

LEARNING TO GIVE

This is short lecture with a few thoughts about sharing oneself in missionary service with unbelievers.

Let's look at 2 Corinthians 8:9, "*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.*" It's one of those verses that again show God's beauty. He that is rich becomes poor so that others through His power can become rich.

Last week I read about Hudson Taylor. Hudson Taylor was the great missionary leader to China. He said to his missionaries, "Whatever you left behind in England, your homes, your education, your relatives, your nice salary, all of that is totally meaningless to the Chinese. You think, 'Oh dear God, I sacrificed A and I sacrificed B and I sacrificed C.' But to the Chinese it is nothing because they never were in England. They think in England it is just the same as China. So if you want to be successful, you need to show more sacrifice and more poverty than what the Chinese themselves are experiencing. If two of your children die and one of the Chinese children die, **then** they see your sacrifice." This is maybe an extreme example to us, but that wasn't an extreme example to them. One missionary was reduced to utter poverty because of the Communist regime. He had to do one of the very worst things any Chinese can think of. He had to put his hand in cow dung. In order to survive he had to get coal dust and gather the fallen leaves in the autumn time and get dung. Then he had to mix that stuff with his bare hands and make a ball out of it that would burn in the place of coal. One or two balls like that would just make enough heat to make porridge for his two-year-old child. It was only the very drunk or the extremely poor people who ever had to do this. He had money in the bank, but the Communist police wouldn't give it to him. The people saw this and thought, "So poor, and a foreigner. Even a white foreigner, and he has to do that." It was probably a big encouragement to the church. The communists would not allow him to preach and they were not allowed to go to church, nor were they allowed to talk to anybody or invite anybody to their one room. They were like prisoners in their own little apartment. One bare room without curtains, without heat, without anything. For two and a half years God gave them the possibility to show only sacrifice without any preaching. Just show sacrifice.



Now let's look at 2 Corinthians 9:6, "*Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.*" I think the missionary who does church planting needs to be generous. We just read the verse about what God did for us. He left his riches and became poor to make us rich. If you want to have success in church planting you need to be with people day and night. You need to give people your time. You need to give people your home. Priscilla, my daughter, has three little children and sometimes she phones and says, "Oh, I'm so tired. People just come and go all day long and I don't have one minute for myself or for my family." Twelve o'clock at night somebody again knocks at the door and there stands a young girl that needs help, weeping.

You just need to give—give your time, give your energy and give your love. Always have something in your pocket for a child or for somebody. I heard of one missionary here in Ukraine doing a wonderful job. When he sees children, he gives them just a little candy. When he sees a grandmother in the winter and she has no shoes, he looks at her feet and estimates their size. Then he buys some cheap shoes and he just gives them to her in a real quiet personal way. Nobody thinks he is rich or that he is giving humanitarian aid. No, but people know that he cares for them and such giving is bringing fruit. He is not rejected because he is a Baptist and not an Orthodox priest. People feel that he cares for them. Whenever he sees a need he meets that need. Of course people come to his meetings! Of course his church-planting ministry is growing! They at least want to see what he does on Sunday. Who is this man really? What is his church like? And why does he do this?

If you sow generously, then you'll reap generously. That's why I think that for us men if we want to see a church of males develop, we need to work with MEN. I do not know if there is some specific male activity MEN do in the winter here outside in the snow and cold. But, if not in winter, then in the spring or summer take three or four unbelieving MEN, get them together for a Saturday, take them to the river or someplace, where they can just drink cola and play some ball. There must be something unbelieving MEN like to do to relax: play chess or whatever! Normally they get together and they drink. So, get together and drink. You don't have to drink vodka. You can drink Coca Cola.

Look at chapter 9, verse 9, "*As it is written: 'He has scattered abroad gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.'*" That's interesting, isn't it? He gives to all the poor and probably at the end he has nothing left. But **his**

righteous name endures forever. That's the kind of missionary you need to be in your village. The local people need to feel that they have never seen such a compassionate person before. Afterwards another man will come who will carry on the ministry. He is also a good person, but he is not like that first person who started the church here. That's what your reputation should be.

What did God do? God gave creation. What an infinite variety we find in creation. God gave each of us gifts. Each of us has several different gifts from God, which we can use to make the world more beautiful and better. That is the purpose of those gifts.

Remember our goal. ***God's purpose in our lives is to make other people successful.*** God has given us salvation. **God has given us resurrection.** God has given us a place in heaven. God is just giving and giving to us. He scattered His gifts freely. That is what you need to do, imitate God. I think God will bless you if you remember that, if you stay humble. Give that good reputation that you have to Jesus Christ Himself. Somebody will come to you and say, "Oh you are such a good brother." You can answer, "Thank you, but it's only because Jesus makes me like this. Two years ago I wasn't like that. It's only because of Jesus!"

So let's say, "Hallelujah to that!" Amen.

Blessings to you, our dear friends!

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