If there is a poor man with you...you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand to him." They were to, 'give generously to him', (and he repeats this).

When their slaves, which were more like indentured servants who signed up for slavery for like, seven years, (and this is in our own history; we have that), when they were set free they were to take care of them. Not send them out empty handed, but send them out with much provision...be generous to them. He told them in Deuteronomy 15:15, "You shall remember that you were slaves in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you." John Newton, famous for his great hymn, *Amazing Grace*, had that written over his mantle. [He had, as you know, been a slave trader, and in fact, at one point was even reduced to becoming a slave himself in Africa before God saved him.] He knew grace. He remembered daily, what God had saved him from, a corrupt life and a desperate situation.

Again, that is what the LORD instructed Israel to do—to, 'Remember their origin'. That is important for all of us to do. That is a command we find throughout the Old and the New Testament: "Remember!"

We do that in the hour that follows this, 'remembering the Lord.' We're instructed to do that, and it's vitally important that we do that. It's essential to living well, to being a giving and kind people. That's the attitude of a changed heart, (for naturally our hearts are 'curved in on themselves').

Generosity is the disposition of a child of God, of a new creature in Christ. But very often that attitude, that spirit must be stirred up...and we do that by, 'remembering what Christ did for us', remembering that we were slaves in Egypt—that is, that we were slaves in this world, this fallen world.

We are slaves to our passions. We were dead in sin. That is when Christ saved us and delivered us from Satan's domain—and God transferred us from that domain of darkness into the kingdom of light, the kingdom of his Son.

Remember that. Remember that, "...though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich." (vs9). We need to remember that because when we do, (and it really sinks in), we cannot close our hand to those in need. God didn't close His hand to us.

Now let me say this by way of encouragement. Let me boast a bit about Believers Chapel: I've been here a long time and I've been an elder for quite a long time; this is not a large church, but this is a generous church—blessed with people who give consistently. I'm not preaching this sermon because I see a need that needs to be corrected. I'm preaching it because this happens to be where we are in 2 Corinthians, and it's not the subject that I really want to preach on, to be honest—but it's one that, 'There it is, and we have to consider it.'

But the people here have been consistent in their giving for as long as I can remember. And the elders often marvel at the abundance with which God has blessed this assembly. And the blessing comes from you, from your open hands. That's an

encouragement. As a result, we're able to do much in the Lord's service; providing for the needs of people and providing ministry for people in a variety of ways. And that's as it should be. We should be a giving people. We don't ask for funds—we never have. We never will...well, I say I hope we never will because if we do that, we'll mark the decline, I think.

Paul says, it's "to your advantage", (vs10), but it's only 'to your advantage' as you give willingly, gladly...to give properly in a way that pleases the Lord. And we can only do that, and we will only do that, as we *remember* Him and think about what He's done for us—that 'He became poor, He who was rich...' (and we can't even fathom the riches that He left to come here), '...to have nothing so that He could sacrifice Himself for us so that we would be rich.'

Well, let me close with a story Dr. Johnson told about General Charles Gordon, a hero of Victorian England, 19th century England, and a Christian who became known as 'Chinese Gordon' for his military exploits there. When he returned home, he returned home a hero, and the British government wanted to honor him for his great service. He refused all money; he refused all titles.

He finally agreed to accept a gold medal commemorating his 33 engagements in China. It was his most prized possession. He didn't have much, but that was his prized possession. After his death, his family couldn't find the medal. Later it was learned that he sent it to the city of Manchester during a severe drought and instructed them to melt it down and with the funds buy bread for the poor.

When they read his personal journal from that day, the day that he sent it in, they read these words, "The last earthly thing I had in this world that I valued I have given to the Lord Jesus Christ." That's a testimony. That is 'willing giving'. It was given out of love for the Lord and love for the poor—and I'm sure the gift of that gold medal was traded for many crowns in heaven. That was the spirit in the early church in Acts 2, (verse 45), when everyone gave, "as anyone might have need."

And may God continue to produce that spirit in us. May we continue to be givers out of gratitude for all that He's done.

And if you have not believed in Jesus Christ, our prayer for you is that God will make you to know your need of Him. You may be rich, and you may be dependent upon all of that and think, 'I have no need.'—But, really, you're poor.

You're a sinner, and you're under the wrath of God. **But Christ** died for sinners to remove us from that wrath. And all who realize their lost condition and trust in Him are forgiven, and they're made rich with the greatest of riches—*righteousness* and *eternal life*.

Don't let the glory of the world and the love of riches deceive you. It is all passing away and it will all forsake you in the time of great need. Believe in Christ, come to Him, trust in Him, and be saved.

*(Closing prayer)* Father, the Savior's love for us, the love of the Triune God for us is marvelous and wonderful. We give You praise and thanks for it. All that we are and have is traced to that infinite, eternal love. May You cultivate that love within our hearts for one another and most importantly for You.

And may we be men and women who are the kind of people that saints ought to be, giving and loving people. We thank You for Your love for us and all that we have as a result of it—which is *life everlasting*.

Now,

The LORD bless you and keep you;

The LORD make His face shine on you,

And be gracious to you;

The LORD lift up His countenance on you,

And give you peace.

In Christ's name. Amen.

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