

AUC: Union Global Partnership (eGiving: Union Partnership)

A Life Spent For the Cause of God

2 Corinthians 8:5 — “And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.”

A certain missionary had challenged his church members to make a sacrifice for the cause of God. Not long after, when visiting one of the poorest families in the church, he could not believe his eyes. As he approached the house, he noticed that the eldest son was pulling the plough, in place of the only ox the family once owned. When the missionary asked, “Where is the ox?” he was surprised by the answer: “We sold it so we could give an offering for the new place of worship to God.” The missionary couldn’t hold the tears as he grasped the enormity of the sacrifice made by the family.

In 2 Corinthians 8, Paul presents the example of the Macedonian church to teach the principles of true faithfulness. Macedonian Christians lived in extreme poverty and faced persecution for believing in the Lord Jesus. Many under similar conditions would operate in a self-preservation mode, but not the Macedonians.

The Macedonians’ faithfulness teaches us the following principles:

1. Temporal limitations do not mean spiritual limitations. The Macedonian example eloquently teaches a valuable lesson to those in the church who are called to serve the Lord in a situation of poverty. We look at our condition and ask ourselves: What can we give the Lord being so poor? As poor as we are, can we still give something to the Lord?

Some of our people may be experiencing financial trials and challenges, but the strong example of the Macedonians silences all our excuses until we are forced to confess that it is our selfishness and self-preservation mode that prevents us from giving generously to the cause of God.

2. They understood the great gift of God’s grace. By nature, we are self-centred and not capable of giving generously. To give freely to God’s cause, we must find God’s grace in Jesus Christ. The understanding of His sacrifice on the cross for us will touch the invisible heartstrings and melt the selfishness that resides in us.

Appeal: The secret of true giving is found in giving ourselves to God. When Christ owns our hearts, He also owns our wallets and purses. We have good examples to follow, so what we need to do is to go to God’s presence, and He will give us the strength and ability to do what must be done.