Life of Giving - Fr Daoud Lamei

https://www.youtube.com/embed/sD3box3WN58?si=mC1boIAiRuTDU4Kn

"Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom." (Luke 6:38)

Give a smile, give a good word, money, time, a listening ear, a warm welcome

The more you give, the more you receive

The Giving Church:

Acts 11

- "Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul." (Acts 11:29-30)

2 Corinthians 8:

- "Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia"



- "that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality."
  - Christians in Macedonia was persecuted (as were Philippi and Thessalonica)

    - Despite their persecution and afflictions, they were rejoicing in their giving
    - Deep Poverty
        - Reminds us of the widow with two mites... entee na2sa fa2r?? Are you lacking poverty that you give even what you barely have?
    - Riches of their Liberality
        - Reminds Fr Daoud of a man in the service of the poor once, who seeing the poor did not realize people were living like this. So he took out everything from his wallet and asked Abouna "would God accept this from me?" and they told him "it's a lot, it's too much" and he said "if I knew people were living like this, I would have done more but this is what I have right now. Will God accept it?" This is a man who acted without thinking - he acted from the love that was in his heart. Once we introduce thinking, we start to get in the way of the giving heart
- "For I bear witness that according to *their* ability, yes, and beyond *their* ability"
    - There is one who gives according to his ability and this is great (katar khero)
    - There is one who gives beyond his ability
        - Fr Daoud has seen people over 80 years old serving the Lord in such a way that is beyond what their body would allow, or what their age would allow and it is beyond biology and you wonder how are they doing it? Beyond their ability.
- "*they were* freely willing,"
    - You may ask someone for help with something and he says "I'll think about it" - but freely willing means without thinking. They are willing
    - Giving has to be from a willing heart, not forced
    - Don't wait for someone to say "give me" - this can even ruin the giving
    - Some of these Macedonians heard about the need in Jerusalem, and they encouraged each other to give as much as they could and even more, freely. They did not wait for St Paul to tell them or to ask them.
    - Not waiting for the church to say "come serve" but to come and serve
        - The day of service is the most valuable day of the week
    - Not waiting for the church to say "we have a project and we need funds" but to come and give
        - The day of giving your tithes and more than your tithes is the day of your happiness because you are laying up for yourself treasures in heaven
- "imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints."
    - With respect and humility, they urged St Paul
    - The "gift" or "the grace" (al ne3ma) - it's not called money, but grace. It's God's grace
    - He who gives is just a middleman, taking from the hand of God and putting in the hand of someone else who needs it
    - And ministering to the saints - not "the poor" but the saints
- "And not *only* as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and *then* to us by the will of God"
    - Before the giving, there was consecration to the Lord
    - They gave themselves to St Paul and said "whatever you need from me"

- "So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well."
  - There is organization in what is given. Titus here is responsible for receiving their gift, organizing it, recording it, and making sure it is delivered appropriately. (as he had begun, so he would also complete)
  - Just like in the 5 loaves and 2 fish (those were a gift!) and yet the Lord organized. He told the disciples to separate them into groups of 50 and then each disciple took a basket and started to distribute to the groups - this is how they knew there were 5000 men!
- "But as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—*see* that you abound in this grace also."
  - Just as you hear sermons, just as you pray the psalms, just as you read the Bible, just as you serve in Sunday School, see that you abound in THIS GRACE also. Giving.
  - Don't say "well I attend many liturgies and I read the Bible" - yes but not without giving.
  - Giving is a grace that gives more to the giver than the receiver
- "I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others"
  - He is not giving a commandment to the Corinthians here to give a certain amount or to do anything, but he is giving them the example of the Macedonians and how they gave, and how their joy was full
- "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."
  - Christ, who was the richest - decided to be born in a manger, to a poor family, to live as a carpenter
  - You will be rich by His poverty - when He became poor, He gave us the whole of the heavens
- "And in this I give advice: It is to your advantage not only to be doing what you began and were desiring to do a year ago; but now you also must complete the doing *of it;* that as *there was* a readiness to desire *it,* so *there* also *may be* a completion out of what *you* have."
  - Again, he's not giving a commandment but advice
  - "Shed 7elak" - what you started a year ago, complete today
  - Giving has a weird effect... you give at first as you are unsure. Then you see that there is a blessing, so you give more. The blessing increases and there is peace and goodness, so you are transformed from the Act of Giving to the Desire of Giving

What to Give

Although we discussed here the giving of money or things, there are other equally important ways of giving:

- Some people don't need money, but need for someone just to ASK about them
- Some need a smile
- Some need encouragement
- Some need comfort (tab tab 3aleh)
- Some need medicine

- Some need visitation
- Some need guidance
- Some need to mourn and someone to mourn with them
- All of these are needs that have in front of them the virtue of giving

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