

Experiencing God's Abundant Provision

by Harrison Conley

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This morning, I want to talk to you about sowing and reaping. Sowing and reaping. What you may not know about this principle is that it actually stretches across the board. It touches each area and arena of our lives. This principle matters when it comes to the area of our relationship. It applies when it comes to our parenting, it applies when it comes to work, and it even applies to leadership. It touches every area of our life. But this morning, I want to talk to you about this principle in regard to our finances.

The reason I want to do that is because I believe that this is one of the major areas where we can actually see the provision of God at work in our lives. Now, having said that, this is not the message that I had planned on bringing you this morning. As a matter of fact, I had planned to bring you a different message. I had studied some other things, but the more I jumped into the Word, the more I felt the Holy Spirit tugging me in this direction. I've just been at this long enough to know that if the Holy Spirit pulls you in a certain direction, you better just go that certain direction.

That's what we're going to talk about this morning. On top of that, yesterday, I don't know; maybe some of you were there. We had over 700 people go through a seminar on money management. It just seems like this is a topic that the Holy Spirit is wanting to focus on this weekend here at the church. Having said that, I also realize that the moment the preacher mentions money, some people get uncomfortable, and they start to bristle a little bit. Honestly, I get that because I've heard some of your stories and at other churches, previously, at church experiences, and you've kind of felt manipulated when it comes to money.

I've heard some stories, and my heart goes out to you. Before we jump into this, I want to say a couple of things. If that's been your experience, I want to let you know a couple of things. Number one, I'd like to say this to you: from an eternal standpoint, money that has been sowed into the kingdom of God is never wasted. There is always an eternal ROI, a return on investment. I think we will not know the ripple effect that our giving has had until we step into heaven, until we step into eternity, and we see all the lives that were changed by the glory of Jesus as a result of our sowing into the kingdom of God. That's what I want to say. Eternally, from that perspective, money sowed in the kingdom is never wasted.

Here's the second thing I want to say to you. This is something that I've shared before, but I want to make sure you hear it again. I want to give you a couple of promises when it comes to the topic of money on this particular platform. Here's the first promise I want to make you. You don't ever have to give a cent to feel like you're a part of this church. You don't. End of story. You don't ever have to give a cent. Now, having said that, we hope that you do. We hope that you participate. We hope that you feel connected to the vision and the mission of this house. That you would co-labor with us as we bring a living Jesus to a dying world. But in order to call this place home, you don't ever have to give a cent.

Here's the second promise I'm going to make you. From this platform, we are going to teach you what the Bible says. When it comes to money, we're not going to teach you our opinion.

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We're not going to teach you what we think that you want to hear. We're going to unashamedly take you to the Scriptures and teach you what the Word of God says, but you play a part in that. Here's the part you play. Bring your Bible to church. Follow along with the preacher. Read it, meditate on it, and double-check. Make sure that what is being said from this stage is actually what the Word of God says, so we're in this thing together. That's the second promise I'll make you. Here's the third promise: we will never teach on something that we, as a pastoral team or we as a staff, are not actively engaged in ourselves. We would never do that. That would be hypocritical. Listen, it is a privilege to lead the way when it comes to giving. It's a privilege to lead the way when it comes to being obedient to God's Word.

Also, I just want you to understand our motivation in teaching on finance and in teaching on money. The motivation is number one: whether you believe it or not, we love you, and we want your life to be blessed. Genuinely, that's why we teach on it because we want your life to be blessed. Number two, we teach on it because Jesus taught on it. He taught a lot on it. When you take all of His sermons and all of His teachings, and boil them down, He talks about money, finance, giving, generosity, and stewardship, one out of every four teachings. Just be lucky Jesus isn't here in the flesh teaching you because once a month, you'd get the money talk. Listen, the greatest goal in this life is maturity, to become more like Christ.

If generosity and giving mattered to Him, if He taught on it, then I think it's important that we teach on it as well because we need to be more like Him. Is that alright? Those are the promises that I will make you. Having said that, 2 Corinthians 9. Let's jump into this: if you got your Bible, 2 Corinthians 9. What I'm going to share with you today is not all mine. As much as I'd love to take credit for it, the truth is almost all of what I'm going to share with you today is the wisdom and practical principles that were taught to me.

Some by my parents, some by other pastors, and some by mentors in my life, but these are all things that I have put into practice in every season of my life. From the time I was a teenager, to when I became a newlywed, even until today, when I'm an old man with gray hair in my beard with a couple of teenagers. That's what I'm going to teach. I'm going to teach from a place of experience, a place where I've been there, done that, and got the T-shirt. Everything I'm going to share with you is the wisdom I've gleaned both through the Word of God and through other people. I promise you, if you will take these Scriptures, if you will apply them, if you will meditate upon them, you will experience the abundant provision of God in your life.

Now, to be clear, that doesn't mean that suddenly, you're going to have a million dollars in the bank. It doesn't mean that suddenly, there's going to be this windfall of cash that comes your way. Truthfully, it doesn't even mean that there's going to be a surplus of finances in your life, but what it does mean is that you will have all that you need. Every need will be met, and you will have enough to bless others on top of it. Let's go to Scriptures. 2 Corinthians 9. Let me give you some context, and then we're going to read, but what we're about to read are words written by the Apostle Paul. He's writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He's writing to a group of believers living in a city called Corinth. This is a familiar group to Paul. He had spent two years in that city. Two years helping to establish this church. He had lived with them. He had worked with them. Where we're about to pick up reading, he's talking to them about a financial collection that they're getting ready to take up.

They're getting this offering together so they can give it to a group of persecuted Christians living in the city of Jerusalem. As Paul writes about this financial offering, he does something really interesting. He almost makes a bit of a side note where he begins to explain some of the principles that God has woven into the fabric of the universe and how God is using these

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principles, using these laws in relationship to our finances. This is the context from which we're going to read this morning. As we read, I'm going to highlight a few things, but you're going to see one principle in particular come to the forefront. Second Corinthians 9, let's begin in verse number six. Paul writes, and he says this, (2 Corinthians 9:6-11 NIV)

⁶ Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷ Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to bless you abundantly, (There's our word.) so that in all things (not just financially) at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. ⁹ As it is written: "They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever." ¹⁰ Now he (speaking of God) who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹ You will be enriched in every way (why?) so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

If you would just keep your Bible open here, we're going to reference the Scriptures throughout the sermon. Now, you probably noticed that I did my best to highlight it in this verse or verses of Scripture. Paul mentions multiple times this principle of sowing and reaping. Nine different times, he uses words like seeds, sowing, scattering, and harvest. We hear those terms, and immediately, we think about farming. We know it's a universally known thing that when you sow seeds into the ground, God has hardwired those seeds to grow and produce fruit.

What we see in this passage, again, is that Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, then takes this principle of sowing and reaping and puts it in the context of our finances. This morning, I want to give you three seed principles, or three laws around seeds and sowing, that we see here in our text. Just a bit of a forewarning: each of these three seed principles, you're going to hear them and be like, "Seriously?" They're going to be really obvious. You're going to be like, "These are elementary." But, if I'm honest, even though they're obvious, so many of us don't apply them in our lives, particularly in the area of our finances. Let me maybe phrase it like this. What can seem completely obvious to us in some areas of our lives, we can actually be blind to the "same things" relevance in a different area of our life and end up missing out on God's blessing because of it. You may know. You may recognize the things I'm about to share with you, but the real question that each of us has to answer is this, "Am I applying this principle in my life currently?"

Here's the first law about seeds and sowing. The first seed principle is you reap what you sow. Some of you are like, "Seriously?" I told you. It's simple. You reap what you sow. Watch this. The Bible says in Galatians 6:7, "Don't be deceived. God is not mocked. Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap." It's the simple principle of sowing and reaping. If you sow apple seeds, what are you going to get? Apples. If you want tomatoes, what do you have to do? You have to plant tomato seeds. Again, it's this principle of reaping what you sow, and it's actually a law that God has established in the earth, and He did it at creation. If you have your Bible, Genesis 1. Let me just take you there. I promise you. I'm going somewhere. Genesis 1:11-12 NIV. It says,

¹¹ Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. ¹² The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

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God has hardwired this law or this principle into the universe, but it doesn't just apply to farming. It applies to everything. You reap what you sow. Recently, my path crossed with another pastor. This is a guy, we're not friends, but we've known of each other. Our paths have crossed a number of times over the years. I go back a decade. Fifteen years ago, we were both youth pastors at different churches in different parts of the country. We've known of each other. Anyway, our paths crossed recently, and he was telling me about some of the things that were going on in his church. He was looking for some counsel, and he was like, "Man, the staff's gone crazy. There's this one particular employee who's been sowing seeds of discord, and the staff's trying to turn on me. My youth pastor is trying to usurp my authority."

He went on and on. He's like, "What should I do?" and I'm like, "Man, I don't know." I did my best to encourage him, but I walked away from that conversation. I was actually lying in bed that night, and I was thinking about the situation. I began to think back to when that guy had been a youth pastor. When he was a youth pastor, he had done some of the same things that were happening to him now. How he had actually sowed some seeds of discord in the staff, and he tried to turn the staff.

He said, "Hey, I thought I could do my job better than the senior pastor could do his job." He tried to usurp that authority, and it all blew up in his face. I know he was very repentant about it and had to move to a different church and stay in that same line of calling. He still wanted to be a pastor. Now he's the lead pastor, and the same thing's happening to him. As I laid in bed thinking about that whole scenario, I couldn't help but think about the principle God has hardwired into the earth: that you reap what you sow. That's in the context of leadership.

Think about it in the context of marriage. There's a story of a lady here in the church who wanted some counsel around her marriage and relationship with her husband. I don't believe her husband was a believer at that time. I don't believe he was following Jesus, and their marriage had become incredibly difficult, almost untenable. She comes seeking counsel, and she gets pointed to a particular Scripture, Luke 6, where Jesus said, "Give, and it'll be given to you, pressed down, shaken together, and running over."

In the context in which Jesus spoke, He's talking about giving love and giving forgiveness. "Give, and it will be given to you." This lady takes that counsel and decides she's going to try it and apply God's Word in her life and her marriage. She begins to sow seeds of love and forgiveness toward her husband. He'd act up. He wouldn't respond to certain things, and she'd be like, "It's not easy, but I kept sowing seeds of love and seeds of forgiveness." Before you know it, she gets back in contact with us, and she says, "Man, God turned my whole marriage around. As soon as I began to sow those seeds and put the Word of God into practice in my life, the atmosphere in our house changed. It's almost like my husband's a completely different man."

She was just giving so much praise and glory to God for it. But here's the point: sowing and reaping is not just for farmers. It's a principle. It's a law that God has hardwired into the universe. Catch this: in the text that we read this morning, Paul is using it in the context of our finances. He's talking about it in the context of money. In essence, what he's saying to believers there at Corinth, what he's saying to us as the modern-day church, is this, "If you want to reap finances, you got to sow finances." Look back at our passage, 2 Corinthians 9:6 NIV. Paul says this,

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⁶ Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

You reap what you sow. Again, we have to apply this in the principle of sowing and reaping in its context in which he's talking about our finances. If you sow a little bit, you're going to reap a little bit. If you sow a lot, you're going to reap a lot. Now, some of you hear me say that and a bunch of red flags go up for you. And you're like, "Man, are you teaching that the apostle Paul was teaching a prosperity gospel? Where it was all about making money and cash and prizes falling from the sky?" No, I'm not saying that at all. Paul's not teaching a prosperity gospel. For those that are maybe new to the conversation or didn't grow up going to church, let me just explain what this is. There does exist a false, spiritually destructive teaching called "the prosperity gospel." It essentially goes like this: God exists as a Cosmic Piñata, and your faith works like that stick. The more faith that you have, the more cash and prizes you can collect from God. The richer you are must mean the more righteous and faith-filled you are. And the poorer you are, the less faith you must have.

Now, here's the problem with that, and it's a big problem. You see, the problem with that is the Bible. Because the Bible is full of people who had gigantic faith but ended up with really small bank accounts, yet they're going to be rich in the kingdom of God. Now, does God want to bless you? Yes, He does. I believe that with all my heart, and the Scriptures teach us that God wants to bless us. But here's the thing: if you're solely focused on financial blessing, you're going to end up really disappointed because finances are pretty far down the list of the good things that God wants to give you.

Let's think about a few good things that God has given us. How about the fact that He's given us His Holy Spirit to live in us and to dwell among us? How about the fact He's given us the gift of peace that supersedes all human understanding and is not dependent upon circumstance or situation? How about the fact that every single morning, we wake up and take breath in our lungs? Each and every day, He loads us down with benefits. He blesses us with a fresh provision of His mercy and His grace. Hear me. If financial provision is all you're looking for, if financial blessing is all that you want, not only are you going to be disappointed, but I'm telling you, your God is too small.

The other problem that comes with teaching the prosperity gospel is this: it puts all your focus on blessings and not on the giver of the blessings. All of your focus then comes on the gift and not the giver of the gift. What happens when you focus just on the blessing is you actually come to a point where you don't want God anymore. You just want the stuff He can give you. The moment you put a greater desire on stuff over God, my friend, you've lost the plot, and you've lost it in a big way. We don't follow Jesus because He makes our lives better. No, we wholeheartedly follow Jesus because He's better than life.

Listen, when we follow Him, we have the promise that we get Him. Catch that, we get Him. That happens through the presence of His Holy Spirit in our lives. He is our great reward. Everything else, any other blessing, is secondary to the fact that we get Him. That's the prosperity gospel, and it's such a destructive teaching. Because of it, so many people in the church run in the opposite direction, and that's not biblical either. They embrace what's called "a poverty gospel." Which essentially is this mentality or this mindset that says, basically, the poorer you are, the holier you are. And the richer you are, the more sinful and the more corrupt you must be.

Let me maybe try and explain it like this. Recently, I was with a group of guys, and one of them was on their social media, on Instagram, and they pulled up a particular person's feed, and they

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were looking through the pictures. I happened to be sitting next to them. They were like, "Look at this guy. Look at the clothes he's wearing. Look at the car that he's driving. Look at that house, man. This guy must have a greed problem."

What that guy didn't know was that the pictures he was showing me were pictures of my friend. Now, I don't have a lot of friends, but the ones I do have, they're stuck with me for life. I probably wasn't as kind to this guy as I should have been. He's showing me pictures of my friend, "Oh, he's got a greed problem." I let him have it a little bit. I said, "Actually, the dude that you're talking about is my friend. He and his wife are the most generous people that I know." I go, "Check this: I knew them before they had money, and they were the most generous people I knew then." I go, "God can trust them with finance, so He has opened doors of business." They've got this water company. God's blessed them. It's amazing.

I told this guy, "What you don't know is that he gives six figures into the gospel every single year. What you don't know is that he has personally paid for thousands of clean water wells to be placed in third-world countries all over the globe." I said, "Hey, he doesn't have a greed problem, but you might have a judgmental problem." Hear me. That's what a poverty gospel mindset does. It creeps into our hearts. It creeps into our minds. Pretty soon, we embrace this thinking that rich people are bad and poor people are good.

Now, don't get me wrong, sometimes that can be the case. But when it comes to God's standard, when it comes to finances, and this whole good versus bad thing, the dividing standard between good and bad is not rich and poor. It's generosity and greed. How many of you know there are some rich people who are incredibly generous, and there's some poor people who are incredibly greedy? Just like the flip of that is true. There's some poor people who are incredibly generous and some rich people who are incredibly greedy. From God's standard, it's not about rich and poor. It's about whether you are generous or greedy.

I said this in the first service. I'll just add it again. I think it's important to say that some of you in here, some of you under the sound of my voice, God has blessed you with a grace. He's blessed you with a gift when it comes to money and finance. It's a gift that I wish I had, but some of you are studs when it comes to business and when it comes to investing. You just understand how money works. God has given you this holy ability to make and distribute wealth that comes naturally to you. It's a gift.

I've got friends where it's like everything they touch turns to gold. I watch them in their generosity. I genuinely believe it's an ability that God gives to people, what He puts on their lives. If that's you, if that's your thing, if God has graced you with this amazing gift to grow business and to grow wealth, number one, can I just say this to you? Don't feel guilty about that. It's a gift. Number two, let me say this to you. I'd encourage you to utilize that gift to the best of your potential. Kill it. Just destroy it in the marketplace. Make tons of money and then pour it out for the kingdom of God and for the glory of Jesus.

Have an eternal mindset. Have an eternal perspective. Never forget that the things of this earth are fading away and that the only things that will last on the pages of eternity are not the \$70,000 SUV and the 5,000-square-foot house. The only things that will last on the page of eternity are the things we do for God, for other people, for the kingdom of Jesus, and His glory. Catch this: we don't teach a prosperity gospel. We don't believe in a poverty gospel, but we do believe, and what the Bible does teach is a provision gospel.

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When we return back to God our first, He promises that He'll take care of our needs and that we'll be blessed so that we can be a blessing to those around us. Again, you reap what you sow. That's the first law about seeds and sowing. The first seed principle. Here's the second. You reap after you sow. I told you, it's going to seem obvious, but look at the order that Paul puts things in. Go back to our text in 2 Corinthians 9:6 NIV,

⁶ Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

Notice sowing comes before reaping. At no point in this passage does he reverse that order. We get into verse number 7, where Paul mentions the act of giving. Then, after giving, look what follows verse number 8, "And then God is able to bless you abundantly." Giving precedes blessing, not the other way around. Why is that? Because you reap after you sow. Imagine seeing a farmer. He's gathering together all of his harvesting tools. He's got his tractor. He's got his harvester, whatever that's called, his reaper. And he's got it all gassed up, and he's ready to go, but then he just sits there. He watches the field, but the field is empty. The reason the field is empty is because he never planted any seeds. You would walk up to that farmer and be like, "What are you doing?" It doesn't work that way. You reap after you sow.

I remember being a kid in Sunday school class. The teachers were teaching on the parable of the sower and how when God's Word gets sown into good ground, it's like a seed, and that seed takes root and begins to grow in our life. As an illustration, they gave each of us a cup of soil, and they gave us a little bead seed, and we were to plant it and take it home. I was all excited about it. I take it home, and I'm watering it. I put it on the windowsill. Every day, I check it. Is it going to grow? Is it going to grow? It never sprouted, and it never grew. I thought, "Man, that's a faulty seed." Finally, after two weeks, Pops and I dig it up. We dug up the soil only to find out there was no seed in there. I had never planted the seed.

Here's the simple truth. You cannot reap a harvest if no seed has been sown. I know this seems so elementary, yet so many of us live with this principle backward in our lives. Tell me, does this sound familiar to anybody else? "Hey, Pastor, when I get a little bit more money, then I'll start tithing. Hey, Pastor, when I get that commission, when I get that promotion at work. Hey, when I win that settlement, then I can afford to be generous." Can I say something to you? Can I be really honest with you because I love you? Please, hear my heart here. I hope this doesn't come off as harsh. Listen, I'm speaking from a place of experience. I've been there, done that, and got the T-shirt.

Some of you believe what the Bible says about tithing and generosity. You want to obey it. You want to participate, but you have this genuine fear that you can't afford to tithe. Here's what I want to say to you. You will never be able to afford to tithe until after you start tithing. Why? Why? Because you reap after you sow. Now again, I said this at the beginning, and I realize people get really uneasy with the church when it starts talking about money. Let me just give you a little theology really quick about how people view money. Three ways that people view money, and this is universally known, as well, as taught in the Scriptures.

Here's the first way that people view money. What's mine is mine. That's called selfishness. As Christ's followers, we don't get to fall into this camp. As a matter of fact, we've been called to do the opposite. To be like Christ, who is the epitome of selflessness. As we participate in what He's doing in the earth, as we model ourselves after His selflessness, we become more and more like Him. Here's the second way that people view money. What's yours is mine. That's called stealing. Unless you're the government, then it's called socialism, but that's a

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different service for a different day. But again, as Christ followers, we don't get the option of being a part of this camp. God is very clear on the topic of stealing and taking what does not belong to you. See Exodus 20 and the Ten Commandments. "Thou shalt not steal." That's the King James Version. "Thou shalt not steal." Here's the third way people view money. What's mine is God's. That's called stewardship. Here's the best definition of stewardship that I could find. It's managing God's blessings God's way for God's glory.

Let me be really clear and remind you of something you already know. Everything we have belongs to God. It's all His. James 1, "Every good and perfect gift, where does it come from? It's come from above, from the Father of lights in whom there is no shadow of turning." Everything good in our life has come from Him. The fact that you woke up this morning in your right mind is a gift from God. The fact that you took breath into your lungs, that air that you're breathing, it belongs to Him. The creativity that you have in your mind to create, guess who gave it to you? He did. It belongs to Him. The strength that you have in your body to work and to make money, guess where that strength came from? It came from Him. Every good and every perfect gift, when you boil it down to its source, comes from God.

And in the context that we're talking about today when it comes to finances, we have to acknowledge that all that we have is from Him, and therefore, ultimately belongs to Him. Paul says as much, look at 2 Corinthians 9:10. He says, it's God who supplies seed to the sower, not you. You didn't make the seeds. God supplied the seeds to the sower and bread for food. He's the one who caused the seed to grow and turn into wheat so you could make bread. God is the one who supplies. It came from Him. God alone is our source. As the supplier and as the source, it all belongs to Him. When we sow or give into His kingdom, we're not actually so much as giving, as much as we're bringing or returning back to God what already belongs to Him.

He's the one that gives seed to the sower. That's why, in Scripture, we're instructed to "bring the tithe." Not give the tithe, but bring the tithe because you can't give somebody something that already belongs to them. You can just bring it back or return it to them. As a matter of fact, every time the word tithe is mentioned in the Scripture, the verb that is always attached to it is bring or return, never give. For those who are new to the conversation, tithe means 10%. Biblically speaking, it's the first 10% of all of our increase.

I know some people get super weird when the preacher starts talking about tithing, and sometimes I hear this whole thing. "Harrison, that's Old Testament. That's the old covenant. That's the law. We're not under the law anymore. We're under a new covenant. We're under grace. I don't have to tithe." To which I would say, "Yes, thank God we're under grace. Thank You, Jesus, for a new covenant. Thank You, Jesus, that my finances have nothing to do with me entering into salvation. I can't merit salvation. I can't pay for a right standing with God. It's purely a gift of His amazing grace. I'm so grateful I don't have to live under the law. I've got a new covenant."

However, I've got a few questions for you. If you think that tithing is old covenant and it doesn't apply to you now, here's the first question. Did you know that the act and the precedent of tithing actually precedes the law by 600 years? Tithing was practiced before the law ever came on the scene. As a matter of fact, we see Abraham as an act of faith, which, by the way, that's what tithing is. It's an act of faith. He brings a tithe to the house of God, where Melchizedek is the priest. You can read about it in Genesis 14. Abraham practiced the tithe before the law ever instructed us to tithe. Then you jump into the New Testament, under the new covenant. In the book of Romans, this applies to us. We are instructed, not offered to. We are instructed to follow in the footsteps of Abraham's faith.

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The point being is that just because we now have a new covenant and we're under grace doesn't mean that the precepts and the principles of the law are dead and gone. No, they still matter. For example, if something was right under the law, now that we're under grace, does it make that thing wrong? Let's just think about this critically for a moment. If honoring our parents was right under the law, and if taking a sabbath was the right thing to do under the law, now that we're under grace, does it make those things wrong? No. Of course not. We still have to do those things.

Let's flip that scenario. If something was wrong under the law, like murder or adultery, now that we have a new covenant, now that we're under grace, does it make those things right? No, of course not. Do you understand the point I'm trying to make here? That just because we're under grace, does tithing somehow become obsolete? No, of course not. On top of that, in this New Testament reality that we're living in, under this new covenant, we actually have a higher standard of living than just the tithe.

Now, instead of it just being about, "Do this," or the act thereof, the law said, "Do this. Don't do that." Now, because we have a new covenant because we're under grace, that standard has gone up. Now, it's not just about the act. Now, it's not just about following the law. Now, it's about the heart behind our actions. Now, it's about why we do what we do. When it comes to giving, and when it comes to finances, tithing's still the precedent. It's still an act of biblical obedience. It's still an act of faith that God requires. But now, just because we're under grace or now, rather because we are under grace, it's not just about the act itself. It's about the heart behind the act. Now, it's about generosity. Now, it's about having an open heart before God.

Think about the New Testament Church in the book of Acts 2. Remember what it said of them? That nothing they had, they considered to be their own. At the end of the day, when it comes to our finances, tithing, and generosity, the question becomes this: does God have my heart? Because listen, God doesn't need our money. God's not lacking in the financial department. God is not about to foreclose or go into bankruptcy. He does not need our money, but what He does need and what He does desire above anything else is our hearts.

He desires our hearts. Where if He puts His finger on a particular area of our life and He goes, "Hey, I want you to give that to Me," our response is, "Yes, Lord, anything, everything, whatever, however, for your kingdom, it all belongs to You anyway." Truth be told, in this life, we have nothing that we can offer God except our obedience. That's what He's looking for. He's looking for a heart that is obedient to His voice. A heart that doesn't hold tightly onto stuff, or let me say it like this, a heart that doesn't hold tightly onto seeds. We realize that every good thing that we have from God belongs to Him. He's the one that supplies seed to the sower and bread for food. You reap what you sow. You reap after you sow. Then, the third and final seed principle here is this: you reap more than you sow. Look at our text, verse 10. It says, 2 Corinthians 9:10 NIV,

¹⁰ Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.

God has hardwired this principle into the universe. It's called "the law of multiplication." That after seeds get sown, when they come back to you in the form of a harvest, it's always greater than what you initially sowed. Here's a real practical visual for you. I've got an ear of corn here. This ear of corn is full of kernels. If I take one of these kernels off this and I plant it in the ground, one stock of corn, one corn plant, will pop up. And on that stock of corn, between two

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and four ears of corn will come on it. On each ear of corn, there are somewhere around 800 kernels, 800 seeds. Think about that. I took one kernel, and now I've got 3,200 kernels.

This is the law of multiplication. I got more than enough to sow back into the ground for the next harvest. I've got more than enough to take care of my needs and to take care of my family. I have more than enough to share with other people. This is what God has hardwired into the universe. This law of multiplication says that if you are faithful to steward what God has already entrusted to you, if you do it God's way and return back to Him what belongs to Him, what may start as small will multiply into something much bigger than what you initially began with.

Why? How? Because you reap more than what you sow. Think about Mark 4. Jesus tells the parable of the sower. When seeds get sown onto good ground, they produce the harvest. Jesus said that the harvest is 30-fold, 60-fold, or 100-fold. It's the law of multiplication. Think about the story in John 6. Jesus feeds the 5,000. If you include the women and the children, it's probably closer to 15,000. I love this. He takes a little boy's lunch, five loaves and two little fish, a little Hebrew Happy Meal. He takes it, and He blesses it. He distributes it to disciples, and disciples take it out, and they feed 15,000 people. Not just that, they gather up 12 baskets of leftovers. You want to talk about a return on investment? The boy started with one Happy Meal, and he ends up with 12 huge baskets full of Happy Meals.

Here's the best part. I don't think that young man thought that when he took his lunch to Jesus, he was going to get it back. I don't think he knew that there were going to be 12 baskets of leftovers he could take home. I don't think the harvest was his motivation. I think he just wanted to be a blessing. He was like, "Here, Lord, it's not much, but if I can give it to You and if it can get in Your hands, You can do something supernatural with it." That's the truth that we need to live by.

When we put what we have in the hands of Jesus to be used for His purposes, it gets multiplied. The purpose of that multiplication is not so that we can hoard the increase for ourselves. It's not so that we could enlarge our bank account purely for the sake of enriching ourselves. May we never forget, I already said it, that the world is temporal. The things of this world are fading away. Don't get me wrong, I like nice things, but at the end of the day, they're going to get burned up. They're not going to last. I'm not going to be able to take it with me when I step into eternity.

The only things that will last are the things that we do for the kingdom of God. Guys, this life, it's like a vapor. That's why Jesus said, "Don't waste your time storing up treasures here on earth but store for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither rust, nor moth will destroy, nor thieves break in and steal." The purpose of multiplication is so that we can take it in and pour it back into the kingdom of God and be an even greater blessing to those around us. My time is gone, so I end here. Let's look at verse number 8. I want to read it to you one more time. I want to read out of the Amplified Translation. This verse sums up the means and the purpose of the abundance that God wants to pour into our lives. When we do things for His kingdom, we do it His way, this is the purpose and the result. Second Corinthians 9:8 AMP

⁸ And God is able to make all grace [every favor and earthly blessing] come in abundance to you, so that you may always [under all circumstances, regardless of the need] have complete sufficiency in everything [being completely self-sufficient in Him], and have an abundance for every good work and act of charity.

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Listen, you reap what you sow, you reap after you sow, and you reap more than you sow. So that you'll have all you need and be able to abound in every good work. Let's pray.

Father, thank You so much for Your Word. Thank You that it's truth. Thank You that if we will build our life upon it, You will fulfill that Word. Father, the things that have been shared today are not always the easiest things to share, but we trust that You're smarter than us. We trust that You have our best interest at heart. We ask, oh God, for the courage to put Your Word into practice in our lives. Don't let us just be hearers of Your Word, but collectively, together as a church, may we be doers of Your Word. We realize that when it comes to the area of finance, this is the only area in all of Scripture You told us that we could test You.

If we will bring the tithe to the storehouse, You will open up the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing. We realize the motivation for that blessing, the purpose of that blessing, is to be able to be a blessing to other people. Father, give us the courage to obey Your Word so that Jesus will be glorified in our generation. We need You, and we need Your help. We realize we're only here for just a short time. In just a breath, this life is over, and we'll see You face to face. Help us to keep eternity on our minds. Hallelujah, hallelujah.

With your heads bowed and your eyes still closed, today we talked about the provision that God wants to bring into our lives. We talked specifically about finances, but the greatest form of provision that God can bring into anyone's life is salvation. If you've missed this part, you've missed the whole point of today. Yes, God wants to bless you. He wants to provide for you financially so all your needs are met. More than that, He wants to provide salvation for you, and that's only found in one place. It's found through the person of His Son, Jesus.

If you don't have Jesus, you may think you have everything, but you have nothing. Listen, take my life, strip it bare, but leave me the cross. I'm nothing without the cross. If you've not experienced the power of the cross in your life, the power of forgiveness in your life, the power of salvation that redeems your life from destruction. If you've not experienced the forgiveness of sin and right standing with God, humbly, I'm telling you, you're missing it. You're missing it. There's a day coming where each and every one of us are going to have to stand before almighty God and give an account of our life.

In that moment, He's going to ask, "Did you believe I loved you? Did you believe I sent My Son for you? Did you believe that I died in your place? That I made a way of escape? I made a way of rescue?" He's going to ask, "Did you put your trust in My Son?" We talked about this earlier. We took communion together. Romans 3 says, "The whole world stands guilty before God because of sin." It's a problem we're born with. It's a systemic problem. You can trace it all the way back to the garden. Back to creation, where Adam and Eve stepped out from underneath the authority of God.

There's this separation that takes place. There's a spiritual death that took place. Now, the human race is born into this state of separation from God. If that wasn't enough, you and I, every single day, have our own issues and our own sins that we deal with. That sin separates you from God, and there's only one way that you can have that sin problem eradicated. It's not through payment. It's not through good works. The only antidote for sin is the blood of Jesus. If you've not put your trust in the finished work of Christ on the cross and in His resurrection, you have not experienced salvation.

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Here's the beauty of salvation. It's free. All you have to do is accept it. I believe that even now, as I've been speaking to you, some of you have heard another voice, and that's the voice of the Holy Spirit. He's been wooing you. He's been speaking to your heart. He's been convicting your heart of sin, but He's also been convincing your heart that although you have sin, there's a Savior named Jesus who can take care of that for you.

You've got to put your trust in Him. You have to call upon Him and make Him Lord of your life. Lord of your life means you get off the throne of your life, and He sits on the throne. His Word becomes the final authority. It's a total and complete submission before Him where we die to our right of independent living. Jesus becomes the standard. His Word becomes the standard for truth. Jesus said, "I'm the way, I'm the truth, and I'm the life. No one can have salvation, no one can get to the Father except through me." I want to give you an invitation right now to accept Jesus for those who have never accepted Him before.

For those who have never experienced the power of forgiveness or the power of salvation, I want to pray for you. If that's you today and you want to experience this, I'm going to ask you to do something. I'm going to ask you to begin to form words on your lips. Words of dedication, words of sincerity, and words of humility. The Bible says that if you believe in your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, you enter into salvation. What transpires after that is a life that's marked by the fruit of repentance, where we begin to change in our old way of living. Our old way of doing begins to change, and we become more and more like Jesus. It starts here at this place of words and hearts coming into alignment. If you want salvation today, I'm going to ask you to start praying your own prayer. Even now, before I stop speaking, why don't you begin to lift up your own prayer? A prayer that says,

Jesus, I believe You love me. I believe You died for me. I believe You can save me. I believe God the Father raised You back to life. Would You rescue me? Would You fill me with Your Holy Spirit? Would You make me like You? I'm going to put You on the throne of my life. I want to follow You.

If you'll pray a prayer like that, God will not turn you away. He'll meet you right where you sit, and He will apply salvation to your life by His Holy Spirit.

God, upon every life, every story, every person that's represented here, everyone that's praying that prayer right now, this prayer, asking for salvation, I thank You for meeting them where they sit. I thank You for newness of life. I thank You that the old is gone. Spiritually speaking, everything becomes brand new; they are new creations in Christ Jesus. Thank You for taking them from the kingdom of darkness and transposing them into the kingdom of light. Thank You for Your work. We trust You. We love You. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.

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