

COMFORT OR JOY?

CHRISTMAS OFFERING MESSAGE – LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS

START WITH AN ICEBREAKER QUESTION: YOU CAN FIND SOME ON PAGE 6 [HERE](#).

TEXT:

2 Corinthians 8:1-8 (NIV)

*And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their **extreme** poverty welled up in rich generosity.*

For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints.

And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will. So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part.

But just as you excel in everything--in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us--see that you also excel in this grace of giving. I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others.

WHAT IS SOMETHING GOOD THAT HAS HAPPENED IN YOUR LIFE THAT A FEW YEARS AGO YOU NEVER THOUGHT WOULD HAPPEN? THIS WOULD BE AN "I CAN'T" THAT IS NOW A "I DO."

WHAT IS A MEMORY OF POVERTY FROM YOUR CHILDHOOD? PERHAPS YOUR OWN POVERTY, OR SOMEONE ELSE'S.

HOW DO YOU DEFINE "POOR?" HOW DO YOU DEFINE "RICH?"

WHAT RELATION DO YOU SEE BETWEEN POVERTY AND GENEROSITY? BETWEEN TRIALS AND JOY?

2 Corinthians 8:1-2 (NIV)

¹ *And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches.*

² *Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.*

WHAT ARE YOUR FIRST THOUGHTS WHEN A SPECIAL OFFERING IS ANNOUNCED? HOW HAVE THOSE FIRST THOUGHTS CHANGED OVER THE YEARS?

WHO HAS BEEN MODELS AND MENTORS FOR YOU IN THE DISCIPLINE OF GIVING?

STORIES OF GIVING ARE RARELY SHARED FOR FEAR OF BEING SEEN AS BRAGGING. YET, HOW ARE PEOPLE SUPPOSED TO BE INSPIRED, ENCOURAGED, AND MENTORED IN GIVING IF THESE STORIES ARE NOT SHARED. SHARE A STORY WHERE GOD USED YOU IN A GIFT OF GIVING BEYOND THE TITHE.

WHY DO YOU THINK GIVING IS ONE OF THE LAST THINGS MANY BELIEVERS “EXCEL” IN?

2 Corinthians 8:7-8 (NIV)

⁷ *But just as you excel in everything--in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us--see that you also excel in this grace of giving.*

⁸ *I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others.*

PASTOR MARK SAID, “GOD CAN NOT INCREASE YOUR CAPACITY AND LEAVE YOU IN YOUR COMFORT.” WHAT HAVE YOU LABELED CONTENTMENT THAT MIGHT REALLY JUST BE COMPLACENCY

WHAT DREAM COULD YOU LIVE TO SEE IF YOU INCREASED YOUR CONDITIONING AND STOP WAITING ON YOUR CONDITIONS