# One Great Hour of Sharing 2025: Our Love Offering to the World

## Scripture Commentary and Sermon Starter

***“****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.”—*2 Corinthians 9:7

This familiar verse is a standard for stewardship campaign slogans. It is also used in many offertory prayers. The aim is to encourage generous donations, given with a smile.

The Apostle Paul wrote these lines in his second letter to the church at Corinth. He encouraged church members to gather a special offering for Christians in Jerusalem. He saw the offering as a much-needed act of charity. In essence, Paul sought a *love offering* from the church at Corinth.

A hallmark of Chrisian living is sharing one’s resources for the benefit of the community. Christians live their faith by doing acts of service—not as a transaction, expecting something in return, but rather as a response to all that God has given and continues to give.

The practice of gathering love offerings may not be a common one in your congregation. However, it is practiced in many church traditions to: thank a particular person in the church or community; support programs and projects that fall outside budgeted items; or when an unexpected expense occurs that needs to be supported.

A love offering is extra—money given in addition to one’s regular offerings and tithes.[[1]](#footnote-1) Love offerings are tangible gifts in response to a particular occasion or need. They are expressions of love, appreciation, and support.

Paul was eager to complete the love offering. At the same time, he was anxious about the readiness of the Corinthian Christians to fulfill their promise to gather funds. His relationship with some at Corinth was complicated; there were issues, concerns, and misunderstandings. Paul penned 2 Corinthians 8-9 with two things in mind: to make sure things were okay between the church and him; and to urge them to stay the course concerning the offering.

To make his point clear, Paul uses the Greek word *hilaros* to describe how they were to give: with joyful and willing spirits.[[2]](#footnote-2) Second Corinthians 9:7 is the only place this word appears in the New Testament. *Hilaros* means giving freely; without hesitation; without resentment. A cheerful giver is one who has a genuine desire to help others.

Paul did not want the Corinthians to give to appease him; nor did he want them to withhold their giving because they are upset with him. So he reminds them that the offering is not about him at all; the offering was about honoring their connection to sisters and brothers in the faith. God has blessed them with life and with Jesus who lived and died for their sakes. Their response to these gifts is to gift others—what they have, they share—joyfully and selflessly.

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is about sharing, loving, and giving for the sake of others, too. In collaboration with local and international partners, OGHS engages in tangible acts of love, compassion, and care. Contributions to OGHS are love offerings—special, above and beyond one’s regular giving, supporting and empowering others to know that God still loves and cares for God’s people.

Our collective love offering helps families live more efficiently. It empowers organizations to fight hunger and food insecurity. Our love offering supports places of hospitality for displaced persons. Our love offering changes lives and transforms communities for generations to come.

While mainly focused on monetary gifts, love offerings also can be acts of kindness closer to home: tutoring students after school; making a casserole for a new mom; coaching a youth soccer team; making blankets for the unsheltered; volunteering at a soup kitchen. No act of kindness is ever wasted time.

As you prepare to preach and teach the theme, *Our Love Offering to the World*, highlight how members of your church and community have already given love offerings—sharing their time, talent, and treasure. Make a list and celebrate those already making a difference in your church and community. Highlight how OGHS is making a difference through your gifts by sharing mission stories from your church, denomination, and OGHS mission stories.

There may be many reasons that people hesitate to give—donor fatigue, inflation/recession, personal financial difficulties, disinterest.

A gentle reminder: God continues to bless us with resources we can and should share—with hearts filled with gratitude and joy. Just as God continues to provide for us, let us not miss an opportunity to provide for others.

One Great Hour of Sharing is an annual opportunity to make a huge difference in the lives of sisters and brothers.

Our love offering to the world is caring for our neighbor—next door and on the other side of the world.

Let us choose, cheerfully and generously, to give to One Great Hour of Sharing—it *is* our love offering to the world.

1. Note that while the Internal Revenue Service has no specific mandates about whether love offerings should be taxed, there are concerns about whether such offerings are substitutes for employee wages; <https://donorbox.org/nonprofit-blog/love-offering> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://biblehub.com/Greek/2431.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)