

GROWING IN GRACE LETTERS! – Calling saints in Christ, (in our homes and with one another in Church), to walk in the Steps of Jesus! (1 Peter 2:15-25) Edited by James Bell, a servant of Jesus Christ!

11 18 25 V1n28 -
GIVING THANKS IN 2025! (Part 2)

[NEEDED REPEAT: ALL OF THE HORRIBLE DEPRAVITY and the present tense WRATH OF GOD, set forth in Romans 1:18-32, in large part, is because of ingratitude, no THANKSGIVING to God (Rom. 1:21) LET US each one hear the word of the LORD: "IN EVERYTHING, GIVE THANKS!"]

Twelve Early Martyrs in ancient Carthage, 180 AD, GAVE THANKS! Their crime? They were Christians who refused to compromise or recant. They would rather die than deny their faith and betray the LORD they loved! These seven men and five women were brought before the Roman proconsul Saturninus in Carthage, North Africa (Tunisia) on July 17, 180AD. He gave them an opportunity to recant: *"You can win the indulgence of our lord the Emperor, if you **return to a sound mind.**"*

Speratus, the apparent leader of the small group of faithful disciples, answered, 'We have never done ill, we have not lent ourselves to wrong, we have never spoken ill, **but when ill-treated we have given thanks...**' **"We too are religious," answered the proconsul,** "and our religion is simple, and we swear by the genius of our lord the Emperor, and pray for his welfare, as you also ought to do." "The empire of this world I

know not," explained Speratus, "but rather I serve that God, whom no man has seen, nor with these eyes can see. I have committed no theft; but if I have bought anything, I pay the tax; because **I know my Lord, the King of kings and Emperor of all nations.**" "Be not partakers of this folly," said the proconsul.

Cittinus, one of the faithful, said, "We have none other to fear, save only our Lord God, who is in heaven."... "Do you persist in being a Christian?" asked the proconsul. "I am a Christian," he answered. All the others agreed...

The proconsul Saturninus then read the decree [their sentence] from a tablet: "Speratus, Nartzalus, Cittinus, Donata, Vestia, Secunda and the rest having confessed that they live according to the Christian rite, since after opportunity offered them of **returning to the custom of the Romans they have obstinately persisted**, it is determined that they be put to the sword.

"WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD," said Speratus. **"Today we are martyrs in heaven; thanks be to God,"** added Nartzalus. The proconsul then gave the order that their sentence be publicly announced by the herald: "Speratus, Nartzalus, Cittinus, Veturius, Felix, Aquilinus, Lætantius, Januaria, Generosa, Vestia, Donata and Secunda, I have ordered to be executed." **They all said: "THANKS BE TO GOD!"** "And so, they all together were crowned with martyrdom; and they reign with the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen!"
<http://www.shepherd.to/Persecution/martyr/early-church/twelve-martyrs.htm>)

What is the level of my GRATITUDE and ThanksGIVING? Lyle Eggleston served as a missionary for many years in a little town on the rocky coast of northern Chile. In time, the congregation grew to about 80 adults, but **The people were very poor, and the church's offerings amounted to no more than six dollars a month.** One day, Eggleston brought the problem to the Lord during a definite time of prayer. A few weeks later he stopped to visit a middle-aged couple, new converts who had begun the habit of reading their Bibles every day. Soon, upon reading in 1 Corinthians, they had questions about 'GIVING UNTO THE LORD!' **"We ran into that in our reading and we don't fully understand it."** Eggleston knew that Manuel and his wife were unemployed. They were somehow managing to feed themselves and their 25 Rhode Island hens on the income from the eggs laid each day.

Nevertheless, Eggleston turned to 1 Corinthians 16 and 2 Corinthians 8, 9 where Paul reported on the giving of some very poor and persecuted Christians. **The following Sunday Manuel handed Lyle an envelope and, smiling, said, "That's our offering unto the LORD!" Inside were a few bills amounting to about 19 cents.** The next Sunday afternoon, the couple flagged down Lyle as he rode his bicycle past their house. They had some exciting news. **The Tuesday morning after they had given their offering, there's wasn't a bite for breakfast nor any money.**

Their first impulse was to take the few pesos that had accumulated in their "Offering Box," but on second thought they said, "No. That's God's money. We will go

without breakfast this morning." There was nothing to do but tend the hens. Much to their surprise, there were eggs in the nests that had usually been empty! Later in the day, a little man came along with a pushcart wanting fertilizer. They cleaned out their hen house, and the manure brought a good price. After buying groceries, there was enough money left over for the wife to purchase a pair of shoes, so she rode the bus 12 kilometers around the bay into a larger town. There she bumped into a nephew she had not seen in five years, and who, to her utter surprise, owned a shoe store. After she had found just the pair she wanted, he wrapped them for her and handed her the package with these words, "Oh no, Aunt, I can't take your money. These shoes are a gift from me!"

The following week, Manuel got a job on a project that would last for two years, and soon the little couple was GIVING to the LORD, from their increased salary. Word got around the church, and others began to give in faith and because of OUR LORD'S worthiness! CHURCH-WIDE, giving unto the LORD increased— they were able to pay all their bills, support a national pastor who was serving among a tribal group; as well as to support a pastor for their own fellowship. AND, Lyle Eggleston and his wife moved to a new location and start a new work as the little church continued to grow in their service unto the LORD— AND IT ALL STARTED WITH prayer, sharing the Scripture, and an offering unto the LORD of **19 cents!**"

'THANKS-GIVING' unto the LORD — The Church at Macedonia is ALSO a powerful example for us!

2 Corinthians 8:1-5: “Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: ² *that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality.* ³ For I bear witness that according to *their* ability, yes, and *beyond their ability, they were freely willing,* ⁴ imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. ⁵ And not *only* as we had hoped, *but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.”*

Comments:

[1] Manuel and his wife out of love for the LORD wanted to give. **They did not give to get. They just gave.** In their case, almost immediately they and others began to not only have an increase in spiritual prosperity but also of physical blessings. Praise the LORD!

[2] **The churches in Macedonia** were exceedingly poor and also persecuted. Nevertheless, their love for the LORD JESUS CHRIST overflowed with joy and generosity. HOWEVER: There is no recorded record of an improvement in their personal finances or of persecution ceasing! BUT ALSO: there is no indication that their joy diminished!

[3] **FIRST, LET US GIVE OURSELVES UNTO THE LORD!** (Our reasons for joy and generosity SHOULD already be settled and unshakable, IN THE LIGHT of GOD’S sacrificial love! **That’s the motivation for THANKS-GIVING — GIVING UNTO THE LORD FROM GRATITUDE!**

In earlier years, many American Christians would have heard of **R.G. LeTourneau**, designer and manufacturer of heavy earth-moving equipment. His machinery transformed vast acres of marshland into New York's Idlewild (now Kennedy) Airport, tore open the wilderness for the Alaskan Highway, made airstrips for the landing of the first Allied fighter planes on the beaches of Normandy on D-Day, and cleared the debris from bombed-out European cities after World War II.

In the early years of his business, **LeTourneau went into partnership with God.** By this he did not lower grace to the level of a bargain. Rather he said, "Because I believe that God wants businessmen as well as preachers to be His servants, I believe that a factory can be dedicated to His service as well as a church."

In 1935 he irrevocably assigned over 90 percent of the company's profits to the LeTourneau Foundation, described as a "not-for-profit corporation **whose income and capital can be used only for the cause of Christ**". (Moving Heaven and Earth, Donald Ackland, Iversen-Ford Associates, New York).

Countless Christian schools and organizations in America have been the recipients of his gift of giving. Scarcely a mission field exists in all five continents where some devoted worker has not been aided through money from this foundation. Altogether,

millions of dollars have been given to further the Lord's work.

LeTourneau's Testimony:

MY LIFE VERSE— I have never been much of a preacher of tithing. My Life Verse has been Matthew 6:33, ***"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."***

MY PHILOSOPHY has been— We should serve God because we love, not because we are making a bargain with Him. Many marriages go on the rocks because it was a bargain rather than love. You do something for me and I'll do something for you. In the same way people say, IF I DO THIS FOR GOD will He also do something for me? That's not love, it's a bargain.

(I often say, **if you love the LORD**, you will serve Him **and if you are not serving Him**, it proves you don't love Him **and if you don't love Him**, it proves you don't know him!) **MY MOTTO has been**— **Not how much of my money do I give unto the LORD but how much of God's money do I Keep for Myself!**

THE APPLICATION— I hope you are now beginning to understand what I meant when I began by saying **that I'm not much of a preacher of tithing.**

If under the law the people of God gave one-tenth to the LORD, shame on us, living under grace, if we don't do better.

The tithe may be a place to begin if you are not now giving to the LORD, but it's no place to stop. **You see what I mean?**

If you get a vision of what our salvation cost, IF YOU see Christ on the cross, the cruel nails in his hands and feet, the mocking crowd, and the weight of our sin... paying the penalty for you and for me— **it will put your service and giving on a different plane.**

He gave himself willingly to give us salvation from sin. If this grips us, we can't help but love Him. We will say with the song writer— ***"Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all!"*** **THE CONCLUSION**— Only the grace of God can save us from a superficial declaration of love for God. **True love based on an understanding of God's grace and deep gratitude for the gift of salvation through our LORD Jesus Christ — these will settle the problem of "what should I give God"** because my thinking will be turned around to consider that all I am and have belong to Him and I am a steward for Him while serving him in this life.

It's easy to sing, "Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold. Take my moments and my days, let them flow in ceaseless praise." **Only God's grace in a life can make it come true. Man, selfishly inclined, can't do it in his own power— IT TAKES GOD'S POWER!** [The above is from R. G. LeTourneau's autobiography, Mover of Men and Mountains.]

ThanksGIVING! In view of all the mercies and goodness of God— I now GIVE MYSELF wholly unto the LORD and insist on partaking of the privilege of sacrificially giving offerings unto the LORD for the advance of His kingdom work! DOES THE WORD 'SACRIFICE' have any good connections with gratitude and THANKS-LIVING and THANKS-GIVING? INDEED: Thanksgiving and Praise Often Involve Sacrifice:

1. Let us give verbal praise and thanksgiving unto the LORD: "Through Jesus, therefore, **let us continually offer to God a SACRIFICE OF PRAISE**, the fruit of lips that confess His name." (Hebrews 13:15)

2. The most astounding example of THANKSGIVING comes from the lips of Jesus! Standing before His disciples, Jesus *"took the cup, and gave thanks"* (Matthew 26:27).

As you know, that cup contained wine which was representative of His own blood which He was soon to shed for the sins of the whole world. It was the cup of death, **and yet with the very shadow of the Cross upon Him, Jesus gave THANKS!**

Crowded into that cup were (1) Your sins and mine; (2) The wrath of God against those sins; and (3) The very sacrifice of Himself for us. **Instead of shrinking back,**

JESUS quietly "took the cup, and gave thanks!"

O how doomed we all would be, were it not for the miracles which come forth from the fountain of **JESUS' SACRIFICE OF THANKSGIVING!**

NOW: How, many more miracles wait to be manifested, especially upon the undeserving ones of our world!

Let us walk in the steps of Jesus!

Let the miracles come forth... as we OVER-FLOW with THANKS unto the LORD! [Edited from THANK YOU THERAPY, by Don Baker]

Grace! Peace! THANKSGIVING! James Bell

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Sunday Services, NOVEMBER 23, 30

Sunday School @ 9:30am; classes all ages
WORSHIP SERVICE @ 10:45am

SPECIAL MEETINGS:

11/23- FOURTH SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP- 5:00pm; LUKUS HASKINS, preaching.

11/30- An Evening for Rest and/or Ministry

EVERY SATURDAY @ 8:00am— Men's Bible Study (Doors open by 7:30am— Enjoy Coffee / Juice / Donuts / Hardee's Biscuits!)
STUDY starts @ 8:00am— ROMANS 3

NEXT Ladies Bible Study; EARLY 2026

EVERY TUESDAY @ 10:00am – 10:30am LADIES PRAYER MEETING (Back door, first room on right)

TUESDAY EVENING, Teens, Young Adults— Bible Study,
'EXODUS!' ... 7:15pm @ Jaden & Rhi's home

WEDNESDAYS, 6:30pm— (Come in back double doors; **ADULT
MEN'S PRAYER GROUP**)

YOUNG FAMILIES— Study & Prayer Service

**LOVE OFFERINGS UNTO THE LORD (by MAIL or by ONLINE
GIVING) For Church Ministry and/or MISSIONS:**

**SUCH funds, (if checks), make out to Southside Baptist) —
MAIL TO: Southside Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1594, Gallatin,
TN 37066 / OR... TO GIVE via ONLINE GIVING**

<https://southsidebaptist.breezechms.com/give/online>