

Relentless

Day 33



Today's Passage

"Now, friends, I want to report on the surprising and generous ways in which God is working in the churches in Macedonia province. Fierce troubles came down on the people of those churches, pushing them to the very limit. The trial exposed their true colors: They were incredibly happy, though desperately poor. The pressure triggered something totally unexpected: an outpouring of pure and generous gifts. I was there and saw it for myself. They gave offerings of whatever they could—far more than they could afford!—pleading for the privilege of helping out in the relief of poor Christians.

This was totally spontaneous, entirely their own idea, and caught us completely off guard. What explains it was that they had first given themselves unreservedly to God and to us. The other giving simply flowed out of the purposes of God working in their lives."

2nd Corinthians 8:1-7 *The Message*

Today's Thought

Allow me to rewrite one of our relentless quotes in order to illuminate this week's theme; *"Relentless giving is the giving you do after you have already given all you have to give."*

At first glance the definition seems impossible, and at best irrational. Nobody could possibly live up to this example! Hold on for a moment; I will be introducing you to several folks this week who did, and today's example of the church in Macedonia is one of the best.

Read through today's passage again and this time highlight the reaction that the Apostle Paul is having concerning the relentless giving of this church. Notice the description; *"The pressure triggered something totally unexpected: an outpouring of pure and generous gifts"* What would we have expected the church to have done in their hard times? What most of us would have done. When the budget gets crunched, God often gets cut first. In hard times we tend to hoard instead of hand out. Human nature tells us when something puts pressure on our budget our discipleship takes a hit more often than our "Dish Network." But not in Macedonia.

Notice the reason for their generosity; *"It was that they had first given themselves unreservedly to God and to us. The other giving simply flowed out of the purposes of God working in their lives."* Their giving was a reflection of their relationship with God, they gave themselves first to the Lord spiritually, then they demonstrated this as they gave of themselves and their resources.

Wouldn't we have excused them from this type of giving? The young couple with a new baby shouldn't be expected to give this way to the Lord should they? The older widow on a fixed income should be excused right? How about the single mother with three teenagers? Isn't the Lord only challenging well off people with disposable income? Don't miss the point! God wasn't raising funds, he was raising the faithful. And in this case the faithful were those that really couldn't afford to be faithful...or could they? This is what makes relentless giving beautiful to the Lord.

Interview those from Macedonia, they will tell you they didn't like their circumstances, yet I believe they will also tell you that their circumstances helped them to learn to give relentlessly.

Today's Prayer

Lord, this week help me to identify that my giving to you is more than just another bill. It is my way of demonstrating my relationship with you. Help me to become a relentless giver.