



a d v e n t

C O N S P I R A C Y

Re-Distribution of Wealth

2 Corinthians 8:1-9

Christmas is an act of grace. No one had the right to expect or demand that God give Himself to us. God, in His own initiative, did for us what we didn't deserve and could never have done. He came to us and out of His fullness, graciously gave us what we desperately needed: Himself. I love what the apostle Paul writes to the church in Ephesus:

*But to each one of us **grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.** Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN."*

Ephesians 4:7-8 (NASB-U)

Grace was not given according to our performance or abilities. The giving of grace had nothing to do with us and everything to do with God. Every good gift that we have flows from the grace of a generous God. Out of His fullness, God met our need by giving Himself to us.

Spend some time in prayer, joyfully thanking God for His gracious generosity.

- What are you grateful for? How have you been blessed by God?
- Don't rush through this – take some time to really reflect on God's gift(s) to you.
- Share this with each other – spur one another on to thankfulness!

When Jesus was sending out His disciples to minister, He said this to them:

*"Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. **Freely you received, freely give.***

Matthew 10:8 (NASB-U)

I love how Eugene Peterson paraphrases this in The Message:

*Bring health to the sick. Raise the dead. Touch the untouchables. Kick out the demons. **You have been treated generously, so live generously.***

Matthew 10:8 (The Message)

Wouldn't it be beautiful if we celebrated Christmas by graciously and generously giving to others just like Jesus gave to us?

I believe that this was Paul's emphasis when he wrote to the church in Corinth, encouraging them to a life of generous, gracious giving:

*Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you **the grace of God** which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, that in a great ordeal of affliction their **abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality**. For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. So we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well.*

*But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in this gracious work also. I am not speaking this as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also. **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.***

2 Corinthians 8:1-9 (NASB-U)

Simply put, because we have received so much as a gracious gift from God, we should be abounding in gracious generosity.

Advent Conspiracy exists to be a catalyst for the church to worship Jesus more fully at Christmas and therefore be transformed by the God of Advent. As we worship Christ this Christmas, resisting the empire of consumerism and materialism, relationally giving gifts to our loved ones, we want to re-distribute the money we save to *'the least of these'* in our communities and world.

Spend some time in prayer.

- Ask God to give you a heart like His. Ask Him to help you be generous and gracious, or at least to **want** to be generous and gracious.
- Ask God to speak to you about how much you can contribute this Christmas to blessing those in need. Don't be timid!



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This Christmas, we'll be taking a special offering. It will go to meet the following needs:

- **Water Project:** We will help build a well offering clean drinking water. According to the World Water Council, 1.1 billion people live without clean drinking water; 2.6 billion lack adequate sanitation. 1.8 million people die ever year from diarrheal diseases. 3,900 children die every day from water born diseases.¹ We want to give the gift of life to others this Christmas to celebrate the life given to us! **Our goal is to raise \$5390 to dig a well through World Vision.**²
- **Health Project:** We are partnering with a medical student in Liberia to help him finish Medical School and establish a medical clinic serving the poor. **Our goal is to raise \$4800.** This will completely pay for him to finish up medical school (tuition, books, room and board).
- **Local Ministries:** The remainder, if any, will go to various Missional ministries in the city like Dinner & A Movie, PRC, Hispanics for Christ, etc...

¹ D. Zimmer & D. Renault, "Water Crisis Facts and Figures" World Water Council, 2003. www.worldwatercouncil.org/index.php?id=25

² Go to http://donate.wvus.org/OA_HTML/xxwvibeCCtpltmDspRte.jsp?section=10050&item=170 for more info!



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