

Sermon followed by Service - October 5, 2025 –

Central Africa Medical Mission Sunday - 2 Cor 9:8-15

Thank you!

Someone gives you a special gift; what do you say?
“Thank you!” It’s just what you needed; what do you say?
“Thank you!” Big or small, what do you say? “Thank you!”

Someone asks you for a gift - just what they need - big or small, what do you say? We might tie knots - “Not now. Not again. Not ever.” We might ask wondering questions - “How much? Why?” We might ask refusing questions - “What? Really?” We might wring our hands and tighten our hearts: “What about me and mine?” We might go on a rant - “Who do they think they are? Who do they think I am? Do they think I’m made of money? Why do they keep on asking?” Someone asks us for a gift - just what they need - big or small, what do we say? It’s tempting to say: “No!”

By nature, I’m a keeping person. By nature, I look out for me and mine. By nature, I doubt that I have enough for me and mine. By nature, when people ask me for a gift - just what they need - big or small, what do I say? I’m not always quick to say, “Yes.” I don’t know whether it’s nature or nurture, just the way I am or the way bad experiences have shaped me, but when people ask me for a gift, when I start with me and my thinking, I start off full of doubts and judgment - “Do they really need ... do they

really deserve ... do I really want to ... will I have enough for myself, for me and for mine ... will it cost me too much???"

When someone asks me for a gift - just what they need - big or small - my pride doesn't want to give too little, my self-interest doesn't want to give too much. When I listen to myself there, I'm not terribly impressed with myself, by nature I'm not all that gracious or generous. And Truth be told - that kind of heart has no place in heaven. So, when someone asks you for a gift - just what they need - big or small, what do we say?

I googled for an answer and got back: "I'm not Santa; ask Santa." I asked AI, but AI didn't like my question. So, if all else fails, what do we do? We look to God's Word.

In our lesson, Paul is asking for a gift, not for himself, but for the church, the Jewish Christians back in Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, so many Christians struggled and suffered in poverty. So Paul asks the Christians he knows in Turkey and Greece to help the Christians he knows in Jerusalem. The Corinthians - they had some money in the congregation - they were quick to say: "Yes, count us in." The Macedonians up north - they were dirt poor - but they were quick to insist they be included - not to be included in the getting, but to be included in the giving. They wanted to be part of the giving, helping, sharing. And, not only were they quick to ask to be included, they were quick to give - more than Paul thought they could give. But the Corinthians, quick to say: "Count us in," were slow to follow through and give.

I wonder if Paul heard the Corinthians thinking things like: “How much do they want? How are we going to take of ourselves? What kind of people is he asking us to give for?” We don’t know what the Corinthians were saying, but we do know what Paul was saying.

In his letters, Paul doesn’t say much about the poor back in Jerusalem. He doesn’t argue their need; he doesn’t defend their need. Instead, he promises their gratitude and their prayers. But most of all, Paul talks about, first, God - the heart of God, the power and promise of God, God’s grace and God’s giving, and then, Paul shows the heart of a giver who knows the grace of God.

You know the grace of God, don’t you? 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.” You know the grace of God in Jesus. We appreciate the grace of God all the more when we realize just how impoverished, how bankrupt, our natural hearts are before God. We appreciate the grace of God all the more when we realize what he deserve from God - not the giving of grace, but the execution of judgment. We appreciate the grace of God all the more when we think about what Jesus has done for us. From his throne in heaven, Jesus left the comfort and glory of heaven to be born in a stable, to sleep in a feeding trough, to be stripped of every earthly thing he had, to be stretched out naked on a cross, to be covered with our selfishness, our distrust of God’s promises, our guilt before God. Why? So that by his poverty, we might be rich - our debt to God covered and forgiven, our empty

lives covered with the perfect life of Jesus - so that God sees you as his child and heir, a home-owner in heaven.

You and me - with Jesus - we're homeowners in heaven. I don't need to see myself as living on the edge. I don't need to see myself in danger of poverty. I don't need to be heard-hearted or tight-fisted - we are homeowners in heaven!

But what about here and now? Here and now, we might have bills that worry us and tighten us. Here and now, we might have bucket lists that distract us. Do they just distract us? Or do our bucket lists harden us and constipate our hearts? ("I need to take care of me and mine. I need to take care of me and my bucket list" ... like my bucket list is more important than Christ's mission and ministry.) There is a part of me that doesn't want to think about such things.

But there is another part of me, another part of you, that isn't afraid to think about such things, that doesn't shy away from thinking about such things. The child of God in you isn't tightened by doubts and worries. The child of God in you isn't distracted by bucket lists. The child of God in you isn't hardened into a focus on me and mine. The child of God in you knows the God you have here and now - **"God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."** The child of God in you knows what God wants to do through you in the here and now - **"You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God."**

In Malawi, Zambia, and Kenya, you have people thanking God for you. Thanking God for the medical treatment you help provide. But that's not all. Thanking God for the grace you share with Jesus. Our Central Africa Medical Mission doesn't just treat the body for the here and now, they feed and treat the soul by sharing the Good News of Jesus. Every year, tens of thousands of people and patients receive care for their bodies and their souls - and with your gifts you help make it possible.

So what do we say? What do we say when we're asked to give? We say: "Thank you!" "Thank you for including us in this special mission and ministry! Thank you for giving us the opportunity to share Jesus' love, to share our love, in this way." "Thank you!" Or as Paul would say: "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!" Amen.

October 4 & 5, 2025

THE SERVICE

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... not only do we see wonderful, beautiful places of beauty where money collects and people splurge, but we also see places of great need giving us great opportunity to show the love of our merciful God.

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we are reminded how God is blessing us to share his love through the Central Africa Medical Mission. Join us during our Family Bible Hour on Sunday for a special presentation on this opportunity to show mercy!

OPENING HYMN

“Son of God, Eternal Savior”

Hymn 729 vs. 1, 2

Son of God, eternal Savior, source of life and truth and grace,
Word made flesh, whose birth among us, hallows all our human race,
you our head, who, throned in glory, for your own will ever plead:
fill us with your love and pity, heal our wrongs and help our need.

Bind us all as one together in your Church’s sacred fold,
weak and healthy, poor and wealthy, sad and joyful, young and old.
Is there want or pain or sorrow? Make us all the burden share.
Are there spirits crushed and broken? Teach us, Lord, to soothe their care.

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves
and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just
and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

peo - ple on earth. Lord God,
heav - en - ly King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther, we
wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your
glo - ry. Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and
peace to his peo - ple on earth.
Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther,
Lord God, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. You are seat - ed at the
right hand of the Fa - ther; re - ceive our prayer.
Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and peace to his



peo - ple on earth. For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord, you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men. A - men. Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and peace to his peo - ple on earth.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord Jesus Christ, you sent your disciples to proclaim your coming. Bless all the missions of your church, and enable your workers to gather in your harvest. Through them, show your love to the helpless, enlighten those in darkness, assist those in peril and need, and at last bring all your children home to yourself; you live and reign, now and forever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

Isaiah 58:1-3, 5-12

“Shout it aloud, do not hold back.
 Raise your voice like a trumpet.
 Declare to my people their rebellion
 and to the descendants of Jacob their sins.

For day after day they seek me out;
they seem eager to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that does what is right
and has not forsaken the commands of its God.
They ask me for just decisions
and seem eager for God to come near them.
'Why have we fasted,' they say,
'and you have not seen it?
Why have we humbled ourselves,
and you have not noticed?'
"Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please
and exploit all your workers.
Is this the kind of fast I have chosen,
only a day for people to humble themselves?
Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed
and for lying in sackcloth and ashes?
Is that what you call a fast,
a day acceptable to the LORD?
"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?
Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter —
when you see the naked, to clothe them,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?
Then your light will break forth like the dawn,
and your healing will quickly appear;
then your righteousness will go before you,
and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.
Then you will call, and the LORD will answer;
you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

“If you do away with the yoke of oppression,
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,
and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,
then your light will rise in the darkness,
and your night will become like the noonday.
The LORD will guide you always;
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land
and will strengthen your frame.
You will be like a well-watered garden,
like a spring whose waters never fail.
Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins
and will raise up the age-old foundations;
you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,
Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

CHOIR

“Bwana Asifiwe”

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 9:8–15

And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written:

“They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor;
their righteousness endures forever.”

Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.

Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

2 Corinthians 9:15

Alleluia. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! Alleluia.

GOSPEL

Matthew 14:13–21

When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.”

Jesus replied, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

“We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered.

“Bring them here to me,” he said. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves.

Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise be to you, O Christ!**

HYMN OF THE DAY

"Lord of Glory, You Have Bought Us"

Hymn 767

Lord of glory, you have bought us with your lifeblood as the price,
never grudging for the lost ones that tremendous sacrifice;
and with that have freely given blessings countless as the sand
to th' unthankful and the evil with your own unsparing hand.

Grant us hearts, dear Lord, to give you gladly, freely, of your own.
With the sunshine of your goodness melt our thankless hearts of stone
till our cold and selfish natures, warmed by you, at length believe
that more happy and more blessed 'tis to give than to receive.

Wondrous honor you have given to our humblest charity
in your own mysterious sentence, "You have done it all for me."
Can it be, O gracious Master, that you need what we can do,
saying by your poor and needy, "Give as I have giv'n to you"?

Lord of glory, you have bought us with your lifeblood as the price,
never grudging for the lost ones that tremendous sacrifice.
Give us faith to trust you boldly, hope, to stay our souls on you;
but, oh, best of all your graces, with your love our love renew.

SERMON

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

OFFERING PRAYER - SUNG

“Son of God, Eternal Savior”

Hymn 729 vs. 3

As you, Lord, have lived for others, so may we for others live.
Freely have your gifts been granted; freely may your servants give.
Yours the gold and yours the silver, yours the wealth of land and sea;
we but stewards of your bounty held in solemn trust will be.

OFFERING

If you prefer to give online, the code at the right will take you to our Online Giving page. We invite our online givers to join in our offering with an “I Give Online” card in the pew racks.



PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us, that his ways may be known on earth, his salvation among all nations. **May the peoples praise you, O God. May all the peoples praise you.**

Loving Lord, your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, has given gifts to the Church in the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. According to your will, raise up more workers and send them into harvest fields in our land and around the world.

By the power of your gospel, strengthen them so that they do not become discouraged but continue in the course you have set before them. **May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples justly and guide the nations of the earth.**

Pour out your wisdom, O Lord, on all who train and prepare those who proclaim the everlasting gospel in their own communities and cultures. Through the power of the Spirit lead them to rely on the authority of your Word and to look for success in the witness of your love. Let them find support in their partners in ministry as we work together around the world. **May the peoples praise you, O God. May all the peoples praise you.**

Spare those who serve your people far away from infections and injury. Provide medical facilities to diagnose and treat disease. Give help and comfort to all the sick in every land [especially... *here name the person and the cause of the petition*]. Bring healing and health according to your will. **May the nations be glad and sing for joy.**

Lord God, King of the universe, direct the governments of the world so that your people may live quiet and peaceful lives. Protect us from crime and war. Let freedom of religion flourish that the gospel may be freely preached throughout the world. Cast down rulers who oppress their people; remove governments that oppose the gospel. Bring relief to Christians who are persecuted. **For you rule the peoples with equity and guide the nations of the earth.**

Wherever we go, near or far, move us to share the gospel with eagerness and joy. Give us grace to be models to all so that our brothers and sisters might see our good works and glorify you. Plant in the hearts of your people a deeper desire to share the gospel with their lips and their gifts so that many more may come to know and believe the love of your Son. **The land yields its harvest, and God, our God, blesses us. May God bless us, so that all the ends of the earth will revere him. Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT

(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)

(Gluten-free wafers are available; ask Pastor.)

PREFACE - SUNG

CW 183

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who promised that wherever two or three come together in his name, there he is with them to shepherd his flock until he comes again in glory. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY - SUNG

CW 184

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power, God of might.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest!

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my T body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my T blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **Amen.**

JESUS, LAMB OF GOD

CW 186

Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us your peace.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

"Forgive Us, Lord, for Shallow Thankfulness"

Hymn 754

Forgive us, Lord, for shallow thankfulness,
for dull content with warmth and sheltered care,
for songs of praise for worldly wealthiness,
while of your richer gifts we're unaware:

Teach us to thank you, Lord, for love and grace,
for life and vision, for a purpose clear,
for Christ, your Son, and for each human face
that shows your message ever new and near.

Forgive us, Lord, for selfish thanks and praise,
for words that speak at variance with deeds;
forgive our thanks for walking pleasant ways,
unmindful of a broken brother's needs:

Teach us, O Lord, true thankfulness divine,
that gives as Christ gave, never counting cost,
that knows no barrier of “yours” and “mine,”
assured that only what’s withheld is lost.

Forgive us, Lord, for feast that knows not fast,
for joy in things that meanwhile starve the soul,
for walls and wars that hide your mercies vast
and blur our vision of the kingdom goal:

Open our eyes to see your love’s intent,
to know with mind and heart its depth and height;
let thankful days in loving labor spent
reflect the truly Christlike life and light.

CLOSING PRAYER

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his mercy endures forever.

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet you have given us in this Sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love. By your Spirit, help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

“Sent Forth by God’s Blessing” Hymn 932

Sent forth by God’s blessing, our true faith confessing,
the people of God from his dwelling take leave. The supper is ended;
O be now extended the fruits of this service in all who believe.
The seed of his teaching, receptive souls reaching,
shall blossom in action for God and for all. His grace did invite us;
his love shall unite us to work for God’s kingdom and answer his call.

With praise and thanksgiving to God ever-living,
the tasks of our ev’ryday life we will face. Our faith ever sharing,
in love ever caring, embracing his children of each tribe and race.
One bread that has fed us, one light that has led us
unite us as one in his life that we share. Then may all the living
with praise and thanksgiving
give honor to Christ and his name that we bear.

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