

Series: 2 Corinthians
Title: The Acceptance of Giving
Text: 2 Cor 8: 11-12
Date: October 22, 2017
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

What does God accept? That is a question that every believer is interested in. It should be a question that everyone is interested in.

Our text tells us what God accepts when it comes to giving. But the principle applies to the matter of salvation as well.

The Corinthian church had been willing a year ago to take up an offering to give to the needy saints at Jerusalem. The apostle Paul says,

2 Corinthians 8: 11: Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as *there was* a readiness to will, so *there may be* a performance also out of that which ye have. 12: For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, *and* not according to that he hath not.

Our subject: The Acceptance of Giving

Proposition: God accepts that which is willingly given according to what a man has, not according to what he does not have.

One, God only accepts that which is actually given—first to God and secondly to those in need. Two, God only accepts that which is given from a willing heart. Three, God does not expect or require us to give what we do not possess, only that which we do possess—*If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.*

PERFORMED

2 Corinthians 8: 11: Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as *there was* a readiness to will, so *there may be* a performance...

God only accepts that which is actually performed. Christ was willing from eternity to be Surety for those God chose and entrusted to him to save. Our suretyship means we agree to pay if a person cannot pay. Christ's Suretyship was agreeing to pay while already knowing his people would fall into sin and could not pay. Christ is God. God knows the end from the beginning. God knows the expected end which he has for his people. So Christ knew the end from the beginning. He knew we would not be able to pay that which we owed.

Yet, not only was Christ willing, when the predestinated hour came, Christ willing performed the doing of it.

2 Corinthians 8: 9: For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

Galatians 4: 4: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5: To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

WILLING MIND

2 Corinthians 8: 12: For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted...

Not only does God accept only the performance, God only accepts the performance from a willing mind. Did Christ perform the work of redeeming his people willingly? He said,

Psalm 40:8 I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.

John 4: 34: Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

Luke 22: 42: Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

It was by Christ's willingness that all his people are perfected forever:

Hebrews 10: 10: By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

From whom does a willing mind in a believer originate? A willing mind comes from Christ and his power.

Psalm 110: 3: Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the mornaing: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

Christ makes us willing to come to him in faith. But Christ also makes us willing to do every good work that God foreordained we shall do.

Hebrews 13:21: Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Philippians 2:13: For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

So if we have this willing mind, we thank God for giving it:

2 Corinthians 8:16: But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.

So first, God only accepts the performance and secondly God only accepts the performance from a willing mind.

ACCORDING TO THAT A MAN HATH

2 Corinthians 8: 12: For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

This principle applies not only to giving but also to salvation. When we have very little we tend to think along these lines, "*The amount I have to give is so insignificant, I will wait to give until I have more—until I can give a substantial amount.*" Consider that thought in terms of salvation. What if I say, "*Well, I believe on Christ but my faith is so small, I will wait until I have more faith then I will confess Christ publicly.*" That is making the quality of faith to be the touchstone of my acceptance with God rather than Christ. That is works. So it is if I make the amount of my gift to be the test of acceptance with God.

God will not accept us if we bring before him that which we do not possess. In our natural state, we did not possess anything acceptable to God: no righteousness before his law, no holiness of heart, no liberty to approach him, only bondage in sin. All we were and all we could produce was sin. If we try to bring a righteousness or holiness to God which we do not possess, God will not accept it—*it is accepted according to what a man hath, not according to that he hath not.*

What did Christ have when he presented himself to be offered up in place of his people? He had perfect faith. He had perfect sinless perfection. He had all fitness to take the place of his people.

What did Christ have after he cried it is finished? He had accomplished perfect satisfaction for God's justice. He had brought in everlasting righteousness for God's people. He had put an end to sin for his people. He had glorified God, honored God's law, and honored God himself. Therefore, according to what he had, God accepted him! He raised him from the dead as he promised and gave him glory as the GodMan Mediator to call out his people—*It is accepted according to what a man hath, not according to that he hath not.*

So by Christ, after a sinner is drawn to cast all our care on Christ, God freely makes us possess somethings so that we have them. What do we have by God's grace through Christ—scripture says "*All things are yours.*" Through faith in Christ we have righteousness by Christ establishing the law for us. We have holiness by Christ dwelling in us. We are redeemed, set free and have liberty to approach unto God by Christ our Redeemer! We have the mind of Christ by Christ our Wisdom! We have all things in Christ our All! Before God, his elect have always been accepted in the beloved Christ Jesus. But now, in our own conscious, we know we are accepted of God.

But what if we say, "*Well, I will come to God when I am able to gain a little more righteousness? Or when I am just a little more holy?*" We easily recognize that as making our works to be the deciding factor in our salvation rather than Christ. God will not accept it. Understand, the same is true when it comes to our giving. If I determine to wait until I have more before I give then I am making my ability to be the reason I give. God will not accept it.

God only accepts a gift out of what we have. By Christ's works we have righteousness—God accepts us in Christ. By Christ's holiness we have holiness—God accepts us in Christ. We do not need to add to what we already have to find acceptance with God—*It is accepted according to what a man hath.*

The same is true concerning our giving. The amount may be small because it is all that we have. But God does not measure our giving by the total amount we give but according to what we have to give. God measures not by quantity but by sacrifice from a willing heart. Again, I give the illustration of the poor widow.

Luke 21: 1: [Christ] looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. 2: And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. 3: And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: 4: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.

So brethren when it comes to salvation, never expect that God will accept you coming to him with something you do not possess—*It is accepted according to a man hath, not what according to that he hath not.* Apart from Christ we have not. Therefore God will not accept us outside of Christ. But through faith in Christ, we have all and God accepts us.

The same principle is true in giving. If I do not willingly perform the act of giving until I have that which I do not currently have, God will not accept it. But if I perform the giving from a willing mind out of what little I have then God accepts it and is well-pleased.

Why does God accept such a gift? The same reason he accepts us savingly. He gave it all and by giving we acknowledge in everything he has prospered us, not anything we possess by our own works.

1Corinthians 16:2: Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him,...

God is who the widow acknowledged as prospering her and by giving her entire living of two mites. She manifest her life was by God's prosperity, not by those two mites.

When we come to Christ, having given up all our works, faith acknowledges Christ alone is our prosperity, not anything in us. God accepts us.

So it is when we come before God with a willing heart of faith, having given out of what we have to the point we have to trust God. By that act we are acknowledging that God alone is our prosperity, not our worldly possessions. And God accepts it in Christ for his sake!

Amen!