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오늘의 말씀

"A Spacious Heart"

When Grace Enlarges Our Hearts

[2 Corinthians 6:11-13]

Corinthians, we have spoken openly to you, and our hearts are wide open. (12) You are not restricted by us, but by your own affections. (13) I speak as to my children: open your hearts wide to us also.

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Introduction ~ How Spacious Are Our Hearts?

Dear brothers and sisters, today is Thanksgiving Sunday. We worship with gratitude, re-membering God's grace. But can we give thanks only when life is going well? Sometimes we overlook our blessings because our hearts have grown narrow. Yet others discover God's grace and give thanks even in hardship. The depth of our gratitude depends not only on what we have, but also on how deeply we recognize God's grace.

In recent weeks, we have explored forgiveness, relationships, and compassion through Grace Between Us. Today, we consider what connects them all: a spacious heart. The true width of our hearts is revealed when others misunderstand us or act differently from what we expect. Where, then, does a spacious Christian heart come from? Paul tells the Corinthians, “Our hearts are wide open” (2 Cor. 6:11). Despite misunderstandings and conflict, Paul re-fused to close his heart. Today, we will see how God's grace enlarges our hearts, allowing grat-itude and love to flourish.

Exposition

A Narrow Heart Makes Relationships Difficult (2 Cor. 6:12).

[2 Corinthians 6:12] You are not restricted by us, but by your own affections.

When our hearts become narrow, our perspective on others narrows too. The Greek word στενοχωρέω (stenochōreō) describes being confined or restricted, with little room to move. Paul explains that his love is not lacking; rather, the Corin-thians have closed their hearts toward him. A narrow heart focuses more on personal feelings than on another person's circumstances, noticing offenses more readily than virtues. When our hearts narrow, the discomfort someone causes becomes greater in our eyes than the person himself. The same happens with gratitude.

Un-fulfilled desires overshadow blessings already received, and what we lack becomes more important than what we have. A narrow heart does not remove our reasons for gratitude; it limits our ability to see them.

A spacious heart does not mean accepting every wrong. Paul did not ignore the Corinthians' problems. He confronted their errors and called for change. Yet correcting a problem is different from rejecting a person. A spacious heart holds firmly to truth without closing the door of love. We may disagree and establish necessary bounda-ries, but that does not require hatred or contempt.

God's Grace Enlarges Our Hearts (2 Cor. 6:11; Ps. 4:1).

[2 Corinthians 6:11] Corinthians, we have spoken openly to you, and our hearts are wide open.

Paul kept his heart open even amid conflict. The Greek πεπλάτυνται (peplatyntai) comes from πλατύνω (platynō), meaning "to widen." Its perfect tense describes a heart that has been opened wide. The Corinthians did not always understand or respect Paul. Problems remained unresolved, yet he kept the door of love open. A spacious heart does not come from the absence of conflict, but from leaving room for love even within conflict.

David confessed that God had enlarged him in distress.

[Psalm 4:1] Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have given me relief in my distress; have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

The Hebrew הִרְחַבְתָּ֥ (hirchavta) comes from רָחַב (rachav), meaning "to make wide." The KJV expresses it beautifully: "Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress." "Distress" suggests a narrow, oppressive situation, while "enlarged" describes God mak-ing room for deliverance. David was not directly describing a

more generous personali-ty. Yet despite opposition, David trusted God. He warned against sinning in anger (v. 4) and declared that he could lie down and sleep in peace (v. 8). His circumstances had not necessarily changed, but he could trust the Lord. Sometimes God enlarges our circumstances. At other times, He first enlarges our hearts within those circum-stances. Even when problems remain, God sustains us. As His grace broadens our per-spective, we recognize His presence and discover reasons for gratitude amid hardship.

A spacious heart grows through experiencing grace.

[Romans 15:7] Therefore, receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.

We welcome others not because they always deserve our love, but because Christ first welcomed us. Without grace, we could not stand before God. Yet the Lord re-ceived us despite our weaknesses. The more deeply we understand this grace, the less we judge others solely by our own standards. A spacious heart is not merely a natu-ral personality trait; it is a transforma-tion Christ's grace produces within us.

A Spacious Heart Sees God's Greater Purpose Beyond Threats (Acts 4:23–31).

The early church prayed even under threats. In Acts 4, Peter and John were arrested for preaching the gospel and brought before the council. Religious leaders threatened them, forbidding them to teach in Jesus' name. After their release, they returned to the believers and prayed together. Remarkably, they did not ask God to eliminate those who threatened them.

[Acts 4:29] Lord, consider their threats, and grant Your servants boldness to speak Your word.

They looked beyond threats to God's greater purpose. The believers did not deny the danger, but neither did they pray only

for their own safety. They asked for boldness to proclaim the gospel and for God's healing power to be revealed through Jesus' name (v. 30). They did not ask to become stronger than those threatening them. They looked instead to God's purpose, which was greater than the threats. The passage does not explicitly say they forgave or embraced their persecutors. Yet their prayer clearly sought the gospel's advance rather than revenge. Philippians 4:6 calls us to bring our concerns to God with thanksgiving, even amid anxiety. Faith does not make our problems smaller; it helps us see the God who is greater than our problems. Gratitude grows from that faith.

The Holy Spirit made them bold witnesses and a loving community.

[Acts 4:31] After they prayed, the place was shaken. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke God's word with boldness.

Verses 32–35 describe believers united in heart and mind, sharing their possessions and caring for one another's needs. The Spirit's work went beyond bold proclamation. He formed them into a loving community with hearts open to one another. God's grace not only gives us courage amid threats; it also widens our vision to see the needs of others.

An Enlarged Heart Opens Toward Others (2 Cor. 6:13; Rom. 15:7).

[2 Corinthians 6:13] I speak as to my children: open your hearts wide to us also.

Paul urged the believers to enlarge their hearts too. The Greek πλατύνθητε (platynthēte) is an imperative from the same verb used in verse 11. Having opened his own heart, Paul urges the Corinthians to do likewise, overcoming misunderstanding and distance to restore loving relationships.

A spacious heart makes room for others. Enlarging our hearts does not mean agree-ing with everyone. It means learning to respect and understand others despite our dif-ferences. Listening patiently, withholding quick judgment, offering second chances, and refusing to exclude others carelessly are practical expressions of a spacious heart. Love also requires wise judgment and healthy boundaries. A spacious heart does not permit everything; it refuses to lose its capacity to love others.

A spacious heart expresses gratitude and love.

[Colossians 3:15] Let Christ's peace rule in your hearts, for you were called together as one body. And be thankful.

Gratitude is not only an expression toward God; it also changes how we see others. As we appreciate God's grace, we begin to recognize people's efforts we once took for granted and see others in a new light. Philippians 2:5 says, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” Jesus humbled Himself and obeyed even to death on the cross. Through His love, we became God's children. Because Christ first loved us, His grace teaches us to make room for others. True gratitude begins with thanksgiving to God and extends into love and consideration for others.

Conclusion — Gratitude Flourishes in a Heart Enlarged by Grace

Dear brothers and sisters, today is Thanksgiving Sunday. Our lives have included hard-ships, pain, and unresolved problems. Yet David declared, “You have enlarged me in my dis-tress.” Sometimes God enlarges our circumstances. At other times, He first enlarges our hearts within them. Through His grace, we see God beyond our difficulties, make room for others, and discover reasons for gratitude even when problems remain. We give thanks not only because everything is sufficient, but because we trust that the God who sustains us is sufficient. This Thanksgiving,

may deeper gratitude toward God and greater love toward others flourish beautifully within our hearts.

Next week, we begin Grace Through Life, the third part of our series, starting with “Grati-tude.” Building on today's message, we will learn to see all of life through the eyes of grace.

Today's Takeaway

~ “When God's grace enlarges our hearts, gratitude flourishes even in hardship, and love for others grows.”

Today's Prayer Points

A. Lord, enlarge my heart ~ Free me from my narrow standards and feelings, and teach me to embrace others.

B. Give me faith to be thankful even in hardship ~ Help me see Your presence beyond my circumstances.

C. Make our church a community of love and gratitude ~ Teach us to respect differ-ences and share the grace we have received.