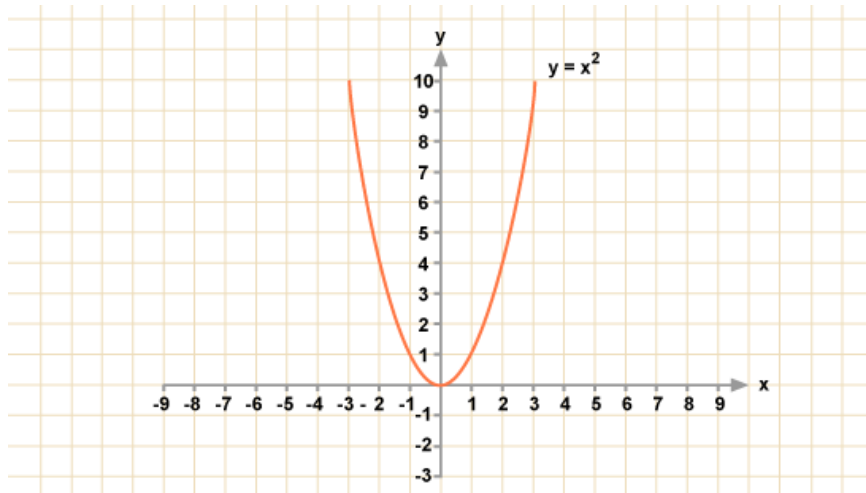


Week of August 5-11

$$\underline{y = x^2}$$

**Scripture Reading:** Read 2 Corinthians 8

For all of you math whizzes out there, I'm sure you recognized the formula above, didn't you? If it were graphed, it would look like this:



It's the formula for a simple parabola. It begins in eternity, touches down as it loops around at the vertex and then takes off for eternity again. The image is a wonderful reflection of Paul's declaration about Jesus in today's chapter reading: *"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."* The Son of God, enjoying all the glories of heaven and dwelling in absolute and unbelievable splendor with His Father in eternity, chose to lay it all aside according to Paul (Philippians 2:6-7) and come to our planet as a poor carpenter with no place to lay his head. He took our sin upon his back so that we could enjoy God's righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21). His poverty led to our blessing. We are now God's children by faith, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ (Rom 8:16-17). We have been lifted from the depths of sin and seated with Christ in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:1-6). No wonder Paul prayed for us to see this clearly (Eph 1:15-23).

As wonderful as God's divine parabola is (and it is!), Paul didn't share it for us just to stand dazzled by God's amazing grace. He shared it as a sermon illustration for the Corinthian believers to motivate them to excel in the grace of giving to assist the poor saints in Jerusalem. In short, Jesus showed us what sacrificial giving was all about through his example and we are challenged to follow in his steps in our giving.

**Action Step & Prayer Focus:**

Take a few minutes to read through and reflect on the verses above. Pray that the Lord would remind you of his divine parabola the next time you place your offering in the collection plate.

**Take-a-way: 2 Corinthians 8:9 – God's divine parabola & motivator for giving!**