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## “THE JOY OF GENEROSITY”

St. Matthew Episcopal Church, Browns Point, WA – Sunday, February 26, 2017  
Marc Rieke, Guest Presenter



### II Corinthians 8 & 9

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In II Corinthians 8 & 9, the apostle Paul is speaking to the church at Corinth. He urges the Christians there to complete a task they had begun earlier, the gathering of funds to save the church in Jerusalem that had fallen on hard times.

In Chapters 8 and 9, Paul makes it clear that the Corinthians' participation in the collection is as important to their spiritual welfare as it is for the physical welfare of the Christians in Jerusalem. This is a short course on the causes and the consequences of giving. The questions are: Why give and what happens when we give?

**In the second letter to the Corinthians, we learn about the apostle Paul's lessons on giving. He uses several examples of generous giving and addresses those who have not yet discovered the joy of generosity.**

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PLEASE READ: **II CORINTHIANS 8:1–7**

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Are the Macedonian Christians rich? How would you characterize their giving?
2. What three things did the Macedonian Christians do that so impressed Paul? (8:3–5) What did they do first? (8:5)

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PLEASE READ: **II CORINTHIANS 8:8-24**

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Paul does not “command” the Corinthians to participate in this collection, but to test the genuineness of their love. (8:8) How does giving test the genuineness of our love?
2. What does Paul mean when he says that though Jesus was rich, for our sakes he became poor so that through his poverty we might become rich? Does this refer to material wealth or something much more significant? Discuss the ways in which Christ enriches your life.

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PLEASE READ: **II CORINTHIANS 9:6–15**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what sense does the one who “sows” (gives) sparingly reap sparingly? (9:6)
2. What examples of the blessings that come from generous giving can you find in this text?
3. What benefits do you feel Paul is suggesting in 9:11-12? Who is enriched and in what ways? How does what we give to build up the church overflow in “thanksgiving to God?” How do we supply the needs of God’s people when we give to build up the church?

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## FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

Do any of the scripture verses indicate that everyone should give the same amount? How can a person decide what is right for them to give?

In what ways have you been blessed when you have given to build up the church? Would you be willing to share your stewardship experience with others (family, fellow members of your church)?

Have you ever given sacrificially? What would sacrificial giving look like in your life?

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## FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

***DID YOU KNOW:*** Of Jesus’ parables, nearly one-third were about money, possessions, and riches.

1. Why does Jesus spend so much time speaking about money?
2. What are some of our fears in talking about giving?
3. Why is it important for us to have priorities in our lives?
4. How do people set spending priorities?
5. What are the priorities in your family? Essentials (e.g., food and housing), time together, church, education, clothing, cars, etc.