

HIGHLANDS CHURCH

Joyful Generosity

Full Transcript

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Setting the Context: 2 Corinthians and Personal Stewardship

- 0:31 We are in our study in 2 Corinthians, if you've been around for the last couple of weeks, you know we are kind of taking the big, major topics of 2 Corinthians and breaking them down. So much of the book of 2 Corinthians is kind of Paul's personal journal to the church, defending his apostleship. And as we've acknowledged a couple times, we have stacked hands and said, yes, we agree that Paul was an apostle, so we don't need to go through his argument to the Corinthian church. We're going to pull out the pieces that are a little more applicable to where we're at today. And so today we're going to spend the bulk of our time in 2 Corinthians chapter 9.
- 1:03 And so if you want, you can flip open there if you would. I'm going to set it up for you this way. Many, many years ago, Brooke and I had just gotten married. We were 20 years old. We had just welcomed our first daughter into the world. And we had about 18 cents to our name. And we were told before we even got married, hey, you guys are too young. You should wait. And so there was this incredible pressure, at least on me. That I felt like, man, I've got to provide for my family. I cannot fail providing for my family. And so I was working here as an intern. I was working at Orange Tree Golf Resort on 56th Street and Shea, doing everything I could as a bellman to make enough money to pay the bills.

A Story of Sacrificial Giving: Learning to Trust

- 1:44 And it was all tip related. And it would come down to that last shift of the month. And it was like, God, I need \$47 today. Otherwise, we're getting evicted. And we'd just grind praying that God would provide. At that same time, there was a small. Group of people gathering together called Highlands Church, maybe 300 or so folks in a warehouse just down the way. And it was during this season that they began to do what they would call a building campaign to help build all of this right here. And I've got a picture of the elders sitting up there long ago, long before many of you were even here. We met in this little tiny room and a group of men would get up and say, man, we are asking God.
- 2:25 We believe God is doing something great with this church. What would it look like for you? What would it look like for you What would it look like for you to begin to pray and think about giving towards the future of Highlands Church?
- 2:34 So Brooke and I sat there and we wrestled with this, realizing that we had nothing. I mean, we had nothing. But I felt this overwhelming sense of the Holy Spirit just convicting my heart, saying, Kevin, you've got to figure out if you believe in this church and you believe in what God has called you to do and you believe in the promises of the Lord. You need to do something.
- 2:54 So after wrestling with the Lord quite a bit, we had decided here's what we're going to do. First Friday of every month at Orange Tree, whatever comes in, I'm going to put into an envelope and we're going to give it to the Lord at the end of this year -long campaign. Which for you might be like, really, one shift? It was huge for us. We could barely make ends meet. And Friday night was one of the most profitable shifts we had at Orange Tree. And so that was our commitment. We made the vow. First shift every

month, whatever comes in, goes to the Lord. Well, guys, that first shift, Friday night, comes around. I roll in going, all right, guys.

The Year of Provision: God's Faithfulness Demonstrated

- 3:29 Today is all about you. Sure enough, I hit a personal record for the most money that ever came in on a Friday night. And I remember driving home, 56th and Shea, driving to my apartment thinking, God, maybe we'll give you first Saturdays.
- 3:49 And somewhere between 56th Street and Shea and 40th Street and Cactus, God just put this heavy conviction on my heart and said, no, Kevin, trust me. And so there it went. I took this wad of cash. I put it in that envelope. And month after month, just continued to put it in there and put it in there. And every Friday shift would come around. And there were some Fridays where, man, it was like such a joy. God, today is all about you. I can't wait. And it was just so life -giving.
- 4:16 Well, lo and behold, a year goes by, and we got our little stack full of cash. And it comes time to present it to the church. And so somewhere, some accountant somewhere around here got a big wad full of \$1 bills and a bunch of fives. And guys, I'll be honest with you. I don't think the amount that we were able to contribute would even buy the amount of seats that my family sits in in this room.

Joy and Freedom in Returning What God Gave

- 4:36 But it's not about the amount. It's about what we learned in that season. And here's a couple of things that I learned in that season. One, money had an incredible hold on me. Man, I worried about it. I stressed about it. There were months where we did not have enough. And it was coming into those last couple of shifts. And I was terrified. And I remember thinking in my head, well, if we don't get there, I can just take it out of what we promised to give God.
- 4:59 I remember thinking, no, no, no, wait. You made a vow to the Lord. You can't have that attitude. And yet, man, I was so controlled. I also learned in that season that my faith would grow more immensely than maybe any other time because I would watch God show up over and over and over again and provide. And God did not provide with incredible amounts of money. You know what God did? Same thing he did for his people in Israel. Remember the promise to the people of Israel? You will wander these deserts, but the soles of your sandals will not wear out. The straps of your sandals will not break. God didn't give us a ton of money because we were honoring the Lord.
- 5:38 But you know all the dumb stuff that comes up in life? The root canals, the flat tires, the new car battery, the random bill from some company you didn't even know existed. God just took care of it. We didn't have any of that for that entire year. It's like God just said, hey, you're giving to me. I'm going to take care of all the rest of this stuff. And the time came and we got to walk up there. And I put my little wad full of, I mean, it looked like a drug deal, but there it is.

The Question of the Heart: Is There Joy in Giving?

6:07 Here you go, Lord. Such joy, such freedom in the midst of that. And yet, man, I learned so many incredible things. We're going to lean into a passage today where Paul's going to begin to talk to us about stewarding what God has entrusted to us. And stewarding it in such a way that it is actually a joy to give back to the Lord what he has entrusted to us. And so that's the question. Before we even dive into our. Time in the word before we even begin to pray about where we're going to go is to wrestle with that in your own soul, in your own heart.

6:39 When it comes to this stuff, God's entrusted to you to steward. It's all his and he's given it to you. When it comes to returning it back to him. Is there a joy in our heart? Paul's going to use the word cheerful. Is there a joy? Is there a genuine sense of like, man, I love getting to be a part of this? Or is there any part of us where it's become this this duty? This obligation? This again, I maybe not 10, but whatever the percentages you've come up with, like this tax, you've got to pay the Lord in order for things to be okay. All right, God, here's your cut.

Understanding the Context: Jerusalem and Reverse Missions

7:16 I'm going to reference it later, but there's a song, Psalm 50, where God's calling out the nation of Israel who have wandered from the Lord. Their hearts are not right. Their hearts are not good, and he's going to begin to chastise them for doing all the right things, but their heart isn't right. And their sacrifice and they're doing all the sacrifices and God's essentially going to say, do I? Do I Do I have any need for your sacrifices? I don't require any more bulls or rams. I own a cattle on a thousand hills. Everything on earth is mine. You're not giving it to me because I need it. You're giving it to me because on some level, it's a joy to return what the Lord's entrusted to us.

7:59 That's what I learned all those years ago. It's what I continue to learn today is God continues to refine me in all of this. And it's exactly. What Paul's going to speak of as he speaks to this church in Corinth. So let me pray for us, and then we'll dive into our time in the word. God, I thank you, well, God, for your incredible provision and blessing, but God more for your incredible patience with me in my own life, God, I would love to say that this is a lesson that I learned all those years ago and the box has been checked and we have moved on. But God, this is something you continue to refine in me season after season after season.

The Corinthian Pledge: Willingness, Not Compulsion

8:35 And yet, God, I thank you that you are our good father. Every promise you have made has come true, and every promise you've made for the future will come true as well. And so, God, I would ask now in this place that your Holy Spirit would move in the hearts of your sons and your daughters, your kids.

8:53 Got whatever you need to stir up in us that you would have your work in our hearts and our souls. And God, I pray against any attack of the enemy. God, if there is any. Uh, I don't know. God. Any box checking, any duty, any, as Paul is going to say, obligation or, I don't know, felt requirement, God, that you would rid this place of that. But God, we would genuinely open ourselves up to you and that we would seek a heart that would be aligned with yours and that you would do what you do. And so, God, we ask you to be at work. I pray that you would move through your word as you have for thousands of years.

Sowing and Reaping: The Principle of Generosity

9:34 God, do it once again today. We love you. We pray all this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, you can flip, as I said, to 2 Corinthians chapter 9. Let me set it up for you a little bit this way. There's a little bit of a reverse missions campaign going on. There is a church in Jerusalem where it all got started. You had a bunch of Jews coming to know the Lord, a bunch of Gentiles coming to know the Lord. And so, all of a sudden, there's this new church in Jerusalem. Here's the problem. The main, I don't know, economic culture in Jerusalem, so much of it for so many of these people was driven through the Jewish church, through the synagogue.

10:17 Well, now, all of a sudden, you have people professing to know Jesus Christ that can no longer do business in the Jewish church. And so, all of a sudden, they are on the outside looking in, trying to figure out how we're going to provide. We've put our faith in Jesus and we lost our jobs. So, the church is struggling financially. So, the missionaries are going out. And essentially, they're going to all of these other churches in these outer regions saying, we would like to take up an offering to help support our brothers and sisters in Jerusalem. They're suffering persecution. And so, now, it's our opportunity to go do that. So, we're going to hear from a couple of churches.

10:51 You're going to hear from Corinthians, the Corinthian church, wealthy. Remember where it was situated. A lot of trade, a lot of things coming through. They were full of decadence and, I mean, they had all sorts of stuff. Plenty of money in Corinth. Then you hear of a church of Macedonia, very poor, very different, suffering incredible persecution. Didn't have a lot to offer, but they were going to give out of an abundance of what God had done for them. And they're going to give generously. And so, Paul is going to use this church in Macedonia and talk to the church in Corinth and speak to all of this. This is what he's trying to do, raise money to send back to the church in Jerusalem.

The Parable of Talents: Faithfulness and Generosity

11:30

2 Corinthians 9:1-5

Now it is superfluous for me to write to you about the ministry for the saints, for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the people of Macedonia, saying that Achaia has been ready since last year, and your zeal has stirred up most of them. But I am sending the brothers so that our boasting about you may not prove empty in this matter, so that you may be ready, as I said you would be. Otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we would be humiliated—to say nothing of you—for being so confident. So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for the gift you have promised, so that it may be ready as a willing gift, not as an exaction.

12:17 So, I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go ahead to you and to arrange in advance for the gift you have promised. So that it may be ready as a willing gift, not as an execution.

12:34 Here's what's going on. Church in Corinth has promised this pledge. We will give to the church. Paul says, great, I'm going to send some people ahead so they can get everything ready. Get it all together. They can make the collection so that when we show up, you can say, here is our gift. Here's our wad of one dollar bills that we have pledged to give. You can take it.

12:54 We don't want you to be embarrassed to show up and everyone be like, oh yeah, wait, I forgot. Yeah, we don't have anything. Sorry. Come back next month. Paul is sending these people ahead to get them ready. But look at the last few words there in the end of verse 5. It's a gift that you have promised. And that you would give this gift willingly.

The Fruit of Giving: Meeting Needs and Advancing God's Kingdom

13:16 Willingly. So, again, this comes back to Brooke and I. We sat there. Making this to us. Again, maybe to you it seems small. But to us it was an incredible sacrifice. And yet we wanted to do it willingly. I would be lying if I stood up here and said every month Fridays were the best. And it was like, this is great, Lord. There were plenty of Fridays where it was like, come on, God. We barely made it last month. And now it's the next day.

13:42 But I promised. Here you go. Shove those ones in the way. But I made a promise. Sometimes you got to stand on your promise and you got to stand on your conviction. Sometimes you're going to do it because it's an absolute joy. It doesn't change. That you made a promise. And so the goal, I think, for the Lord is that we would get our heart right and that we would always do it willingly.

14:09

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

14:27 Verse 6. The point is this. Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. And whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart. Not reluctantly or under compulsion. For God loves a cheerful giver. Now let me just quickly point out that some people have hijacked this passage and made it into an awful heresy. In no way, shape, or form is this God setting up some sort of pyramid scam where, hey, if you give \$100 to God, God's going to give you \$1 ,000 back. Hey, if you reap willingly, God's going to give you bountifully in the financial realm. That's not at all what this is speaking of.

15:18 This is an agricultural system. You guys, it's wintertime. you guys planted winter grass?? I've planted winter grass a number of times. First year, I went exactly by what it said. On the bag. Two tablespoons for 500 square feet or whatever it was. I did it. I looked at my yard like a month later and was like, what? I got five strands of grass. Nothing but a mud pit. That next year, you know what I did? I got that 50 - pound bag of grass, and I just went out there and .

15:47 I mean, I had more grass than a golf course. Sowed sparingly, reaped sparingly. Sowed bountifully, reaped bountifully. Not in financial return, but in the joy that you will experience. Why? Because God loves a cheerful giver. It's not about the amount and what you're going to get back. It's all about the joy that we get in giving to the Lord. Each one must give as he has decided. You've got to make a conscious decision. You've got to decide. God, what is it? This is the prayer. God, what is it you have entrusted to me? What is it you have entrusted to me? And now, in absolute humble submission, can you say it? Can you sit it?

16:26 Can you sit there before the Lord and just for a second pause and go, okay, God, so you've entrusted this to me. What is it you would require of me to give back to you? Not because I have to, but because it is a joy to give back to you. And see what the Holy Spirit stirs in your soul. See what he stirs up. There might be a season where it's sacrificial. There might be a season where it's just out of the abundance of what he's given you. But if you're not doing it from a place of joy, I think we're missing it. I keep in my head. I'm thinking of it. Can you guys flip?

16:57

Psalms 50:7-15

"Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, I will testify against you. I am God, your God. Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you; your burnt offerings are continually before me. I will not accept a bull from your house or goats from your folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine. Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High, and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me."

Three Practical Calls to Action

17:16 Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you. Your burnt offerings are continually before me. You're doing the right thing. I will not accept a bull from your house. Or a goat from your fold. For every beast of the forest is mine. The cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the hills. And all that moves in the

field is mine. If I were hungry, God's speaking to them. If I were hungry, I would not tell you. For the world and its fullness are mine. Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving. And perform your vows to the Most High. And call upon him in the day of trouble.

17:56 I will deliver you. You shall glorify me. What is the charge here? God's looking at this people of Israel going, look, I'm not asking you to sacrifice bulls because I'm hungry and I need your food. Everything I have is mine. Everything on this planet is mine. I'm asking you to sacrifice as a sign of a contrite heart. And understanding that, God, this is a sacrifice to you because I trust you. And I'm giving to you. Same thing when it comes to our finances today. Somebody asked earlier, man, is this going to be a hard passage for you to do? It's always hard.

18:36 But you know what I'm not concerned about? Convincing you to give money to the church. This is God's church. God owns everything. God is always going to take care of his church. It's the promise that he made. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it. God doesn't need your stuff. He doesn't need your money. He owns everything. God is after your heart. Which is why, again, it's not about what you give. It's all about why you give. Can you give from a place of just saying God is such a joy to give to you because I see what you're doing. I see how the kingdom is being advanced. I hear of kids playing games at a church in Gila Bend, a place that we stop for gas and keep right on going.

19:19 And yet here are these kids. They're laughing. They're having fun with a bunch of people. They've never met. And now they're connected to a church where maybe they'll have a chance to hear the gospel. And one day we will sit side by side with some young man or young woman that found Jesus as a result of what God did a couple of weeks ago in Gila Bend for eternity. Because that's how it works. You sow sparingly. Hold on to everything you've got. Spend it on yourself. You will reap sparingly.

The Inexpressible Gift: Jesus Christ as the Foundation

19:46 But when we sow the kingdom of God in abundance and we just go, God, I don't know what you're up to, but here you go. Whoosh. God does incredible things. God's kingdom is advanced. It's what he's asking of this church here.

20:00 Give as you have decided. But you dare not give reluctantly or under compulsion because here's my fear. There might be some that are giving and giving and giving and giving. And God's going, I don't care. I don't need your bowls. I don't need your sacrifices. I've got enough. I'm after your heart.

20:17 So now the deep breath. Take a look back. Ask God to search you. God, search me and know me. Is there anything in me that's doing things out of compulsion, not willingly, as an execution, a tax? Or God, have I decided to give to you because it's what you've stirred in my heart to do? That's what God's after. Keep going. Verse 8. God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good thing. He has given everything to the poor and has done good work. As it is written, he is distributed freely, he has given to the poor, his righteousness endures forever.

20:59

2 Corinthians 9:8-11

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. As it is written, "He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.

21:42 And what does verse 11 say? You will be enriched in every way. Why? To be generous in every way. Be generous in every way. You know the parable. Jesus tells the parable he entrusts a bunch of guys with some money. The parable goes like this. This hard driving business guy. I'm going out of town. Taking a vacation. Brings in his top guys and goes, I'm going to entrust a little bit of the business with each of you. Gives them a little bit of the business. Takes off. Comes back. Sits down with guy one. Hey, what'd you do with the business I gave you? Doubled it. Well done, good and faithful servant. Next guy. What'd you do?

22:24 Doubled it. Well done, good and faithful servant. Gets down to the last guy. What'd you do with the business I entrusted to you? Well, you know, I knew you were a hard man and I didn't want to lose what you gave me. So I buried it in the ground.

22:38 What? How dare you? Take what I gave to him and give it to the guy that doubled it. Depart from me. I never knew you. Cast him out.

22:49

2 Corinthians 9:12-13

For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others,

23:10 Verse 12. For the ministry of this service is not only supplying for the needs of the saints, for those back in Jerusalem, but it is also overflowing with many thanksgiving to God. By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ and the generosity of your contribution for them and all others.

23:38 What's the promise here? Look, when we give faithfully, joyfully, God, you've given it to me. I'm giving it right back. What's the promise? We'll meet the needs. We'll meet some needs of some other folks. People's needs will be met. But then in turn, it says they will glorify God. They will give thanks to the Lord. They will praise God for what God's doing.

24:02 They're not going to come back. None of those elders you saw on that screen came up afterwards and went, hey, Kevin, thanks for buying those two chairs and that giant wad of cash. Well done. They didn't even know. It was between me and the Lord, and yet God was doing an incredible thing in my soul and my spirit so that I could give. And man, I have no idea. Again, you want to get romantic? I'm a romantic.

- 24:30 But maybe someday when I'm sitting up there in heaven, 20,000 years into my eternity, God's going to come alongside, put his arm around me and go, hey, you remember that big wad of cash you gave to that church long ago? Can I introduce you to some people that are here as a result of that faithfulness?
- 24:51 Seriously? Yeah. Because that's what God does. And you know what? If I don't do in that moment, nor will I do it now, you're welcome, God. Fall on my face and just go, God, you are so good. Why would you let me be a part? Why do I get to be a part of this?
- 25:12 God, what a joy it is to advance your kingdom, to do the things you've called us to do, to see people's eternities change. God, you are incredible. You are at work.
- 25:21 He's been doing it for thousands of years. Same thing that's promised here. Look, when you give to this Corinthian church, guys, when you give, you're meeting the needs of those in Jerusalem. But you're also helping advance the kingdom. You know the beautiful byproduct, back to the context of what's going on here?
- 25:43 If you've read through much of the New Testament, you know there was this huge schism. You had these Jews or converted Jews that came to know the Lord. And then you had these Gentiles, these non-religious folks that came to know the Lord. And there was this huge argument over whether the Gentiles were going to be the ones that were going to be the Gentiles could be accepted into God's church because they hadn't performed all the duties of the Jews. And so Paul gets into this whole argument. It's what Galatians is all about. You guys are fighting over the wrong thing. It's all about Jesus.
- 26:16 And so here you have this group of Jewish Christians in Jerusalem that are in great need. And who's going to supply their need?
- 26:25 Gentiles. The Gentile churches. Those on the far outskirts. Those that they would look at for a season and go, ah, we don't know if we can trust these guys. We don't know if we can trust these guys. We don't know if God's affirmed these guys. And yet they're the ones that are going to provide the need. And you know what this does to God's church? Unifies it in a profound way. All of a sudden these Jewish Christians are going, are you kidding me?
- 26:48 Our quote unquote enemies, or at least those that we've treated as outsiders, are going to provide for our needs? Man, God is good. And all of a sudden there's this healing relationship that begins to form when needs get met. Same thing God's at work at even still today.
- 27:09 When we go out and we preach Jesus. The sake of the gospel. So what is all this to say? I'll close with this. Again, I think God's looking for your heart. He's not looking for your wallet. He's not looking for your bank account. God wants your heart. So do some business with the Lord. Ask the Lord. God, what is it you want to do? Maybe you're a broke 20-year-old kid. With a wife and a one-year-old at home. Knowing you got to make \$47 on Saturday in order to pay your rent.
- 27:43 And God's going, I'm after your heart. Kevin, I own everything. Just trust me. I've got you. God, I don't know. I'll tell you what. When I was working at my other church, I had the great joy of coming down the 51, getting off on Shea, and driving there every single week. And you know what? 14 years later, Monday through Thursday, 56th Street and Shea, I drove right past Orange Tree Golf Resort. And it was

like God just putting his hand up going, I got you. I still got you. Remember how scared? You remember how much you learned? You remember what control finances had over you all those years ago? Still got you. Everything is mine, including you.

- 28:32 I've got you. Man, there's great joy in surrendering. That over to the Lord and going, all right, God, I'm just going to be faithful and do what you've asked of me. But do it willingly. Do it willingly. Second thing that Paul speaks of here is we got to, you have to decide. You got to decide. It's got to be a willful and then it's got to be a decision because the day is going to come.
- 28:54 The day is going to come where the enemy is going to attack. And he's going to try and test you. He's going to try and get your eyes off of you. He's going to try and get your eyes off of Jesus. It's his whole goal, right? I've made this statement before. The day I put my faith in Jesus Christ, Satan lost the battle for my soul. Now his only goal is to get my eyes off of everything I have in Jesus.
- 29:19 And so you've decided willingly, God, this is what you've entrusted. This is what you've put on my heart. And so this is what I'm going to do. And I've made the decision. And the day is going to come where the enemy is going to attack and he's going to do something. And there's going to be a part, at least if you're like me, I'm not going to speak for everybody, at least for me. The day is going to come where some obscure thing is going to happen. And the first thought might be, okay, well, if I just take back what I gave to the Lord this month, that'll pay for that.
- 29:47 No, make a decision and then trust the Lord and watch God work. And then when God does work, when you go an entire year without the soles of your sandals wearing out, an entire year without a single tire going flat, an entire year without any dental work needing to be done, and you can look and you can go, God, we were able to do this because you provided.
- 30:12 And maybe someday you'll get to tell your story of what God's been doing and God's kingdom will be advanced. God's at work. God's at work in his church, not just this church, but his church. People's eternities are being altered. Give to the Lord willingly. Give to the Lord because you've decided to. And then ask after a season, just give it a month, give it two months, and then take another step back. God, has it been a joy? Has it been a genuine joy? Would I use the word cheerful to describe how I'm stewarding what you've entrusted to me?
- 30:50 Man, if it's not a joy, ask the Lord, God, what is it? What am I missing? Is it because I feel obligated to? Is it because I feel like it's a duty? Is it just another line item on my Excel spreadsheet that I've got to do? Or is it a genuine joy to say, God, you've given it. You've entrusted it. And so I just want to give back to your kingdom so that people would come to know you.
- 31:14 It's the whole point of what Paul is after. It's the whole point of what God is after. Give willingly. Give because you've decided to. And make sure that there's joy in it. You've heard stories. You're going to continue to hear stories over the many weeks and months to come. God's at work. God's at work through Highlands Church.

31:31

2 Corinthians 9:15

Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift.

31:58

2 Corinthians 9:14-15

while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

32:22 We've sung songs about it. You heard Thomas speak about it. You've heard me reference it. Can I explain to you what this inexpressible gift of Jesus Christ is for anybody in this room? Jesus Christ was the son of God. He lived a sinless life. the end of his life, found himself in a garden with a choice to make, either go die a horrific death that he didn't deserve to pay the sins of the entire world or to say enough is enough and just to go be with his father. And he prayed this prayer, God, I pray that this cup might pass from me. I don't want to do what you're asking me to do. If there's any other way, let's do that.

33:01 And yet, God, not my will, but your will be done. And then in humility and in submission to the Father, they nailed him to a cross, and he died a death that I deserved and that you deserve. Why? Because we aren't perfect. We are sinful people. I am a sinner.

33:21 We call it lots of different things. Made a mistake, said something dumb. The Bible calls it sin, and because I'm a sinner, I cannot be right with God on my own. And so the day came for me long ago that I found myself saying, God, I can't do this. And I'm going to do it. I can't do this anymore. God said, I've been waiting for you to come to that realization.

33:40 And I bowed my face to him, and I said, God, I believe your son Jesus died for me. I believe he rose from the dead. And so in this place, in this moment, I'm putting my faith and trust in him and him alone. Help me live my life for you every day moving forward. And in that moment, the Bible would speak of God adopting me into his family, ushering me into eternity with him, forgiving me of everything I've ever done and everything I will do. That is the gospel message. That is this inexpressible gift that Paul talks about. And if you have not done business with the Lord, if you haven't come to the end of yourself and acknowledged that you aren't perfect and you need Jesus, man, do that today.

34:19 I'm not telling you what to believe. I'm just telling you, at least wrestle with the question. Because 100 years from now, that's the only question that matters. What did you believe about Jesus? It is. There'll be some folks up front would love to talk. There's some people sitting right next to you. You may not even know who they are,

34:40 But it would be their great joy to be able to speak to you about Jesus Christ. They might be terrified, but the Holy Spirit is in them. And they would love to talk to you about what this means to be a believer in Jesus Christ. For the rest of us, I don't know what God's stirring in your soul or in your heart. I don't know what the Holy Spirit's asking of you.

Setting the Context: 2 Corinthians and Personal Stewardship

- 35:01 My only ask of you is that you would just take a moment and open your heart to him and ask the Holy Spirit, why? What is the Holy Spirit? is the Holy Spirit? What is the Holy Spirit? Who is the Holy Spirit to is the Holy Spirit? Who is the Holy Spirit to reveal to you? God, God, what would it look like? And what am I doing?
- 35:12 Am I doing it out of compulsion? Am I doing it because I feel like I owe you? God, is there a genuine joy in getting to be a part of what you're up to? And then ask God to do the work.
- 35:27 Let me pray for us as we close out our service. With your head bowed and your eyes closed, I'll leave you these lyrics of a song we are about to sing. You can have it all, Lord. Every part of my world. Take this life I breathe on this part that is now yours. Oh, the joy I've found surrendering my crowns at the feet of the king who surrendered everything.
- 35:58 We're gonna sing that song together. My prayer is that we would not sing a single word of that song unless that declaration is true.
- 36:09 God, you can have it all, because it's all yours. I just wanna steward it with great joy. And so, God, I pray for my brothers and sisters here. God, I don't know what you're stirring in their hearts and their souls. God, I don't know how your Holy Spirit's at work, but that's the beauty of how you move.
- 36:27 God, I pray the same prayer. Well, God, if I'm honest, that I prayed all those years ago that you would not relent from convicting my heart and the hearts of anybody here until we do what you've called us to do, God, not because we have to, but because you are a good father, and you do all of the incredible, incredible joy that will come when we walk in submission to you.
- 36:53 So, God, if there's anything we need to put to death, I pray that you would kill it in us. God, if there's anything you need to breathe life into, I pray that you would breathe life into it, that we might live in the fullness of who you've made us to be. And, God, I pray, God,
- 37:08 I pray that these words that we are about to sing might truly be a declaration of our heart. God, you can have it all, because it is all yours. We're just fortunate to get to steward it. God, thank you for what you're doing. Thank you for the incredible gift that you have been to each and every one of us in this room, for the inexpressible gift of your son, Jesus Christ. And it's in his name that we pray. Amen. Amen. Profound words to sing, to declare, God, you can have it all.
- 37:40 But you catch that last line. Take this heart and breathe on the life that is now yours. This is a daily surrender. God, I need you. Put to death what is fleshly, fleshly in me, and help me put on the newness of life. It's a daily surrender. God, do what only you could do. You want a heart that's full of joy? Man, you gotta start with that. God, breathe joy into my life. Help me see what you're up to. Help me see who I am to you. Give me eyes to see what it means to be your kid. Man, then joy comes like a wave. And we're able to see things from a whole new perspective.
- 38:15 300 people gathered in a warehouse long ago. I don't know. know. Moved by the Holy Spirit.
- 38:23 Gave an investment into the kingdom that we are all now getting a chance to experience right now in this moment. 25 years from now, what will our story be? It's gonna be incredible. Why? Because God's at work. Because we're great? No, because we have a great God. He's doing great things through his people.

We just get a chance to be a part of it. Grab onto God. Hold onto him with all you got and watch the adventure he takes you on. And do it all with a joyful heart. Man, we love you guys. I hope you have a great day. Have a great rest of your week. We'll see you all next weekend. Service isn't over till you love somebody.

38:55 So get out there and do it.