

Second Corinthians 9:1-15
 Annual Report Sunday
 IM1510

November 22, 2015 pm
 Thanksgiving

“Overflowing Thanksgiving”

INTRODUCTION: Are you a thankful person?

1. This is the Season of Thanksgiving: *Thanksgiving Day; November 26, 2015.*
 - a. **Week of Jubilee** (Monday, Nov. 23 to Sunday, Nov. 29)
 - b. A time to look back on this year and give thanks
 - c. **Annual Report:** Review of 2015 and our Stewardship
2. A week that begs the question: “*Are you a thankful person?*”
 - a. Do you smile much? Consider yourself “blessed”?
 - b. Are you grateful for who you are and what you have?
 - c. Are you appreciative for spouse, family, home, church, job, your life in general?
 - d. Are you able (willing?) to catalog your spiritual blessings?
 - e. Can you say, in all earnestness, along with King David?

*The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup;
 you hold my lot.
 The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
 indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.* (Psalm 16:5-6)
3. One of the hallmarks of a grateful life is **generosity:** Those blessed by God find great joy and pleasure from blessing others with their wealth.

In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ (Acts 20:35)
4. As you looked at our **Annual Report:** “*The Joy of the Christian life,*” I wanted to turn your attention to Second Corinthians 9:1-15.
 - a. A chapter in “giving” (stewardship, tithing, generosity)
 - b. Context: *A special offering for the Church of Jerusalem and Judea, from all the mission churches of Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece, Rome, the Mediterranean Islands, Galatia, and elsewhere.*
 - c. A grateful mission field giving back to the Mother Church of Christian Missions: *Jerusalem.*
 - d. *Gratitude reflected in Giving.*
5. Notice what Paul writes:
 - a. *Now it is superfluous for me to write to you about the ministry for the saints, for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the people of Macedonia, saying that Achaia has been ready since last year. And your zeal has stirred up most of them. But I am sending the brothers so that our boasting about you may not prove empty in this matter, so that you may be ready, as I said you would be. Otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we would be humiliated—to say nothing of you—for being so confident. So I thought it necessary to urge the*

brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for the gift you have promised, so that it may be ready as a willing gift, not as an exaction. (2 Corinthians 9:1-5)

- b. *The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. As it is written,*

“He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor;

his righteousness endures forever.”

He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. (2 Corinthians 9:6-10)

- c. And then Paul adds this unique note –

You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift! (2 Corinthians 9:11-15)

6. **Thanksgiving** will be produced by our giving –

- a. *You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. (2 Corinthians 9:11)*
- b. *For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. (2 Corinthians 9:12)*
- c. *By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. (2 Corinthians 9:13-14)*
- d. *“Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift!” (2 Corinthians 9:15)*

7. Because of your faithfulness in being a “*cheerful giver*” to Christ Covenant Church, in 2015, there is “*overflowing in many thanksgivings*” because of your joy in stewardship.

8. Doubt that? Then take note of this...

- a. Our Elders are grateful for your prayers and support for the progress made in 13 Long Range Goals. (p. 3)
- i. We’ve bitten off huge chunks of some
 - ii. Nibbled away at others
 - iii. And stared at 2 or 3 goals – but progress is being made

- b. **Steffen Mueller** and **Sammy Foucachon** thank you for aiding them to start Gospel Churches in Germany and France, where there are rumblings of revival taking place. (p. 4)
- c. Parents and children at **Matthews Elementary** and **Crestdale Middle School** thank you for your love, investment and tutoring of their children. (p. 4)
- d. Homeless people, girls delivered from sex trafficking, elderly shut-ins, prisoners, failing students and immigrants to our city, thank you for your ministry. (p. 4)
- e. **Andrew Holbrook** in Connecticut, **Peter Eck** in New Jersey, and **Tyler Dirks** and **Jason Piteo** in East Charlotte thank you for help in their church plants. (p. 5)
- f. **Dozens of missionaries** abroad, and a few at home, thank you for your commitment to World outreach.
- g. **Christ Covenant Church families** thank you for supporting Covenant College at the Askings level, making possible a significant grant to their children through the Partnership Shares Program.
- h. **Seminaries** and **Interns** thank you for investing in them in preparation for ordained ministry.
- i. **Covenant Day School** households are thankful for a much-needed High School addition, enhancing the educational program at all levels. (p. 11)
- j. **Our congregation** – especially our **Youth Ministry** – are grateful for a new Community Life Center. (pp. 6-7)
- k. **Central Carolina Presbytery** is grateful for you: of a Presbytery income of \$61,000. Christ Covenant provides \$20,000. A total of 33%!
- l. **The PCA** gives you thanks: each year we move closer to our stated goal of the Askings: \$150,000. We are at a total of \$100,000 now.
- m. **Campus Outreach** and **Zack Fulginiti** (the new CO Director) thanks you for supporting their ministry at UNCC, UNC-Greensboro, Wingate, Elon, Davidson and a new campus opening up this year. (p. 8)
- n. Three men and their families thank you: **Brian Peterson, Andy Schuster** and **Stewart Neely**. Your giving has enabled them to accept new calls to ministry at our church. (p. 8-9)
- o. So do the other Pastors – **Bernie Lawrence, Mike Miller, Bruce Creswell, Dave Baxter, Gabe Sylvia** and **John Haines**. Without your steady giving, they have no income for the privilege of ministering to you.
- p. Our **Senior Staff** and associate employees, from Childrens' Ministry to Administration, across the board, thank you for paying them a salary to do a job they love!
- q. The **Deacons** thank you for staying on budget for most of this year and for closing strong in December: We are supporting three budgets for Missions, General Budget, and Building Project. Thanks for being both steady and sacrificial. (p. 10)
- r. **Covenant Day School** also thanks you for funds given to them; buildings to use for classes; support from church staff. Without your involvement in the school, tuition would be unreachable for many.
- s. There are 2,000 souls in our **congregation**, from newborns to 90-year-olds, who thank you for your regular giving that enables dozens and dozens of ministries to take place which nurture their souls.

- t. In our **church this year**, there are new converts who will thank you for the gift of eternal life you shared with them, as you led them to Christ.
 - u. And there will be **thousands of souls in heaven** who will thank you, face to face when you get to glory, for your giving to the Lord that made possible their hearing of the Gospel and their salvation.
 - v. Those who are **bereaved** thank you for your church's ministry to them in the wake of a loved ones' death.
 - w. **New Members** in the Discovery Class will thank God for this church as they matriculate into this church which you support.
 - x. **Special Needs** families and ministries like **Joni and Friends** are grateful for your embracing them, supporting them, and ministering to their souls in circumstances very trying.
 - y. An assembly of ministries from Pro-life (**Crisis Pregnancy Resources**) to care for the dying (**Kendall Ministries**) thank you for a generous mercy that extends from womb to tomb.
 - z. And...finally...**I thank you** – on behalf of all those other folks I left out, ministries I forgot to mention, and for your support for me and my wife, Jane.
9. Paul was right (the Bible always is!): *“For the ministry of this service (stewardship) is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God.” (9:12)*

CONCLUSION: Are you a thankful person?

1. Well, I guess the answer to that question is twofold: Are you *blessed* by God? Are you a *giving person*?
In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ (Acts 20:35)
2. Would you *receive* this annual report and *rejoice* in all God is doing in and through our church (and you)?
3. Would you *step back* and look at the *bigger picture* of Christ Covenant Church – a picture that circles the globe?
4. Would you *choose to be grateful* and express thanksgiving to God (in praise) and appreciation to others (in words)?
5. Finally, would you begin to *pray* about your *giving in the future*?
 - Taking on a little more to close our budget gap by Dec. 31st
 - Deciding to move beyond (or up to) a tithe in your 2017 commitment (due in January)
 - Joining in our building campaign, even if you did not pledge
 - Thinking about a Faith Promise for this year (due in March)
6. **Remember:** *It is those who give who are blessed, and as a result, are grateful! Are you a thankful person?*