

*A Sermon Transcript Based On Philippians 1:3-5...*

*Giving Creates Opportunities For People To Experience The Good News Of Jesus*

# PARTNERSHIP IN THE GOSPEL



MONEY FROM GOD IS A MEANS  
TO CARRY OUT THE MISSION OF GOD

**Jimmy D. Brown**

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## Working Together For This Purpose...

Back in the early 2000s, I was tennis doubles partner to a good friend of mine named Joe. We played together in many tournaments, winning a number of them and enjoying the rest of them.

Well, we mostly enjoyed the rest of them. There was that time I served the ball into the back of Joe's head during a match. He didn't enjoy that much. Still...

When we stepped onto the court, we worked together to win. There were plenty of unforced errors along the way, but we were united in our mission.

Our "*partnership on the court*" included at least four things that are true of the kind of "*partnership in the gospel*" that we are invited into when we put our faith in Jesus.

1. A shared passion. Joe and I shared a love for tennis that led us to the courts; you and I share a love for Jesus that leads us to our workplaces, neighborhoods, communities and homes.
2. A focused objective. In tennis, we wanted to experience the joy of winning games, sets and matches; in life, we want to win the lost in order to spread the joy of knowing Jesus.
3. Active participation. Both of us showed up on the court when it was time to play because one of us couldn't do it alone; all of us need to show up when it is time to serve because all are needed.
4. Mutual cooperation. There was both work and reward for Joe and me as we combined our efforts; the same is true for you and me as we cooperate to make known to others the Jesus we know.

In a nutshell...

*We are to actively partner with other Christians to know Jesus and make Him known so that God is honored in us and we are happy in Him.*

There are a number of ways we can do this and, in this sermon transcript, I'll share one of them.

My hope and prayer is that you'll join me and others who, despite our countless unforced errors, continue to receive the grace of God so we can show up on the courts of life as partners in the gospel.

All for Jesus,

*Jimmy D. Brown*

[Begin Sermon Transcript]

When Paula and I married in 1994, we were young, in love, and had no debt other than a 15-year mortgage. Within a couple of years, we were young, in love, and drowning in debt. We couldn't make the minimum payments on our credit accounts. Even if we could, it would take 70 years to pay off. That's the year 2066, y'all. Every month, we fell further behind.

Paula would sit at our kitchen table in tears when her paycheck didn't cover what we owed. I was trying to start a business, which is tough when you're broke. Collection agencies harassed us, and we cringed when the phone rang. We applied for consolidation loans but got rejected for being "*sufficiently obligated*"—fancy talk for "*nice try, broke people*." Or, as we say in the South, "*Oh, honey, no. Bless your heart*." We even attended a timeshare presentation just for the \$50. It was bad.

Looking back, we were both to blame: me for overspending like I worked for the U.S. Treasury, and Paula for not stopping me. The reality is, we used our money however we pleased with little thought for what might please God. It wasn't catastrophe that led to our financial ruin, but foolish, materialistic, sinful spending. At that time, we weren't tithing or giving much to our church. And as our debt worsened, there wasn't anything to give.

God showed us our way wasn't working—that was pretty obvious. He didn't need to send an angel to spell it out. At the time, we both felt led to do two things: give 10% of our income to the church and give up a supplemental income source that was in the way of His plans for us. Financially, we couldn't afford either.

But we trusted God and did as we felt led... and we never missed a payment again. Within a few years, we paid off all our debt. A couple of years later, we paid off our house and vehicles. By the time Jacob came along after we'd been married six years, Paula was able to quit teaching and be a full-time homeschool mom for the next 18 years. God blessed my little home business in ridiculous, over-the-top ways to provide for us beyond what we could have dreamed.

By now, you've probably guessed today's message is about giving. Some pastors don't like talking about money and giving... but I LOVE it. For three reasons:

1. The Bible has a lot to say about giving, so we shouldn't be afraid to talk about it.
2. What the Bible says about giving is that it is an invitation into something wonderful.
3. Paula and I have personally witnessed the wonderful things the Bible says about giving.

We often think getting will make us happier than giving. But that's not what the Bible teaches, and it's

not the testimony of anyone who has lived it. Listen, whatever God does through our giving will be better for others—and for us—than if we had spent it on anything else.

Now, I can't promise that if you give, you'll make more money. But I can assure you that your money will make a bigger difference. It will go farther than you think and have a longer-lasting effect than you expect. And I CAN promise you this: 100 years from now, you will not regret that you gave.

So, here's my main point today:

*Money from God is a means to carry out the mission of God.*

It's not the only means for carrying out the mission of God or the only purpose for money, but what we do with our financial resources plays a key role in how God changes lives and grows His kingdom. That's what I want us to see as we go through Scripture—how giving to the local church funds ministry, meets needs, and brings eternal rewards.

If you have your Bibles, turn with me to Philippians chapter one. Philippians chapter one. We're going to read verses 3-5 as a starting point before we move on to some other parts of the Bible. The text will also be on the screen behind me, so you can follow along there as well. Philippians, chapter one, beginning in verse three, the Bible says...

*[3] I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, [4] always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, [5] because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. (ESV)*

Now flip over with me to Philippians 4. Let's take a look at verses 15-20...

*[15] And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. [16] Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. [17] Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. [18] I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. [19] And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. [20] To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. (ESV)*

So, Paul is joyfully thanking God in His prayers for these believers for a specific reason. He says it's because of their "partnership in the gospel." The word translated as "partnership" is the Greek word "koinonia" which is used throughout the New Testament and usually means "fellowship."

Now, when we think of fellowship, we might think of hanging out with another believer or sharing a meal together with our church, but here it speaks of a much deeper connection. He's talking about working

together to advance the gospel and probably has largely in view their financial support of his ministry.

As we see in chapter 4, Paul again calls this a “*partnership*” and rejoices over their contribution to his work after he left Macedonia and when he was in Thessalonica. So, included in this fellowship they shared, this partnership in the gospel, there is a financial component ... He was rejoicing and thanking God for their Christian giving. They supported the work of the gospel.

Our Christian giving can be labeled or categorized or described in many ways, and one of those is that we are joined together with other believers in a “*partnership in the gospel.*” Listen, we don’t give here at Oasis Church to get a tax deduction or special favor from God. Our giving isn’t just to pay the staff or keep the lights on or provide supplies for the children’s department. We give to advance the mission of God.

The money we collect each week goes to creating a space where people can come in and hear the good news of Jesus. Our giving makes it possible for those who are dead in sin to be made alive in Christ and those who are alive in Christ to flourish as they follow Him into the abundant life He has promised.

Life for the spiritually dead. Hope for the hopeless. Encouragement for the downtrodden. Comfort for the hurting. Rest for the weary. Guidance for the confused. Purpose for the aimless. Help for the needy. Support for the ministers. Glory for God. All of this and so much more ... that’s what happens when we give to this partnership in the gospel.

*Money from God is a means to carry out the mission of God.*

Now, I want to point out three quick things that we will press in on more as we go...

1. First, in verses 17-18, Paul makes it clear that his joy isn’t just because his needs were met—he’s not in it for the money—but because their generosity is an act of worship. It’s a costly offering, like Old Testament sacrifices, that pleases God and brings both earthly fruit and eternal reward to their credit.
2. Second, verse 19 assures that God will supply their needs according to His riches in Christ. So, we can confidently share, knowing even as we give away as God leads, there is always enough because God also provides.
3. Third, in verse 15, Paul notes the Philippians were the only ones to financially support his ministry when he left Macedonia. What I want us to take away from that is if we aren’t giving, it’s not too late to start. Because later other churches from Macedonia did start giving as we’re going to read about next.

So, let’s take a look at this by turning to 2 Corinthians chapter 8. 2 Corinthians chapter 8. We’re going to read the first 7 verses. Beginning in verse 1, the Bible says...

## PARTNERSHIP IN THE GOSPEL

*[1] We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, [2] for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. [3] For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, [4] begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints—[5] and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us. [6] Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace. [7] But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also.*

So, what we see happening here is this: the Corinthians had started out eager to support fellow Christians who were in need, but had lost the desire to give generously, and Paul points to these churches of Macedonia as models for radical, sacrificial giving. Macedonia would have included the region of Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea. So, by this time other churches who previously weren't giving had joined the Philippians in this "*partnership in the gospel*."

And, notice that in spite of their own "*severe test of affliction*" and "*extreme poverty*" they gave and they gave generously. They viewed giving as a privilege, not an obligation.

*Instead of Paul begging these believers to get them to give,  
they were begging him to let them give!*

Isn't that amazing?! Where does a desire like that to give come from? Paul says that it comes from the grace of God. It is made possible by His undeserved gifts in their lives and the transformation of their hearts. Listen, when the grace of God lands upon the people of God it changes us into those who are radically and sacrificially generous givers. It makes us do things with our money that the world thinks is crazy. And He encourages the Corinthians to excel in this act of grace also. In other words, to respond to the grace of God – His unmerited favor upon them – in a similar way.

Now, I'll be the first to admit, I would be the most selfish person on the planet if it wasn't for the grace of God. He has transformed me from someone who thought only of myself to someone who more and more thinks of others. But it has been a painful work-in-progress.

As my business continued to grow, we paid off our house. Then we build a bigger house and paid it off. We got a Country Club membership, purchased a Mercedes convertible and took lavish vacations. I had a Rolex on my wrist and a closet full of Hugo Boss, Polo and other designer brands. Having come from a poor background before meeting Paula and being deeply in debt after meeting Paula, I felt like Richie Rich. Only minus the butler ... and I wasn't ruling that out.

Now, all the while, because of the grace of God at work in us, we were being incredibly generous with our money. We gave a lot to our church. We funded missionaries. We met the needs of our brothers and

sisters in Christ. If there was an opportunity to give to the “partnership in the gospel,” we were in. Someday I hope to tell you all of the stories of the amazing things we’ve seen God do. Truly, we loved giving – it brought us great joy to share with others what God have given to us. That wasn’t the problem.

The problem was materialism. And pride. And overvaluing comfort and ease and excess. And striving to measure up to others and have the kind of lifestyle and stuff that the world says is important. And the inevitable division of loyalty that comes because you can’t serve God and money. The Bible says this in 1 Timothy 6:10...

*For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.*

You can be generous with your money and still be sinful with your money. Are you tracking with me?

So, we have since downsized and, by the grace of God, strive to live a more minimal lifestyle. And we’re still purging some of those things out of our lives. We’re still works-in-progress. But you know what, we’re happier in Jesus than we’ve ever been. We don’t miss those excesses at all.

Now, listen. Don’t hear me say that it’s wrong to have a nice house, nice car or nice things. Or that being financially secure or wealthy is sinful. That’s not what I’m saying at all. What I am saying based on what the Bible tells us and what I have seen in the lives of others and what I have painfully experienced myself is this...

*We have to guard against overvaluing a standard of living that the world sells us instead of setting our sights on eternity.*

So, how do we guard against this? We use our money the way God intends for us to use it. Hold your place in 2 Corinthians because we’re going to come back to it later. But for the next few minutes, I want us to see some things the New Testament says about how we are to give. What I want us to see is what giving toward a “partnership in the gospel” looks like by sharing five characteristics of it.

Let’s begin with 2 Corinthians 9:6-8, which says...

*[6] The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. [7] Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. [8] 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. (ESV)*

Now, before we get to the first characteristic, let me remind you of the context. The Corinthians had committed to financially support the believers in Jerusalem, and in verses 1-5 Paul was simply calling



them back to their original eagerness for this collection. He sent messengers ahead in order to ensure their promised gift would be ready so they wouldn't be caught unprepared to anyone's embarrassment when he arrived. So, this is an encouraging call-to-action for them to follow through on their promised offering.

With that said, let's look at the first characteristic where we will see...

1. We are to give BOUNTIFULLY.

*The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. – 2 Corinthians 9:6*

The first thing we see is that the return on our giving is connected to the amount of our giving. This is a basic principle of farming: sow less, reap less; sow more, reap more.

Now, Paul isn't appealing to their greed by saying "if you give more for others, you'll get more for yourself." That's not His point. And His point is not to set a specific amount or percentage for giving. His point is to get them thinking about how to bring about the greatest possible return for the kingdom of God through their financial resources, whether they have a little or a lot.

He wanted to encourage and motivate them – and us, today – to be generous in giving to the work of spreading the gospel and caring for the needy. Paul wants to see hearts created in us that don't hold back in our giving. Rather than having a mindset of "what's the least I can do," the Bible wants to cultivate in us a mindset of "what's the most I can do." How can I give more, not less?

God doesn't command a specific amount for us in the New Testament, but He does call us to respond to His immeasurable grace by being radically generous and sacrificial.

We are to give bountifully and also...

2. We are to give PERSONALLY.

*Each one must give as he has decided in his heart. – 2 Corinthians 9:7a*

Who is to give? "Each one." While we collectively as the church body pool our resources so they maximize their usefulness, we are to give personally. Each one of us. We are to personally choose to give, determine how much to give and sacrifice in order to give.

Each of us must make up our own minds about giving ... this is an individual's decision and plan of action. What you give and why you give is a matter of the heart between you and God. No one else gets to tell you what to do with the money God has entrusted you to steward on His behalf.

True generosity comes from within our hearts as we respond to the way God works in our lives, not

because a church or a culture tries to force some kind of legalistic standard on us. It's not a box to check. It's not a rule to keep. It's not a quota to meet. This is much more about your heart than your money.

That's why giving is deeply personal, because it reflects our own individual walk with Jesus ... our faith in Him, our commitment to Him, our love for Him. Paul isn't talking about an amount of giving here; he's talking about an attitude toward giving that comes from the loving relationship you have with Jesus.

And that brings us to...

3. We are to give CHEERULLY.

*... not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. – 2 Corinthians 9:7b*

God does not want us to begrudgingly give with a heart that says, in essence, "I'd rather spend this money on something else." He should never have to pry from our hands what He has put in our hands in the first place. We aren't to give because we feel like we have to, but because we want to. We want to see lives changed. We want to lay up treasures in heaven. We want Jesus to be exalted. And, most of all, we want to testify to the world that our contentment is not in our money, but in our God.

That's why the goal is not simply, "I'll give this amount," but instead, "I delight to give this amount." I want to give. I'm happy to give. I'd rather use this money for the kingdom of God than on anything else. Can you imagine how much God loves that? When God looks at the heart of a cheerful giver who is motivated by gratitude and faith and love ... He approves. He is deeply pleased. He loves it.

How does He feel about the reluctant giver who has no joy in giving? It doesn't say ... but it's clear that's not what He is looking for in His children. What He is looking for is those who mirror His image ... because He is the ultimate cheerful giver. All that we have is a gift from God ... and He delights to give to us.

In fact, before we move on to the next characteristic of giving, look with me again at verse 8...

*[8] 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. (ESV)*

One of the biggest obstacles to giving is the fear of needing. That is, we are afraid that if we give away for others, we will not have enough for ourselves. What if I lose my job? What if there is an emergency? What if the kids' college tuition costs too much? What if the stock market crashes? What if inflation rises? What if we can't afford retirement? And this verse reminds us that God is bigger than every "what if" that we can imagine ... and even if they *all* happen, God is able to provide for us.

That's the tone of this verse ... not just that God *can* replenish our funds, but that He *will* replenish our funds. This verse just rings with the lavish provision and generosity of God towards those who give: "all sufficiency in all things at all times." Does that sound like lacking what you need? Abounding grace so we can abound in every good work? Does that sound like there won't be enough for you?

Now, listen, this is not a promise that if you give generously then God is going to make you rich. This verse doesn't mean, "If you give \$100, then God is going to give you back \$200." I'm not saying He won't, but this isn't saying He will.

What this is saying is that even as we give away, there will always be enough. We don't have to understand how the math works or where the money is going to come from or "what if" something happens; we just need to trust that God keeps His promises. That He is ready, willing and able to provide for us as we seek His will for how to use the money and resources we have been given.

He doesn't bless us with money just so we can spend it on more comforts, but so that we can abound in every good work in this "partnership in the gospel" we are included in.

*Overflowing cups are not for us to choke on, but for us to let others drink from too.*

So, we are to give bountifully, personally, cheerfully and...

4. We are to give REGULARLY.

Here's what Paul wrote to the Corinthians in verses 1 and 2 of chapter 16 in his first letter to them...

*[1] Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do.  
[2] On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. (ESV)*

What we see here is a pattern for giving. He hasn't just said this to the church in Corinth, but has also given these same instructions to "the churches of Galatia." The point here is that giving is to be regular. It should be the normal practice for Christians to set aside money to give to the work of their local church. What we are talking about is to be prepared to give on a recurring basis. To be intentional about our giving as a part of our budget so it's an established and fixed part of our worship.

In fact, most commentators agree that Paul instructs these believers to give on "the first day of every week" because that's when the church typically gathered together to worship. And in Philippians 4:18 which we read earlier, Paul said their giving was "a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God."

Their giving was considered worship. Just as we are to not neglect gathering together (Hebrews 10:25), we are to not neglect giving when we are gathered together.

Now, when he says "the first day of every week," does that mean we have to give every Sunday morning when we come through the doors? Or does that mean we can't give during a Wednesday evening Bible study or during a weeklong revival or spontaneously on any other day? I don't think that's his intent or point here at all; I think his emphasis is on the consistent nature of our giving.

He doesn't want believers to be neglectful in their giving, unprepared to give or sporadic in their gifts so as to avoid any problems collecting what is needed. Whether you get paid weekly, bi-weekly, monthly or some other interval, your giving should be similar in regularity. The exact timing isn't as important as the ongoing nature of it is.

One other quick note before we move on. Notice that he writes, "*as he may prosper.*" Your translation may say, "*in keeping with your income*" or "*in proportion to his prosperity.*" This means to give in relation to what you have earned. As John Piper says...

*The idea seems to be this: to the proportion that you prosper, put more aside — not everything, just more for those who earn more, less for those who earn less. Put something aside.*

Again, the New Testament doesn't command a specific amount or percentage, but rather we are to give based on what we have been given. Listen...

*It is not a matter of how much we have to be generous with,  
but how generous we are with how much we have.*

Okay, we are to give bountifully, personally, cheerfully, regularly and the last characteristic we are going to cover is this...

5. We are to give SECRETLY.

Listen to what Jesus said in Matthew 6:1-4...

*[1] Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. [2] Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. [3] But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, [4] so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. (ESV)*

So, we see Jesus here encouraging his followers to avoid giving for the purpose of being praised by others. As with all of the Christian life, it is possible to do the right things for the wrong reasons. And so we aren't to give in order to get recognition for ourselves ... not only is that a selfish motive, but it's also a terrible reward. If we give in order to be seen giving, that's all we get out of it. The only reward is a brief moment of public applause or approval and it's over.

Listen, that's not worth it. It is far better to give in secret and lay up treasures in heaven and have an eternal reward from God that isn't gone when the moment is over. Instead of giving so we can hear some kudos from other people, let's give to hear our Father say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Here's the thing: when no one else in the world knows the good you are doing ... God sees it. And God is glorified through it. And God is pleased with it. And God will reward it.

The grace of God has worked in our lives and He is the One we boast in. We don't give to call attention to ourselves; we give to direct the attention of other people to Jesus. We love God. We love people. And we put our money where our mouth is without blowing our own horn.

There are plenty of other verses, but we'll save those for another time. So, let me recap...

We are to give...

- Bountifully, not sparingly.
- Personally, not legalistically.
- Cheerfully, not begrudgingly.
- Regularly, not occasionally.
- Secretly, not noticeably.

And if we're not giving like this, then we need to repent this morning. There is grace for us. Grace that forgives us for not stewarding money well and grace that frees us from the love of money so we start to steward it better.

*Money from God is a means to carry out the mission of God.*

Now, in all of this, I haven't said anything about "tithing" – which is to give ten percent of your income. And there's a reason for that. Tithing isn't commanded in the New Testament. It was an Old Testament requirement to give a tenth of one's income to provide for the ministers God called (the Levites) and the expenses of their ministry. But, for us today, there isn't a designated amount or percentage that we are commanded to give.

So, how much should you give?

*If you have a little, give a little. If you have a lot, give a lot.  
If you aren't giving, start to give. If you are giving, consider giving more.*

The amount or percentage is between you and God. So, here's what I encourage you to do when it comes to how much and how often you should give: pray about it and plan it.

*Prayerfully make a plan for giving.*

Listen to me: if your heart is to give as we've seen today ... God will make the specific numbers known to you and will make a way for you to give what He has made known. Review your giving as a partner in the gospel and prayerfully make a Biblically-based plan to give. Primarily to the local church and secondarily to other gospel-centered missionaries and ministries.

Now, my own thinking is this...

*The tithe – 10% - is a starting point to grow beyond as God prospers you.*

We should never be satisfied to let those who lived under the law outgive us who live under grace. We have a better covenant, a better sacrifice and better promises that should motivate us to give more, not less.

So, I'm going to try motivating you to give in the same way that the Apostle Paul motivated the Corinthians to give. In fact, I'm going to repeat his motivating words to you straight from the Bible.

Go back to where we left off in 2 Corinthians chapter 8. Paul has just held up the Macedonia churches as a model to offer a little motivation, but then he really presses in to the heart of motivation for giving in verses 8 and 9. Let's read those together...

*[8] I say this not as a command [that they should give], but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. [9] 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 by his poverty might become rich. (ESV)*

Paul doesn't command us or guilt-trip us or make empty promises to us ... He reminds us. He points us to Jesus, who didn't just give a tenth of Himself, but gave all, setting aside His privileges and position to come to earth and to suffer so we might become spiritually rich. Rich in grace. Rich in forgiveness. Rich in eternal life. Rich in salvation and all of the benefits and privileges and favor that come with it.

The King of Kings became the lowliest of servants for us. To live the perfect life we couldn't live. To die in our place on the cross to atone for our sin. To rise victoriously to secure abundant and eternal life for us.

And Paul says, that's your motivation for giving: the sacrificial giving of Jesus. Our motivation is the gospel. And if we find ourselves lacking the desire to give, then we have likely forgotten the lavish giving of Jesus toward us.

Listen...

Remember earlier when I told you the debt Paula and I had was so big it was going to take 70 years to pay it off. Well, we all have an even bigger debt that we will never be able to pay. We have a sin debt. The Bible says we owe God because we have broken His commandments. And it doesn't matter how much money we give or how many good things we do or how hard we try to be better, we can't even make a tiny payment toward that debt. And so, condemnation and everlasting suffering is what is due for us.

But, here's the incredibly good news...

## PARTNERSHIP IN THE GOSPEL

*Our biggest debt has already been paid.*

Listen to what the Bible says in Colossians 2:13-14...

*[13] And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, [14] by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. (ESV)*

Jesus paid a debt He didn't owe because we owed a debt we couldn't pay. And not only did He pay our debt, but He replaced that debt with riches.

And, so, this morning, I'm going to ask you a simple question. Are you still in over your head in sinful debt, or has it been canceled because you have put your faith in Jesus? If you haven't received the grace of God, then you can do it right here, right now. In the model prayer, Jesus instructed us to pray like this... "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

That's how your debt can be paid: ask God to forgive you. If you are willing to turn from your old sinful life to follow Jesus in faith, then ask Him to forgive your sin and transform your life. And if you mean it, He will do it.

If you have questions about this or want to make this decision today, we will have people on the front row you can come talk with. I'll be up here as well. Please come today and have that burden lifted from you and be made spiritually rich. We'd love to pray for you and talk with you.

For those of us who have already given our hearts and our lives to Jesus, let's delight to give money as well because of all He has given and promises to give to us. I love the way Don Carson puts it...

*"We should value our riches in Christ in this new covenant relationship so highly, and our freedom from sin so highly, and our gospel so highly, that we would simply love to give."*

And when we do, God is glorified because it reflects His generous nature and love for us. Giving honors God because it demonstrates we trust in His provision and treasure Him more than money. What it can buy is nothing compared to what is freely offered to us in Jesus.

Giving is an invitation into something wonderful: a partnership in the gospel that God works through to meet needs, transform lives and lavishly bless so that we will be happy in Him and He will be honored in us now and forever. Listen, you can trust God with your money; it's all His anyway. So, take a step of faith and see what God does.

*Money from God is a means to carry out the mission of God.*

Let me close with Romans 8:35-36 which says this...

*Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. (ESV)*

Let's pray.

*Heavenly Father, You have made us spiritually rich through what Jesus has done for us. Your love is so extravagant and your grace is so lavish and your blessings are so incredibly generous, it's almost too good to be true. But the gospel is true. Our sin debt has been paid and our inheritance has been secured. What a God You are! Father, everything we have is yours and so I pray You would help us be good stewards of it, giving it back and giving it away as You lead us. Indeed, give us a delight to do so. For those who haven't tasted of Your grace, would you right here in this moment call to them to come to Jesus and be saved. We're waiting to talk with them, and more importantly, You are waiting to receive them. We give You all the praise, in Jesus' Name, amen.*



## Reflection Questions

1. What stood out to you from this message as most meaningful? Why?
2. What was the central idea or theme from this message?
3. What Bible verses or passages were used, and how do they support the message?
4. How does this message relate to your life right now?
5. In what ways did this message convict, encourage or inspire you?
6. What good news did you receive in this message?
7. What did you learn about God that is praiseworthy in this message?
8. How was grace and the gospel presented in this message?
9. What do you think God wants you to do as a response to this message?
10. With whom do you need to share or discuss this message?

### PRAY IT

- *God, I praise you because...*
- *I confess that I struggle with...*
- *I thank you for...*
- *Please help me...*

## Connecting With Me

If you have questions about any of the enclosed material, or if you have any other questions about life with Jesus, please reach out to me by using the *Contact* form at the bottom of the page at *JimmyBrown.com* (making sure you enter your email address correctly). I will personally reply back to you, usually within 24 hours (excluding holidays or weekends).

*NOTE: There are a number of free resources available at [www.JimmyBrown.com](http://www.JimmyBrown.com), and I regularly add more to the site. Check back often for additional materials to access at no cost.*

### Other Connections

- Social media (personal page): [www.Facebook.com/thejimmydbrown/](http://www.Facebook.com/thejimmydbrown/)
- Daily devotions: [www.FinishLineFaith.com](http://www.FinishLineFaith.com) or [www.Facebook.com/FinishLineFaith/](http://www.Facebook.com/FinishLineFaith/)
- Travel / mission vlog (with my wife, Paula): [www.TheMissionAmerica.com](http://www.TheMissionAmerica.com)

*If this resource has been helpful to you, please reach out and let me know.  
And please pass this document on to other people who may, by the grace of God, be helped too.*