



Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.

Isaiah 60:1

Message Notes

Arise.....Surrender..... R_____!

ARISE is a an intentional call to action for Point of Grace to be transformed as individuals and as a church body, to literally "become light" and "shine" for God's glory in key areas of personal and church life. Part One of ARISE will call Point of Grace to surrender to God's transforming work in the area of financial giving.

The First Movement of ARISE is _____!

Romans 12 ¹Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. ²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

2 Timothy 3 ¹⁴But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, ¹⁵and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Galatians 2 ²⁰I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Matthew 4 ¹⁸As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." ²⁰At once they left their nets and followed him.

John 1 ¹⁰He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹²Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

There is more to transformation than Surrender, the Second Movement is R_____!

The art of R_____ is often overlooked in the process of God transforming us. If we are lacking something necessary we might assume that God did not provide (and begrudge Him that) or that we failed in someway to produce it ourselves (self-condemnation).

The reality is God gives all I need to follow Him every day—perhaps the question is my r_____!

Training to Receive—

- Our words can help!*
- Intentional receiving !*

Receiving with regards to Financial giving!

- His Guidelines!*
- He is the owner I am the m_____!*
- I joyfully honor Him and participate in His Kingdom work!*

A Personal and Small Group Experience

A Generous Heart

Generosity is both a cause and an effect. We give gladly when we are gripped with thankfulness for all we have received, and we are encouraged to give even more when we experience the joy of giving and when we see the wonderful effects our giving has in the lives of others.

In the longest and clearest description of generosity in the Scriptures (2 Corinthians 8-9), Paul explains how the Macedonians gave gladly to meet the needs of others. John Piper notes that the Macedonians responded in love in four ways:

- **Their generosity was a result of God's grace.** They didn't just decide to give; God worked powerfully in their hearts to give them the motive and the heart to give.
- **They gave joyfully.** The act of giving brought joy to the Macedonians and encouraged them to give even more.
- **They gave liberally.** They didn't see how little they could give; they wanted to give as much as possible.
- **They gave sacrificially.** The Macedonians "*gave . . . beyond their means, of their own accord, begging earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints*" (8:3-4).

Far too often, people in churches grudgingly put a check in the plate only because they feel they have to, not because they are thrilled to give. In this lesson, we want to look at some of the principles of giving out of grace-filled, joyful, thankful hearts.

GUIDELINES FOR GIVING

Read 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 to see how Paul instructed the Corinthians in their giving.

In verse 1, we see that the instructions for giving are given to God's people. This is why our church does not ask those who visit our fellowship to be financially responsible for our church. This is clearly the responsibility of the membership. Verse 2 gives us five words to remember:

- **Systematically:** *"On the first day of the week"*
- **Individually:** *"let each one of you"*
- **Purposefully:** *"lay something aside"*

The passage infers that we will keep on giving this way. One commentator said it means, "Keep on keeping on, it'll make a difference." Each week we put something aside. We don't wait until the end of the year. We don't wait for that special promotion. We give on a regular basis.

- **Proportionately:** *"storing up as he may prosper"*

We give as we prosper. We may prosper greatly at one time in our life and not so greatly in another. Our ability to give fluctuates according to the way we prosper. Stephen Olford said, "We must remember that the prosperity of God is never limited to the material gains of our daily work. Spiritually, He blesses us with all spiritual blessings... in Christ; physically, He prospers us with health and strength. For in Him, we live, and move, and have our being; temporally, He continually loads us with benefits. Then over and above these He supplies that by which we live our normal lives: the talents, time and strength for our toil; these are all of His giving." God's giving to us should challenge and encourage us as we face our responsibilities of giving to Him.

- **Privately:** *"that there be no collections when I come"*

The apostle Paul, having founded the church of Corinth, did not want to use his presence as some sort of manipulative technique to promote giving. Jesus also spoke to this same issue in the Sermon on the Mount when He said, "*...give in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*" (Matthew 6:4)

Few issues today are more distorted than that of giving money to the local church. When we deal with money, people tend to get nervous and defensive. Let us challenge this attitude with an illustration from Dr. Alan Redpath's book, *The Royal Route to Heaven*: "A certain Christian once said to a friend, 'Our church cost too much. They are always asking for money. Her friend replied in this fashion: 'some time ago a little boy was born in our home. He cost us a lot of money from the very beginning: he had a big appetite, he needed clothes, medicine, toys and even a puppy. Then he went to school, and that cost a lot more; later he went to college, then he began dating and that cost a small fortune! But in his senior year at college he died, and since the funeral he hasn't cost us a penny. Now which situation do you think we would rather have?' After a significant pause the friend continued, 'As long as this church lives, it will cost. When it dies for want of support, it won't cost us anything. A living church has the most vital message for all the world today; therefore, I am going to give and pray with everything I have to keep our church alive.'"

We must take this precept purposefully and personally. We should pray for our church to remain a living church that glorifies the Father by being faithful and obedient to His Word.

PAUL'S MESSAGE ON GIVING

In 2 Corinthians 8:1-9, Paul gives further instructions to the Corinthians and provides us some wonderful examples on how we are to give. Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-9.

As an Example

In this passage the Apostle Paul writes to the Corinthian church, a wealthy church, and uses as an example of generosity the churches at Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea. These were a group of churches just north of Macedonia. What was it like in Macedonia? The Romans had seized all of their mining industry; the Romans then taxed their rights to smelt copper and iron; the Romans also cancelled the rights of the Macedonians to cut lumber for their homes and for the building of ships.

Their land was damaged and war-torn, for several wars had been fought on their soil. Look in verse 2; observe the words "extreme poverty." This means ghetto-like conditions. In verse 3 it says they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond. In verse 4, note how they begged Paul to allow them to give. How can such generosity be explained? Their secret is found in verse 5. For us to know the full blessing of generosity, we must first give ourselves totally to the Lord. As our eyes are moved from our circumstances and focused onto the Lord, generosity will come natural to us. Great acts of generosity often occur in the lives of those who fully surrender to the will of God.

Q. What was the primary motivating factor of their desire to give?

Q. Do Christians today tend to view giving as a privilege, a duty, or drudgery? Explain your answer.

Q. Why did the Macedonians view giving as a privilege? After discussing, apply this to today and to the privilege God has given us to give as our church follows God's leadership.

"In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said; 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Acts 20:35

Q. What does it mean to give ourselves first or totally to the Lord (verse 5)? What areas do many people tend to hold back and not surrender to God? Why?

Dr. Roy L. Laurin tells of a Christian businessman who was traveling in Korea: "One day I saw in the field by the side of a road a young man pulling a rude plow, while an old man held the handles. The businessman was amused and took a snapshot of the scene. 'That is a curious picture! I suppose these people are very poor,' he said to the missionary, who was interpreter and guide to the party. 'Yes,' was the quiet reply, 'those two men happen to be Christians. When their church was being built, they were eager to give something toward it; but they had no money. So they decided to sell their one and only ox and give the proceeds to the church. This spring they are pulling the plow themselves.' The businessman was silent for some moments. Then he said, 'That must have been a real sacrifice.' 'They did not call it that,' said the missionary, 'they rather thought it was fortunate that they had an ox to sell.' Needless to say, the businessman was silent. When he reached home, however, he took the picture to his pastor and told him all about it. Then he added, 'I want to double my giving to the church, and do some plow work. Up until now I have never given God anything that involved real sacrifice.'"

Sacrifice comes from a clear understanding of the work of God. Biblical giving is not just giving to support a cause; we are to give as the Lord has led. If our heart is right it won't seem like sacrifice, it will seem like a great opportunity to support the work of the Lord.

Responding to a Challenge

Let's continue to read and gather more insights from this message on giving — we'll pick up in verse 6. Reread 2 Corinthians 8:6-9.

Paul turns from the Macedonians to the Corinthians in verse 6 and urges the Corinthians to complete a work of grace. It wasn't a demand on Titus' part, but a work of grace. If we claim to be persons of grace, it should be reflected in our checkbook. Not only in our checkbook, but it should also reflect in the other areas of our lives, such as how we use our time and talents.

Verse 7 gives us a checklist for the church. Paul mentions five things that make up a healthy fellowship:

- **Faith**
- **Teaching**
- **Knowledge**
- **Earnestness**
- **Love**

In verse 8 Paul is on his knees saying to this Corinthian church and to us, please take this message "personally." Hear these examples and model them. Surrender your heart and mind to Christ so that you might personally know the joys of giving.

Q. What could happen in the life of our church if we began to excel in the "grace of giving?"

Q. What could happen in your life and mine if we began to excel in grace giving?

Q. In what ways can our giving impact eternity?

Paul also says he wants to *"test the sincerity of their love."* The true test of our love for someone is evidenced in our actions. A sincere love for God shows forth in what and how much of our-selves we give to Him. The scripture says, *"Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."* Eph. 5:1-2 Living a life of love requires that we give of ourselves just as Christ loved us and gave Himself as a sacrifice. As our love for Jesus Christ continues to grow, our giving will grow as a result. "You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving" (Amy Carmichael).

Lastly, in verse 9, Paul uses Christ as the supreme example. Immeasurable, the price paid for our salvation. Unfathomable, that unmerited favor God gave to us through His Son. Paul would write again this same thought in Philippians 2:5-11.

PERSONAL APPLICATION AND PRAYER

Take a look at the following statements and share some personal reflection as to how they strike you and what challenge they present to you. Share what are you in need of receiving from God in order for you to do what He wants you to do in this whole area of giving. Spend some time praying for one another as to their needs and desires and also vocalize in your own prayer that you "receive" what you need from God..

- A personal relationship with Christ is the source of our experience of grace, which is the motivation to give.
- Trying to experience God's grace without giving our treasure will leave us with an incomplete experience in our faith.
- As our love for Christ grows, it will affect our generosity. As our love grows, our giving grows.

Scripture & Meditation Guide for March 1-6

Helpful Hints:

- 1) Find a quiet place along with 15-20 minutes!
- 2) Focus on God for a few moments asking His Spirit to speak to your heart!
- 3) Listen to Him by reading a section of scripture then rereading it several times, dwelling on "words and phrases" which grab your heart's attention.
- 4) Ask God, "What do You want me to hear?" "Why this word at this time?" "How are You inviting me to respond?"
- 5) Pray everything that is on your heart and mind as you are ready!
Worship Him, Bless Him, Thank Him, Ask Him, Trust Him

These verses will remind you that we all get to receive what God so wonderfully gives!

Monday: Proverbs 3:5-10

Tuesday: Hebrews 4:14-16

Wednesday: 2 Corinthians 8:1-7

Thursday: 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

Friday: Luke 11:9-13

Saturday: 2 Timothy 3:14-17