

A Cheerful Giver

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God loves a cheerful giver. There is a right way and a wrong way to do everything that we do in service to our Great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Our phrase comes from **2 Corinthians 9:7** where the Lord urges us not to give grudgingly or of necessity, that is, not because we have to but don't really want to. We can complain about every blessing that God gives and grouch about every duty that we feel we must fulfill and grump about every kindness we express leaving a very bitter taste on the Lord's tongue. I wonder if maybe He feels the urge to spit seeing how we serve Him.

There is a proverb that says, "A glad heart makes a cheerful face, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is crushed." Gladness begins in the heart, the point of view that we bring to every experience in life. If sorrow rules us, our spirit is crushed and we crush the spirits of those all around us.

On the other hand, Jesus often said, "**Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid.**" In the face of fear, worry, and anxiety, Jesus offers the failsafe remedy: good cheer! Face each foe with confidence in the Lord. Face each abuse and scornful word with gladness of heart that God has counted you worthy to suffer affront for the precious name of Jesus. That is a generosity of heart. Generosity of the pocketbook begins with generosity of kindness toward our neighbors, both friend and foe. Jesus said, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." **John 16:33.**

In **Acts 23**, when Paul faced almost certain death from an enraged Jewish mob, the Lord appeared to him in his prison cell, and the first thing He said to him was, "**Be of good cheer.**" Then He gave him more reason to be confident, "for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." On that journey, two years later, Paul encountered a terrible winter storm at sea in which all despaired of life. Now it was Paul's turn to repeat the words of Jesus, "**Be of good cheer.**" **Acts 27:22**, "for there shall be no loss of any man's life among, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, fear not, Paul; ...**v.25** Wherefore, sirs, **be of good cheer: for I believe God,** that it shall be even as it was told me." Paul then broke bread in front of them, **v. 35** and they were all of good cheer. It is all a question of whether you like Paul believe God or not. tp