Text 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

**Intro Questions**

**This week is Thanksgiving! Share one thing that you are most thankful for and why.**

**What is the best gift or act of kindness that you have received?**

**Worship**

**How were you blessed through the service this weekend?**

**What was one thing that challenged you this week?**

**What was your main takeaway from the message?**

**Bible Study**

*This week, we will dive into Paul's encouragement for generosity by looking at the heart of the passage used for this week's message from 2 Corinthians. The church of Corinth was rather messy and dysfunctional. You can read about their troubles in 1 Corinthians. Many in the church disregarded his letter, and so he visited in person and finally wrote the letter we know as 2 Corinthians. The letter's primary purpose is to challenge the church back into orthodoxy by refocusing the people on the core of our faith, which is the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.*

*Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-7*

**What is Paul encouraging the Corinthians to do?** He is asking them to give generously. **How is he using the example of the Macedonians?** He points to the Macedonians generosity despite their wealth. We can get a sense that he is trying to stir up a bit of the competitive spirit or maybe guilt among the better-off Corinthians. **What is the purpose of the offering collection?** The collection is for the church in Jerusalem, which faced extreme hardship due to persecution and famine.

**Were the Macedonians or Corinthians coerced into giving?** *Look at verses 3-5* The Macedonians gave willingly, sacrificially, and in response to what Christ had done for them. **How does Paul encourage us to give?** Like we heard in the sermon, we are encouraged to give cheerfully.

**How do you respond when you are unwilling to give or uncheerful to give?**

**Have you ever been asked to give in a similar way? How did you respond?**

**What is the purpose and value of wealth? How should it be used?**

**Why is Paul so emphatic about giving? What is the source of our giving? Why is it a central part of worship?** *Reread verse 9.*Paul spends so much time on giving because it is a clear response to the generosity we have received from Christ. Christ gave up everything so that we may be saved. If God did not send his Son, we would still be spiritually deficient and without hope, but because of Christ, we have received all the riches we need. We have received his righteousness and holiness. It is Christ's sacrifice that is the source of our giving.

Like today, most charitable donations were made to bring glory or recognition to the giver. Paul's reason is in stark contrast in that it is not to glorify the giver of the donation but to glorify the giver of all things.

**What does giving graciously do for others?** It brings them relief, but it also is a witness to the real heart of the believers. By being generous with the things we have, we proclaim with our resources our core belief that Christ has fulfilled all of our needs.

**What does giving do to our hearts?** Giving reorients our hearts around our dependence on God of all things. IT reminds us that we are simply stewards of God's many blessings.

**What does giving generously not do?** It does not place us any closer to God or cause us to receive more blessings. God's love for us is not conditional, and we cannot earn it. He and him alone secures the relationship that we have with our savior and creator. The freedom we have in that security is what allows us to give so freely.

**How have you been affected by giving?**

**Reflection**

**What is the biggest need that you see in your community? What blessings have you been given that could help?**

**How generous have you been with what you have been blessed with? What goals of generosity do you have for this coming season and year?**