ANNOUNCE FALL FESTIVAL FOLLOW-UP
ELECT NEW DEACONS
TODAY IS HARVEST DAY

"HE GAVE … WE GIVE"

ILLUSTRATION – In the summer between my graduation from college and my starting at Southwestern Seminary, I read a book that lit a fire in my life. As a college student I was profoundly affected by the ministry of a group called Navigators. Their ministry was focused on discipleship, helping students get grounded in Bible study, Scripture memory and sharing our faith with others. The founder of the Navigators was a man named Dawson Trotman. His life story, contained in his biography, *Daws*, was used by God to shape a vision in my own heart of the kind of man I wanted to become. Dawson Trotman invested his life in people, challenging them to really surrender to Christ, die to self, and let Christ lead them into a life of selfless service to the Lord and to people. Dawson Trotman was an inspiration to many young men and women in the military who would multiply this ministry around the world.

> All this was dramatically punctuated in an event that happened one day on a lake in the Adirondack Mountains. Daws and some friends were out on the lake in a ski boat. It was a beautiful day and they were having a blast. The boat took a quick turn, and simultaneously hit a large wave. Suddenly Daws and the young lady sitting next to him were thrown out of the boat. Unfortunately, neither of them had life jackets, and Daws knew that the girl could not swim. But he held on to her while the boat circled back. As the boat arrived two of the others jumped in to rescue the two. By the time they arrived Dawson's strength was all but spent as he kept the young lady from drowning. The water was very cold, and Dawson's strength now was completely gone. As he handed off the young lady to the other rescuers, he slipped beneath the surface, sinking to the bottom of the lake where he drowned.

Dawson Trotman died like his Lord died, saving others. And this act inspired a generation of men and women to give themselves more devotedly to Jesus Christ and to let Him use them to reach the world for Christ.

Open your Bibles to II Corinthians 8. There's something inspiring about a life lived in selfless service and sacrifice to others. Paul was collecting an offering to send to the impoverished Christians in Jerusalem. Corinth, this church that we have been studying for several months now, was being asked to be generous in the offering. And to inspire them, Paul told of others who had sacrificed. Read I Corinthians 8:1-6,9 NIV.

Let's look at this in the order the events occurred. What set off this explosion of selfless living was the Cross where Jesus Christ gave His life for our sins.

1. "He Gave…"

2 Corinthians 8:9 (NIV) - For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

He's not talking here about financial poverty and riches. Rather he's speaking of eternal riches that Jesus set aside when He left heaven to come to earth. And that mission took Jesus all the way to the Cross where He died a humiliating death in a Roman instrument of torture … crucifixion. In doing so He became "poor." But His death and resurrection made it possible for us to become "rich," that is to share in the eternal blessings of heaven, and to have a full and meaningful life today.

Church, this is all beautifully "imaged" for us in the Lord's Supper. And this morning, we're going to stop right now and share together in the Lord's Supper. Let's be reminded of how Jesus, though He was rich, became poor, so that we who are poor might become rich through Him.

OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Read I Corinthians 11:23-24.

Read I Corinthians 11:25-26.

What Jesus did on the Cross not only paid the penalty for our sin, but it also transforms people to live selflessly, not selfishly.

2. "He Gave … We Give"

And there are at least three ways here that we give.

- **"We Give … Our Lives"**

  Speaking of the believers in Macedonia, Paul tells about their response to Jesus' giving His life for them.

  2 Corinthians 8:5 (NIV) - And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord …

  This is reference to their surrender to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of their lives.

  One of the men you elected to serve as a deacon this morning is Frank Nusbaum. When we were interviewing Frank for the office of deacon, we had the chance to hear the testimony of how he came to faith in Christ … how he gave his life to Jesus Christ. I wanted you to have the opportunity to hear his story.

  Testimony - Frank Nusbaum

Now these Macedonians didn't just stop there. They gave their lives to Christ in salvation, but they did more.

- **"We Give … Our Service"**

2 Corinthians 8:5 (NIV) - They gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.

The preceding verse explains this.

2 Corinthians 8:4 (NIV) - They urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints.

What a transformation … selfish people are changed to selfless people … begging for the privilege of sharing in service!

MENTION PLACE TRAINING THIS AFTERNOON

One of the people in our church who has demonstrated this spirit of service is Mary Lynn Stewart. She puts in many hours each week leading out in our Benevolence Ministry, along with the Friendship House. I wanted you to hear her story, and her heart.

Testimony - Mary Lynn Stewart

Christ gave His life for us. We give our lives to Him in salvation and in service. And this life of service is total. It reaches down into your pockets, our purses, our bank accounts where we keep something very important to us … our money.

- **We Give … Our Offerings"**

  This is the main thing that Paul was writing to the Corinthians to encourage. About the believers in Macedonia he writes:

  2 Corinthians 8:2-3 (NIV) - Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. [3] For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability.

  Through the years I've watched God do an amazing work in our church. He has blessed us in ways that are truly supernatural. And what I've come to realize is that God is really blessing the individuals and the families in our church. And you are being generous with the blessings God has poured into your lives. One of the young men in our church who has a remarkable story in this is Jamie Sharples.

  Testimony - Jamie Sharples

Now, I'm going to catch you off guard with something this morning. But I have an idea that your heart is filled with love for God at this point in our worship. You've shared in the Lord's Supper being reminded that "He Gave…" And you've heard some stories that reminded you of how "We Give…"

I’m going to ask you to worship now with your giving. Our men are coming forward with offering plates. Put your Harvest Day offerings in the plate. Maybe you haven’t prepared to give and you need a minute to get your checkbook out. Or perhaps God would just have you put what is in your wallet or your pocket.

Note: You know earlier in the service the plate was passed and you took something out … reminding you of what Christ gave for you. Now, I want you to have an opportunity to put something into the plate. HE GAVE … WE GIVE. Let’s pray.