

God Is Able

TEXT: 2 Cor. 9

INTRODUCTION: We have seen the vision of what God wants to empower us as a church to do as a part of His Acts 1:8 strategy in taking the gospel to His world. We have said “Yes, Lord. We will join you in that work.” We have said, “We are ready to move forward with VISION JERUSALEM and start developing the property and buildings He has given us to house and expand our Benevolence, Sheltering Tree, and Medical Mission Ministries.”

We have said Yes with our lips; next week is the time for us to say Yes with our hearts and our pocketbooks. The two are inseparably linked, for Jesus said

Matthew 6:21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Next Sunday morning we will all be turning in a sheet of paper that states what we believe God wants to provide through us toward the construction of The Center of Hope and the development of our VISION JERUSALEM.

Therefore today, I want to go to a passage of Scripture that speaks exactly to where we are as a church. We have decided to do this, to take this offering which begins with our decisions that we give to the Lord next Sunday. So this week we are getting ready.

That is exactly where the Corinthians were as the Holy Spirit addressed them through the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians, chapter 9. They had committed to take an offering for the poor who were in need of food, and clothes, and medical care in Judea because of a deep and sustained famine in that land. Paul is sending people ahead of himself to get the offering ready, and he gives them this instruction.

The only way this could fit us any better is if the book were addressed to the believers at St. Andrew Baptist rather than to the believers at Corinth.

2 Cor. 9 ¹ Now concerning the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you; ² for I know your willingness, about which I boast of you to the Macedonians, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal has stirred up the majority. ³ Yet I have sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this respect, that, as I said, you may be ready; ⁴ lest if *some* Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to mention you!) should be ashamed of this confident boasting. ⁵ Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go to you ahead of time, and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which *you had* previously promised, that it may be ready as *a matter of* generosity and not as a grudging obligation.

⁶ But this *I say*: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ *So let* each one *give* as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly

or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may have an abundance for every good work. ⁹ As it is written: “*He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever.*”

¹⁰ Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have *sown* and increase the fruits of your righteousness, ¹¹ while *you are* enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God. ¹² For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God, ¹³ while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for *your* liberal sharing with them and all *men*, ¹⁴ and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you. ¹⁵ Thanks *be* to God for His indescribable gift!

Let me begin by paraphrasing the first five verses: I am writing this so that when the time to collect the offering comes, you will be ready to give; not because you are pressured into it or feel like you have to, but because you want to, because you are excited about it.

I remember when our two boys were 4 and 5 years old. We were in our first pastorate, and we were in a capital stewardship preparation time for the building of a Worship Center. A few couples had gone to eat fried chicken after church on a Sunday night and we were talking about what God was doing in our church. Person after person began their comments around the table with the words, “I’m so excited.” After listening to this for a while, our oldest, Jeremy, pipes up and says, “I’m so exciting!”

That is what I want for each of us right now – this week, next Sunday, the weeks beyond.

I want each of us to be so excited about what God is doing among us.

I also want each of us to be in an exciting personal adventure with God.

Keep something firmly planted in your mind. **This project does not belong to us; it belongs to God.** It originated with Him, and what God begins He completes.

1. He is the One who gave to SABC the Benevolence, Pregnancy Care, and Medical Ministries for us to use to reach out with the loving arms of Jesus to Bay County.
2. He is the One who has provided miraculously for the supply of those ministries through all the years of their existence.
3. He is the One who has given us VISION 1:8 and VISION JERUSALEM.
4. He is the One who has now given us the property and buildings as tools for the fulfilling of that vision.

He is the One!

And as He instructs us in how we may come along side of Him and join Him in this work of expansion and refining of these ministries that belong to Him there is a single overarching message that comes through. That message is ... God is Able.

Verse 8 begins with “God is able ...”

I. GOD IS ABLE

A. Able to do what?

B. Anything He Wants!

What can He do for Israel when the path God chose for them is blocked by the waters of the Red Sea?	He can roll the waters back and make them stand up like a wall on the right and on the left.
What can He do for His people when they are to take possession of the Promised Land but come to the fortress city of Jericho?	He can cause those walls that were thick enough to have rooms built into them and chariots to drive on top of them, to fall down flat before the surrounding army.
What can God do for a widow whose sons are about to be sold to pay the debt left behind by her dead husband?	He can cause oil to flow out of a six ounce jar and fill 1 gallon, 3 gallon, 5 gallon pots of oil in a seeming never empty stream until every container in the house is full to the brim, so it can be sold to pay the debt and supply the widow's need.
What can He do for Lazarus when he's already been dead four days and his corpse lies wrapped in a cold tomb filled with the stench of decomposition?	Our Lord can call dead cells to life again, make decaying organs regenerate, and give life to the lifeless and cause him to walk out of that tomb and live again.
What can God do for the Corinthians, who are not exactly examples of mature spirituality, and who are not even classified as wealthy or well to do by their neighbors? What can he do with this little group of believers to meet needs of the hurting far away in Judea and show to them the love and grace of Christ?	God says to them, "I am able!" I am able to give to you so that you will be able to give to them. I can give seed to you so that you can give fruit to them!
What can the Lord do for us as on the heels of following Him in the building of the Student Center and the KidZone now turn around to redo buildings so we can give more food, more clothing, more diapers and baby clothes, more medical care, more of the gospel, and more help to people to escape the cycle of sin and poverty? What can God do in this?	<p>God is able to do whatever is necessary to put into the hands of His people everything they need in order to have an abundance for this and every good work.</p> <p>2 Cor 9:8 And God <i>is</i> able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all <i>things</i>, may have an abundance for every good</p>

	work.
--	-------

Now I do not have to be a mind reader that some bright guy or gal out there is asking in his or her mind, "OK, so if God is able, why are we being asked to decide what we can give for the next three years, over and above our regular giving?"

I'm glad you asked. If you had not asked that question, I would be through right now and that would establish a terrible precedent.

It is a good question.

Why was Paul taking an offering if God is able?

Why did men roll away the stone in front of Lazarus' tomb if God is able?

Why did Elisha tell the widow to gather all the jars she could find if God is able?

Why did Joshua's army have to march around Jericho, blow the trumpets and shout if God is able?

Why did Moses have to hold his rod in the air above the waters of the sea if God is able?

Because ...

II. GOD DESIRES TO PROVIDE THROUGH HIS PEOPLE.

God could have sucked the waters of the Red Sea dry and let His people pass. He could have rained fire and brimstone on Jericho as He did Sodom and Gomorrah.

He could have turned humble furniture to gold for the widow, could have caused Lazarus to walk through the stone over the grave, could have dropped coins on the believers in Judah to meet all their needs,

But God chose to provide through His people.

God chose to let His people share in His work.

God chose to allow believers to become the pipeline of the provision He would send.

2 Cor. 9:8 And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may have an abundance for every good work.

III. THE PURPOSE OF THE PIPELINE

A. **To accomplish God's purpose** – to build the Center of Hope, to finish paying for our Student Center and KidZone so we will not be hindered by debt.

B. **To bless us.**

2 Cor. 9: 10-11 ¹⁰ Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have *sown* and increase the fruits of your righteousness, ¹¹ while *you are* enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.

And to increase the blessing, He offers this word of wisdom.

2 Cor. 9:6-7 ⁶ But this *I say*: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ *So let each one give* as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

This is a statement of principle of how God has designed this universe.

Jesus said the same thing.

Luke 6:38 Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”

CONCLUSION: God is able! He will provide and bless us as He does it if we will join Him in His work. Each of us must decide.