

The Priceless Privilege of Giving

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[0 : 0 0] the title of my message for this morning, The Priceless Privilege of Giving. The Priceless Privilege of Giving, a biblical theology for enjoying stuff. It's kind of a part tour from last time, but I changed up the title to reflect more of the emphasis I'll be bringing in this particular message, although it tag teams well with what I talked about last week. The main passages that will be in, the main chapters are from 2 Corinthians, but I'll be in some other places before that as well, namely reviewing in Luke with you from last time. But let me give you a couple of things to think about as is my manner, my habit as we approach the introduction for our passage this morning. Now friends, we give our money and we give our time and we give our material resources because we love God for first loving us.

We give out of a motive of love as believers. We don't give out of obligation. We do give because we've been commanded, but we understand that command is not burdensome to us because we are fulfilling the law of Christ in love for God and love for one another as we use the resources God entrust to us to help build the kingdom of God on this planet, to help build the kingdom of God as God gives us means to do so within our community. We are using the resources God entrusts to us to give back to God and build on eternal things. We want to lay up treasure in heaven for ourselves and help others do the same. So we give because God has given himself to us. And then by his example, the Lord teaches us to be generous in how we offer ourselves and all we have to him. He has been so generous in the Lord Jesus with us and then showering us with blessing. Why would we not want to give back to him and be good stewards to him for all that he does in our lives? Now, one thing is certain as we start this morning. One thing is is absolutely definite about this topic. In his love for us, we can never ever out give God. No matter how wonderfully generous you are in giving to God, you can never out give your

God as he provides for you. It cannot be done. It's a promise from scripture. We're going to see that. Excuse me, I'm still battling these these allergies and all. I guess that's what it is.

But I want to share a few verses with you as we put our minds around all of this and then I'll fulfill a promise that I made to you last week. Jesus, Jesus promised us this. Give and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over for by your standard of measure. It will be measured to you in return. Now, think about that principle by your standard of measure. It will be measured to you in return. Luke 6:38. Also, the apostle Paul taught that he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Now, you understand from scripture that's counterintuitive, isn't it? We don't think like that. We think in terms of the more I hoard, the more I save, the more I keep, the more I'll have.

I'll build it up. Well, there's good principles in scripture for saving, for being responsible and putting money away, for taking care of your family. There are certain priorities that we want to fulfill in the Lord before we start sending our money in other directions. But remember, it all belongs to him, doesn't it? We cannot out give God. And in this particular way, those of us who are willing to so bountifully will receive bountifully. Now, I want to be careful to caveat this and say to you, what I am not saying up here from scripture is that you can put God in some kind of box or corner and by doing what you're supposed to do, obligate him to do what you think he ought to do or even say, well, he said he do this. You have to be careful about motive, the motive of your heart. The motive of our heart isn't that we are giving in order to get this bounty back. We know that's true.

[4 : 58] We rejoice in that wonderful truth. We give because we love. That's the critical nature of giving as a steward of the Lord, as a Christian. We give because we love. That includes our money. That includes our time, any of the resources that we have in our life and the gift that God puts in us by the power of the Holy Spirit. We give that in service to God, not as a burden, not as a martyr, but in joyful thanksgiving that God would honor us with the privilege, the high privilege, the priceless privilege of being able to give back to the kingdom. Let me ask you this. What does your God need?

Nothing. Isn't it a priceless privilege that the God who needs nothing allows us to give to him?

And what does he tell us in our giving? I will give you joy. I will give you a greater bounty than you give me. What a privilege he has put us in that position because he loves us. It's a wonderful responsibility and it's a wonderful privilege that we enjoy. When Paul was giving some final instruction to the pastors from Ephesus, he said this in everything. I showed you that by working hard, that's a good concept. They're working hard. Christians are hard workers. We're good laborers in this manner. You must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus that he himself said it is more blessed to give than to receive. Acts 20, 35. Jesus said it is more blessed for you to give than to receive. Another one of those principles in scripture, those axioms from scripture that are counterintuitive to the way that we think about what we get and how we increase it. We don't think about increasing it by giving it away and blessing others, but here's what scripture is teaching us.

So we can say it this way. Giving is a natural and necessary part of being a Christian. Did you hear that? It is a natural and necessary way that you express love to God? Now, last week, I concluded my message by promising you something. I said that Lord willing, I would offer you some very practical guidelines for how you inform your biblical understanding in your life in practical ways concerning this topic of giving. So let's review the outline that I was working from from last week.

and then we can cover the practical applications. I'll have a number of them. I'll already warn you. We're going to look at Luke 12 again, but then when we get to 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, it isn't going to be the normal way of me taking a number of weeks to plow through 8 and 9. I'm going to hit some high points and draw out some principles that relate to the topic of giving. So we'll move rather quickly. All right, let's look over the outline from last week in the way of a review to walk us into all of this.

[8 : 22] biblical foundations for faithful stewardship. And I gave you two of them. That's where we started. The first was God owns all things. Greg reminded me in an elders meeting that we had last Sunday afternoon for several hours after the service that he had taught on this on a Wednesday night while we were gone to in Georgia and sent me some of the slides. And we didn't plan this now. The Lord did.

But we use the same verses to pull all that together. That's just the beauty of coming to Scripture and counting on the Word of God as we stand before you as your pastors to teach and preach. Thus saith the Lord, not thus saith Greg or Jeff.

And it's wonderful. It's beautiful. So this, I really gave you a review last Sunday and I didn't even realize I was doing it, but it was great. God owns all things. Now, one of the principles we pulled out of this, one of the truths that we pulled out of this, since God made all things, since God owns all things, since God sustains and watches over all that he has and owns as a child of God, that's a possessive, as someone who belongs to God, what does that make you? And we said, we answered that you then are a steward. You are a steward of what God entrusts to you. And we also said a biblical steward has a stewardship from God. As a steward, you have a certain privilege and responsibility to respond to God in stewardship. And this is how we define that. It is the careful, a biblical steward. It is a careful management of the resources of the kingdom of God. You are managing the stuff that belongs to God, which have been entrusted to a person or a group. And then we referred to Luke chapter 12. So I'll ask you to turn to Luke 12 with me. We began in verse 13. I'll just read down through this rather, rather quickly so that we can grasp the flow of thought as he comes to the latter part, the middle and latter part of chapter 12. Jesus here is speaking about the issue of anxiety and worry.

But notice the context before that has everything to do with stuff, possessions, money, the material goods of this world. Those are typically the kinds of things that we get ourselves all tied in knots about.

Verse 13 of Luke 12, someone in the crowd said to him, teacher. So they're speaking to Jesus. Tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me. But Jesus said to him, man, who appointed me a judge or arbitrator over you? Then Jesus said to them, beware and be on your guard against every form of greed. For not even when one has an abundance, does his life consist in his possessions?

[11 : 37] Isn't that good? And he told them a parable saying the land of a rich man was very productive. He began reasoning to himself saying, what shall I do since I have no place to store my crops?

Then he said, this is what I will do. I will tear down my barns and build larger ones. And there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul. So you have many goods laid up for many years to come. Take your ease, eat, drink and be merry. But God said to him, you fool.

This very night, your soul is required of you. And now who will own what you have prepared? So is the man. Now, now look at the comparison here. So is the man who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God. And he said to his disciples, for this reason, I say to you, do not worry about your life as to what you will eat, nor for your body as to what you will put on.

Now, we understand the principle here that one of the reasons that we value money the way we do is because of what money gets us. The clothes and the food and the cars and the goods and all that kind of thing. And remember that we said last week that money in and of itself is not sinful, is it?

God's not telling us we shouldn't handle money or have money or use money, but he tells us that the love of money, a greedy heart, a person who hoards and lays up treasure for themselves on this earth based on the materialism of this world, that person is a fool. So let's move on in the text.

[13 : 38] Verse 23, for life is more than food and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap. They have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them.

How much more valuable you are than the birds and which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life's span. If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about other matters?

Consider the lilies, how they grow. They neither toil nor spin, but I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory clothed themselves like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass, the field, which is alive today and tomorrow was thrown into the furnace, how much more will he clothe you, you men of little faith? And do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink and do not keep worrying for all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek. Yes, they do. But your father, look now, knows your father knows that you need these things, but seek his kingdom. These things will be added to you.

Do not be afraid, little flock, for your father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. What a privilege. Sell your possessions, give to charity, make yourselves money belts, which do not wear out an unfailing treasure in heaven where no thief comes near nor moth destroys for where your treasure is.

There your heart will be also. Now, when we finished this section last Sunday, I gave you a little I was able to give you a little bit more dealing with this. And we came to this particular point.

[15 : 41] The next major point, biblical perspectives for stewardship. We talked about two foundations. God owns everything, and that makes you a steward of what God owns. He's just entrusting it to you for a brief time. And now biblical perspectives. The first thing that we said based on the text, a greedy fool lays up the third, a greedy fool, his treasure, and the third one. The second thing, a greedy fool is to give you the truth to the truth of his brother. He's just one of the things that he's going to give you the truth.

Tell him to give me my inheritance or my share of it. And Jesus rebuked that man and immediately began talking about the issue of greed. Beware of it. Be careful. Greed is sneaky. It's like so many other sins that we deal with in our hearts. Greed will sneak up on you and grab you and hold on to you before you realize it's there.

By nature, that's what we are. And we have to be very, very guarded about this. We said several things about what this greed does. Greed, first of all, poisons your perspective on relationships.

Greed poisons your perspective on life. The poison perspective was illustrated for us in verses 16 through 22.

That's where we first began to see this illustrated with this man who tore down all of his barns for a bumper crop and built great big barns and then put it all in those barns and had no regard for God or other people with what God blessed him.

[17 : 19] And so that Jesus is saying, be aware of that kind of thing. How much are you going to take with you when you die? None of it. So isn't it wonderful to know you and I have a way to lay up treasure to wait for us in heaven while we enjoy the greatest treasure we could ever have and know here on earth?

Jesus. Jesus is the treasure, isn't he? Whether he ever gives us a single thing beyond that, giving us his son means that he's given us everything.

He's withheld nothing that is of the greatest value to God the Father. What was most valuable to God, what is most valuable to God, God has given to you sacrificially.

And by that, he's left us this wonderful example of how to live and how to think about life and the stuff of life. Very, very important. That's what we're dealing with now.

Then, I think I teased you with this a little bit. This is where we want to pick up. A grateful follower lays up treasures in heaven. And that's 22 down through the end of where we read.

[18 : 37] 22 down through the end. A grateful follower lays up treasures in heaven. I'm going to run through this rather quickly as we move toward 2 Corinthians because we have a lot to cover there.

But this is what I promise to follow up with. The do-nots of faithful stewardship or how to enjoy your earthly stuff. The reason I'm putting it in a positive after the do-not is I want you to understand the do-nots are important only because they rob you of your enjoyment of what God gives.

So don't do that. That's why Jesus is saying, don't worry. Don't worry about your life. Your life doesn't consist in your possessions. Don't get caught up in that.

You are not defined by what you have or what you don't have. That's not what defines you. There is a much, much greater reality, an eternal reality that defines who you are.

And that will not change. That's cemented in the heart of God. And he holds you in his heart. So much more precious and valuable than the fleeting stuff of this earth that's all going to burn up.

[19 : 48] All right. The do-nots of faithful stewardship or how to enjoy your earthly stuff. The first don't that we'll look at. Don't be anxious. Now, I'm not going to go through all this. I'm just going to just list them off for you.

Verse 22. And he said to his disciples, for this reason I say to you, do not worry about your life. Now, that's a command. Don't worry about your life.

But we do. And we get anxious. Another don't. Don't waste yourself. Don't waste yourself. Verse 25. And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his lifespan?

You just waste your life. You waste your life worrying about this stuff. Worrying about material goods and how to hang on to it. You know, even when outside circumstances threaten your livelihood.

I totally, I've been there many times. I totally understand as a provider and as a man how it works on your heart to think, man, are we going to lose the house? And we did lose the house.

[20 : 51] And you know what? Here I am. We lost everything. Overnight, when the downturn hit, we went from a house that was valued at that time probably around \$185,000.

We paid \$150,000 for it. Brand spanking new. First people to live in it. It went from about \$185,000 if we'd been able to sell it one day till we woke up the next day.

And it was worth about \$119,000. And we lost all of our equity. Everything was gone overnight. Here I am. No, was it hard? Yeah. Yeah, it was.

I ended up having to get a secular job and do things I didn't even know how to do and work hours, 16 hours a day. And that was hard. But here I am.

And was the Lord faithful? Did my kids miss a meal? Not one. Did we pay all of our bills? Every one of them. Every single one of them. And we were able to short sale our house so that we didn't burn the mortgage company any worse than they, we could have just left the keys on the table.

[21 : 51] That's what many people in our neighborhood, we woke up. Over the next few weeks, we would wake up and we'd see another house abandoned. Everybody moved out that night. One after another down our street.

Within a year, grass was grown up in all these yards. Trash was moved out into the front of the yard and it sat there for weeks at a time. One of the houses, one of the gutters had come down in a storm and it was swinging over through the garage.

I looked like a war zone. Yeah. Can't control that. Don't need to. Where did God go during all that time?

Did he just take a vacation? Oh, no. Never. He was right where he'd always been. We look to the Lord.

All right, I told you I wasn't going to do all that and I'm doing it anyway. I don't have time to preach all this. All right, let me move on. Don't seek control. Verse 29.

[22 : 52] Don't seek control. And do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink. And do not keep worrying. Jesus is saying that because he's hitting and hammering the issue of control in our hearts.

We want to manipulate and control the outcomes of our own life. One of the reasons that we get anxious, if not the number one reason that we're fearful and worry and we are anxious is because we forecast.

We are constantly doing the what if. What if. What if. It doesn't mean that we don't have concerns, folks. But we're being told here not to worry.

And then look at this one. Don't be afraid. Jesus says, don't be afraid in verse 32. I'm just pulling these right out of the verses, aren't I? Just it's not rocket science.

And then finally, don't be idle. You can tie 2 Thessalonians 3, 10 through 12 here. You'll remember that's the passage where Peter was telling the Thessalonians who were worried about the fact that they'd missed the second coming and they just decided to just kind of give up on life and just sit down and do nothing.

[24 : 00] And Paul said, if you don't work, you don't eat. Don't be idle. Work with your hands and you'll eat. Provide for yourself. That's good.

Christians should work. Remember, Adam and Eve were working in the garden before sin. Work is not sin. Last night at our table, one of the wives was talking about some stuff her husband was doing and some things he'd gone through in life.

And as she was talking about it and listening them off, her eyebrows kind of raised. And she went, actually, he's a workaholic, isn't he? And he took offense to that. He said, workaholic?

Yeah, workaholic. And they kind of went at it for about, you know, 10 seconds. It's one of those... Now, this whole conference was about biblical counseling. It's like, are we going to have to start doing some intervention therapy here kind of thing, you know, or something?

So don't be idle. Now, the do's. Let's hurry to the do's. We got to do those. The do's of faithful stewardship or how to lay up treasures in heaven. How to turn this into a positive because the Lord deals with that.

[25 : 11] The first is, and you won't be surprised by this at all, so many of the things that we deal with in terms of the matters of life come back to and begin here. It's amazing.

And here it is. Trust God. Trust God. Now, again, don't... Please don't hear that and go, oh, yeah, that's right. When everything goes upside down and south, you trust God.

No, no. This is when you remember that there is a great and mighty God who loves you and cares about you, and he is still on the throne and cannot be dethroned.

What's the worst that can happen to you? You can die. And where do you go? Where's your hope? Now, look, I'm not trying to sound morbid. I'm trying to put perspective on this for us.

This is all fleeting. This was never meant to be an always proposition. From the time of the fall, we knew this is all going to go away.

[26 : 07] And a greater, better, newer heaven made for us, fit for us. God will provide for us. All right?

So trust God. That's... I just took that out of the entire passage. Trust the Lord. All right? Look at this one. He deeply cares for you. You remember that from 1 Peter?

Don't be anxious, right? Give all of that anxiety and worry to God because he cares for you. And then this one.

He knows what you need. I emphasize that in the reading. And he is faithful. God is faithful. Again, when we went through that really difficult time, and we've been through several periods like that, when we went through that very difficult time, it was hard.

It was challenging. God taught us about ourselves. God squeezed me, and I saw things that came out that I had to deal with in all of these areas. But God was faithful.

[27 : 09] Do you understand? That was a faithful work of my father, to use those circumstances to show me my heart, to reveal to me what my heart is so desperately sick and wicked and deceived to see.

So God put me in those circumstances and squeezed, and I saw, and I went, yuck. And now you can deal with it. That's a gift. That's a gift.

And that's what God uses these circumstances to do. So these truths about the Lord, they come into clear focus. They inform your perspective as you prayerfully consider this, God's character and your value to God as his child.

That's what it did for me. And as I saw those things in my life, I realized this is not the character of the Lord on display in my life. I need to deal with this. I need to take care of this. And some of it in me, because this seems to be the way the Lord wired me, is push, push, push, push, push, push, push.

Some of you who know me aren't surprised by that. Push, push, push, push. Find a way. Make a way. Don't, I would tell my guys that were around me, okay, as we face this stuff, don't come to me and talk to me about the problems and talk to me about the why nots.

[28 : 24] Come to me with solutions. Come to me and talk to me about ways that we can shepherd this and deal with this and move through this. Greg and I are a lot alike in this way. So we check each other, don't we, brother?

We check each other. And we were able to say to each other, whoa. Or sometimes maybe we need to, but it's looking to God.

It's putting our eyes on the things of heaven. All right. And then this one, this one, seek God's kingdom. Trust God, seek God's kingdom. See why I couldn't do all this last week?

I just can't help myself. I got to, I got to talk about all this. I didn't have time. Now I do seek God's kingdom versus 31 and 32. Very clear, but seek his kingdom.

And then you know what? You're seeking his kingdom. All these other things he's going to add to your life. So don't be afraid, little flock. That's, that's beautiful, isn't it? Don't be afraid, little flock.

[29 : 24] Come here, come here. I know. I need that. That's what he did to me. Jeff. Push, push, push, push, push, push. Stop.

Quit. Yeah. So this is a deliberate pursuit. Don't be afraid. Your father has chosen. Oh man, this is so powerful.

Your father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. It delights the heart of God that he's made you part of his kingdom and that he's teaching you how to live a kingdom life on this earth.

That delights the Lord to see you like that. To see you striving in holiness delights God. Isn't that wonderful?

All right. This is a deliberate pursuit. Honor God in all you do. First Corinthians 10 31. Colossians 3 17. The reason we're here is to honor God in all we do as we make disciples.

- [30 : 25] All right. Make his kingdom's work. The priority for you. His kingdom's work. The prior doesn't matter if you're a plumber or if you're a doctor or whatever it is that you do in life. You can make God's kingdom work the priority in what you do with your life. And then cease striving and enjoy God's gifts to you.
- I get this all from 31 and 32. Cease striving and then be at peace. Knowing because he knows you need these things.
- Be at peace knowing God will provide. He hasn't forgotten you. He gets it. He knows. It doesn't mean it won't be hard or challenging. It doesn't mean that you keep the house. Doesn't mean you'll have the cars you want. It doesn't mean you'll wear the designer clothes you want. But God will care for you friends. That's a promise.
- [31 : 25] And then finally. Manage your possessions God's way. That's 33 and 34. Sell your possessions. Give to charity. Make yourselves money belts which do not wear out.
- An unfailing treasure in heaven. Where no thief comes. No moth destroys. What can we say about managing those possessions? We can say three quick things. Look at here.
- He gives. God gives. That you might have what you need. That's where it starts. Now look at this. He gives. That you might give what you have.
- We've already seen that principle over and over again. We'll see it again. And then finally. He gives. That you might have forever. God gives to you.
- That you might lay up treasures in heaven. As you give. You're blessing other people. You're honoring the Lord. You're delighting the Lord's heart. As you give here. And you get the greater benefit of the return on your investment is so huge.
- [32 : 25] We can't even fathom it. Because it's being laid up for us in heaven. It's just powerful stuff. I hope you leave here today.
- This is my goal. I hope you leave here today and say. Man we got to get on this give thing. I don't know where you are in your giving. You guys know I don't know who gives.
- I don't know if you give. And I don't know how much you give. I have a brother who protects me from all that. So I can look you in the eye right now. And say give. And I have no idea what you're giving.
- Or anything that's going on. But give. Give. And be liberal in your giving. And generous in your giving. Because God's generous to you. Alright now. The gist of these truths.
- Is expressed in the relationship. Between verses 34. 34 and 21. Just one more thing. A couple. Here before we get to 2nd Corinthians. I know.
- [33 : 22] That was all introduction. I'm looking at the clock. 34 and 21. Let me put these up here. So you can see them together. Suzanne. Is all the. Are these slides going to be on the. These slides are available on the website.
- Amen. We're getting all that straightened out. For where your treasure is. There your heart will be also. So. So is the man.
- Who stores up treasure for himself. And is not rich toward God. What can we say about this? Verse 34. At the top. Is the correction.
- For verse 21. We need to correct this verse 21 thing. The man who stores up treasure for himself. Is not rich toward God.
- Not good. You don't want to be there. There. What's the correction for that? Where your treasure is. There your heart will be also. Who are we to treasure? Christ. God. Right.
- [34 : 21] And as we treasure the Lord. Our heart will follow. Where we lay up our treasure. Our heart will be found. It's what you treasure in your heart. That is most important about you.

Because that's what you worship. In any given moment. So not surprisingly. The matter of our relationship. With material things. Including money.

Is a matter of relationship to God. It just always comes back to God. Why? Because God owns everything. And sustains everything. Alright.

Now let me say this. The treasure is found. In the many blessings. Of our relationship with God. Through Christ. That's where the treasure is found.

Not in the stuff. From this treasure. Of our relationship with God in Christ. From this treasure we invest. In what God calls true life.

[35 : 16] Genuine life. And we enjoy life with the things. Of this world. Which do not wear out. An unfailling treasure in heaven.

Now how God translates all that. Into a heavenly treasure. That's up to him. We're just laying it out. That that's what happens. As we are generous. And gracious.

And as we give. Out of a heart of love for the Lord. We lay up treasure in heaven. Beautiful. Alright. Now. Let me take you to a section of scripture. In the time I have left.

Richly. Richly deals. With what we call. Grace. Giving. We'll only hit some high point principles of this. We can always circle back. Lord willing. And take a deeper dive.

Which we might end up doing. But I'm eager to get into another book of the Bible. That I have burning in my. My head. But I wanted to do this with you too. So grace. Giving.

[36 : 14] If you'll turn to 2nd Corinthians. Corinthians. Chapter 8. Some of what I say today.

May be just a little bit new. And challenging for you. But I'll show you in the scriptures. Now brethren. We wish to make known to you.

The grace of God. Which has been given in the churches of Macedonia. The churches of Macedonia. Would likely be. First Thessalonians. The Thessalonians.

The church at Philippi. I think. And Berea. I think are the three. That we're talking about here. That in a great ordeal of affliction. Look at this now.

Their abundance of joy. And their deep poverty. Overflowed. In what? In the wealth of their liberality.

[37 : 20] Wow. These people. Are giving. Not out of. An abundance of resources. As much as. An affliction.

Right? And joy. And a poverty. But we'll see later. That he's going to add to that. For I testify. That according to their ability.

And beyond. Their ability. They gave. Of their own accord. Begging us. Begging us. Look at that. With much urging. For the favor.

Or the privilege. Of participation. In the support. Of the saints. And this. Not as we had expected. But they first. Gave themselves.

To the Lord. And to us. By the will of God. Please make note. Of verse five. They first. Gave themselves. To the Lord. And to us.

[38 : 16] In our work. For the Lord. By the will of God. Verse six. So we urge Titus. That as he had previously. Made a beginning. So he would also. Complete in you.

This gracious work. As well. Now what's happening here. Is Paul. Some time ago. Began a collection. And he was collecting money. For needy.

Christians. In Jerusalem. These are pilgrims. And different people. Who had been. Spread all over the place. That came back. For Passover and all. And many of those people.

Under the preaching of Peter. Had become saved. They had come to trust God. And so now. Remember in Acts. Three thousand souls. Were added to the church.

In one moment. One day. So now they have this. Huge influx of people. Who. Because of persecution. They're sticking around. In Jerusalem.

[39 : 11] To be part of the church. Why? Because there's not. A first Baptist. In whatever. Podunkville. Fifty miles away. There's not even.

A second Baptist. There's none of that. If they're going to be. Part of the church. The new. And fledgling. And growing church. They're going to have to. Stay in Jerusalem. To be part of that church.

And grow in the Lord. You see. And so now. They have all these people. And they need housing. They need to be helped. And cared for. While they look for employment. You see the issues here.

So Paul. Seeing that legitimate need. And recognizing that. He's been going around. On his missionary journeys. And part of what he's been doing. Is asking other. Christians.

To give. As they form. And as they become bodies. Will you give. For the need in Jerusalem. And so now he's saying. Titus is going to help you guys.

[40 : 03] Finish that. That we started with you. When we told you this about. I don't know. I think it was about a year ago. And now we're going to. We've come back. We want to follow up on that. Verse seven.

But just as you abound in everything. In faith. In utterance. In knowledge. Good things. And in all earnestness. And notice this one. And in the love.

They abound in the love. We inspired in you. See that you abound. In this gracious work also. So Paul is saying. Out of love. Please make sure that you contribute.

Please make sure that you give here. I am speaking. Verse eight. I'm speaking this. I am not speaking this. As a command.

But as proving. Through the earnestness of others. The sincerity of your love. Also. He mentions love again. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[40 : 57] This is why we call it grace giving. You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. That though he was rich. Yet for your sake. He became poor. So that you through his poverty.

Might become rich. That's the gospel isn't it? Now I give my opinion. In this matter. For this is to your advantage. Who were the first to begin. A year ago.

There it is. Not only to do this. But also to desire to do it. So the Corinthians started this a year ago. Then there was some conflict. The Corinthians basically ran Paul.

Out of Corinth. They began to doubt his apostleship. He's had to write these letters. One of them we don't have. And it's gotten pretty heated. And so Paul is admonishing them.

As well as trying to affirm and encourage them. In this effort. But now finish doing it also. Verse 11. So that just as there was the readiness. To desire it.

[41 : 51] So there may also be the completion of it. By your ability. For if the readiness is present. It is acceptable according to what a person has. Not according to what he doesn't have.

For this is not for the ease of others. And for your affliction. But by way of equality. See what he's saying there? We'll go into this just a little bit more.

But he's saying look. This is not Robin Hood. I'm not robbing from the rich. To feed. To give to the poor. And make you poor in the process. That's not. This is not socialism. It's not what we're doing.

It's certainly not communism. It's biblicalism or something. I don't know. That's what he's saying. Look. Their abundance also may become a supply for your need.

In verse 14. At this present time. Your abundance. Being a supply for their need. So that their abundance also may become a supply for your need.

- [42 : 49] That there may be equality. Again. He's not talking about the equality of socialism. He's talking about mutual love and support. You're going to step up to the plate.
- And offer mutual love and support to them in a time of need. Out of the abundance that God is giving you in your life. And there's going to come a time in your life. When they can reciprocate.
- And do the same for you. It's mutual. It's a mutual care. Even across a distance. Do you see that? Even across a distance. It's a beautiful compelling love.
- That brings these people to this point. Verse 15. As it is written. He who gathered much did not have too much. And he who gathered little had no lack.
- A principle. But thanks be to God. Who puts the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus. For he not only accepted our appeal. But being himself very earnest.
- [43 : 44] He has gone to you of his own accord. We have sent along with him the brother. Whose fame in the things of the gospel has spread through all the churches. And not only this.
- But he has also been appointed by the churches. To travel with us in this gracious work. Which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord himself. That's Paul's motive.
- And to show our readiness. Taking precaution. So that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift. Paul knew about the rumors that were being spread about him.
- And so he's taking along trustworthy companions. Men of great reputation in the Lord. And it's all accountable. He's being accountable in this. And he's telling them about that.
- This is not a slippery thing. Because there were false teachers. Who were accusing Paul of getting this money for himself. And pocketing it. And he's saying no such thing. That's not what's going on.
- [44 : 41] Verse 21. For we have regard for what is honorable. Not only in the sight of the Lord. But also in the sight of men. That's a great concept. We have sent with them our brother.
- Whom we have often tested. And found diligent in many things. But now even more diligent. Because of his great confidence in you. As for Titus. He's my partner. He's my fellow worker among you.
- As for our brethren. They are messengers of the churches. A glory to Christ. Therefore. Openly before the churches. Show them the proof of your. There it is again.
- Love. And of your. Our reason for boasting about you. So now we don't know who these men are. It's funny to me. Sometimes in scripture. We'll see names listed. Like here Titus.
- That name is burned in the scriptures. And the scriptures will be forever. Forever. But there are several men mentioned here. That are just brothers. Their names aren't. So we don't know who they were. No use to speculate about that.
- [45 : 39] Doesn't matter. We still can get the point. Of what he's talking about. So you'll see that. As we even move into nine. There's too much detail for me to cover. In detail.
- So I'm just going to hit some helpful. Guiding principles for you. And here's the first one. I want to offer you. Look at this one. Principles. Fundamental truths. Grace giving. Grace giving is a gift from God.
- Second Corinthians. Eight. Verse one. Now brethren. We wish to make known to you. The grace of God. Which has been given. In the churches. In Macedonia.
- God is making all of that. Possible. It's a gift first. From the Lord. And we want to pass that on. In a great deal. Ordeal of affliction.
- Their abundance of joy. And their deep poverty. Overflowed in the wealth. Of their liberality. Why? Because they love the Lord. Because they love the Lord. And they're responding to a need. Like any other blessing and ability.

- [46 : 36] It is from the Lord. That we find. Both the desire. And the capability. To give generously. With a grateful heart. So we're talking about. Giving by grace.
- Grace giving. Out of a. Out of a sense of God's grace. His favor. Being poured out into your life. That is his love. The spiritual blessings. Of his mercies. From Romans 12.
- One. By the mercies of God. Present yourselves. A living sacrifice. To God. As an act of your spiritual worship. You see. We are sacrifices.
- To God. Because we belong to the Lord. Everything we are. And all that we have. Belongs to God. So we. It's as if we're walking up. And we lay down on the altar. And say God. Here I am.
- And everything that I am. It's all yours. I'm yours. It's all yours. How do you want me. To live. For your glory. To please you. That's every day. That's what we're doing.
- [47 : 32] It all starts there. That's why these people. Are giving by grace. All right. Let me give you another one. Grace giving. Is according to what you have. Verse three.
- For I testify. That according to their ability. And beyond their ability. They gave of their own accord. Nobody's coercing them. Nobody's guiltning them. Nobody's manipulating them. They're giving out of what they have.
- That's a great place to start. You give in accordance with what you have. Quote unquote. In store. That is. What you have purposed in your heart.
- To give. And have set aside for that purpose. That's first Corinthians 16. Verse two. Grace giving is sacrificial.
- Verse three. For I testify. For I testify. That according to their ability. And beyond their ability. They gave of their own accord. Begging us. With much urging. For the favor of participation. In the support of the saints.
- [48 : 30] They want to be a part of this. The proportion of your giving. Should show some kind of sacrifice. On your part. So folks. This is important.
- We don't give. Out of convenience. And ease. It's not like we say. Okay. Well. I've got this. And I've got that. And I've got this in order. And I've got that in order. And I've been able to get me.
- This and this. And this and this. Because I really wanted. That bad boy right there. And so I've got it all. I got it pretty much. I got a few other things over here. But I think I'm at a place now. Where since I've got all my ducks in a row. And I got the things I want.
- Now I'll give a little bit to God. No. No. No. You don't give out of convenience. And ease. It's going to cost you something. To give like this to God. It's going to cost you. There's going to be a challenge involved in this.
- That's what we're seeing here. So we don't give out of convenience and ease. We give sacrificially. Now here's what that does not mean. It does not mean. That we act unwisely.
- [49 : 29] God's not asking you to miss your mortgage. So that you can send money to the Ukrainian refugees. That's irresponsible. And it's not a good testimony as a Christian. And we are called on by the Lord to pay our debts.
- Aren't we? And take care of our families. So we know first of all. That's got to be in place. That's fine. That's good. We encourage that. And we'll help you with that.
- If you're getting in trouble with it. We have means here at the church. That if you're having trouble paying your bills. And it's not because you've been all irresponsible. And all. It's just. It's tough. We want to come alongside and help with that.
- It does not mean that you act impulsively. This is not about you being undisciplined in financial matters. We can help you with that too. All right.

What does it mean? It does mean to give sacrificially. And we're going to go to a couple of passages. Mark 12. 41 through 44.

[50 : 29] Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. And Jesus sat down opposite the treasury.

And began observing how the people were putting money into the treasury. And many rich people were putting in large sums. All right. That's. That's not a bad thing right now.

A poor widow came. And put in two small copper coins. Which amount to a cent. Calling his disciples to him. Jesus said to them. Truly I say to you.

This poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury. Wow. They all put in. Out of their. Surplus. But she.

Out of her poverty. Put in all she owned. All that she had. To live on. What's. What's the principle here? What are we looking at? There is a certain. Certain aspect of sacrificial giving.

[51 : 25] That is just that. Don't. Don't think that this kind of giving. Is going to be something that's. That's easy for you. It is going to cost you. You. You may have to rearrange your priorities to think through.

All right. You know what? We can give this up. We don't. This is. We can. And so we can do this. As you start thinking like that. As you start thinking about laying up treasures in heaven.

That kind of stuff starts to fade. And you. You begin to experience a great inner joy. And an inner peace. About how you're using what God provides to you.

To lay up treasure in heaven. And build the. The kingdom of God. As he is. Showing you. And purposing in your heart to give. You give out of what you purpose in your heart to the Lord.

And it's sacrificial. Philippians 4. 19. Did I give that one yet? Philippians 4. Oh. Look at this.

[52 : 22] I forgot. People ask me. And they have asked me. Do I give from the gross or from the net? Neither. You give from your heart. All right. Philippians 4. 19. And my God will supply all your needs.

According to his riches. In glory. In Christ Jesus. And my God will supply most of your needs. Most of the time. Now my God will supply all your needs. All your needs. All the time.

Because he's a good and gracious God. He's not like us. He's not greedy. And he's not stingy. Trust God. Don't begrudge God.

To begrudge God. Means to hold back. To be reluctant toward. Don't be reluctant toward the Lord. In this area. Of giving. The Lord has first given to us.

And so we want to give to him. Now another way to express this concept. Is commitment and investment. You understand those terms. In a fiduciary way.

[53 : 24] A financial way. Only you know for sure. How much you're giving. Reflects a true commitment. And sacrificial investment. In the things of God. And that's fine.

That's the way it should be. Greg and I don't want to. We. Come knocking on your door. And say to you. You're not giving sacrificially. Yeah. It's not. That. That's between you and the Lord.

You deal with that. But give. All right. Grace giving is voluntary. That's another verse three. Did I do that one? Let me see. Okay. Grace giving is voluntary.

Nowhere in the New Testament. Now here. It gets a little interesting. Nowhere in the New Testament. Are believers required. Required. To give. A percentage. Or a fixed amount.

In their financial stewardship. Say. Whoa. Wait a minute now. What about tithing? I hear you. Listen. Tithing is not a good way. To approach giving by grace.

[54 : 24] We're talking about New Testament concepts here. Some who tithe. Think about this. There's just a couple of problems with this. Some who tithe. Do so.

Because they've been told. That not tithing is equivalent to robbing God. Tithing was a tax that God put on ancient Israel. It was a way that they expressed their love and obedience.

And God's command to them. To give a percentage like that. Yes. That was for Israel. New Testament is all about grace giving. Some people tithe.

Because they feel obligated. They feel like God's going to get them. If they don't do it. Now that doesn't have any place. In love. Does it? You're not giving out. There's a problem with that.

Now. Here's another thing. Other people tithe. And they could do. Much more. Now what am I saying? Don't be guilty of hiding behind the tithe.

[55 : 19] To avoid being graciously generous. Don't do that. Don't say. Well I tithe. I'm good. When you have an ability. Because of what God's blessed you with.

To do more. I've heard people say this. And you know. This could be helpful. You may want to think about a baseline. Of 10%. A tithe.

And then go from there. But you know what folks. You're not under any obligation. To give 10%. If you can't give 10%. Or you're in a position. Where 10% is not going to work right now. And you want to work your way.

Toward more and more. Giving. That's fantastic. But we don't want you to feel guilty. If you're not tithing. If you're not giving a full 10% of your income. Again.

Is that gross or net? It's your heart. It's what you purpose in your heart to give. Don't get legal. Legalistically bound up in that.

[56 : 14] Think in terms of grace giving. Give. Give from the abundance of your heart to the Lord. And trust God to multiply it. And have joy. And have joy.

Be joyful. Do what you can do in the Lord. And be joyful. And know that your pastors love you. And we support you. And we know that God will deal with your heart.

Don't be hard hearted about this. Remember what Jesus said. You need to beware. And he added this. Be on guard of about every form of greed.

There's lots of faces to greed. And you just don't want to be there. Do you? So believers. Please be careful about this. And don't hide behind the tithe.

Either way. These aren't biblical motives. Forgiving. Forgiving. According to God's grace. His favor on your life. So at grace. You are not required to tithe.

[57 : 09] No one's reviewing your giving records. To guilt you into giving a tithe of your income. You give as you purpose in your heart. All right. Look. Grace giving. Grace giving is based on devotion to Christ.

Devotion to Christ. Where we were back in. First Corinthians 8. Five again. Or second Corinthians. It's. It's all about. Being faithful. faithful. To your God.

And loving your God. Generous giving. Flows from your love for Jesus. It's like you're saying this. It's what I did. Just a second ago. When I took you.

When I said to you. It's like you're laying yourself down on the altar. Before the Lord. And saying God. Everything that I am. And all that I have. Belongs to you. And I want to honor you that way.

And live that way. Please help me with the deceitfulness. Of my heart. And the greed. That I tend toward in my heart. Sometimes I don't even realize I'm there. Till I'm there. Please help me with that.

[58 : 07] So your desire to be a living sacrifice to God. Leads you to act in generous ways. Toward those. Whom God loves. Grace giving is an act of obedience.

And worship. Obedience and worship. That should say second Corinthians. I'm. I'm sorry. We're in second Corinthians. Eight. They first gave of themselves to the Lord.

That's the devotion. And to us by the will of God. We urge Titus to come and be there. But just as you abound in everything. In faith and utterance and knowledge. And in all earnestness.

And in the love we inspired in you. See that you abound in this gracious work. Also. Obedience and worship. Paul is saying be obedient. Follow through.

Make this about your. Devotion to the Lord. As you obey him. So giving according to God's grace. Comes from a heart. Set on worshiping the Lord. Desiring to be obedient to him.

[59 : 09] Grace giving is important. In your walk with the Lord. It's just like any other aspect. Of your Christian life. Remember this passage. So whether you eat.

Or drink. Or whatever you do. Do all. Do all. To the glory. Of God. First Corinthians 10 31. Grace giving is according to Christ's example.

We see that in second Corinthians. Eight. Nine. Sorry. I didn't catch that typo. Second Corinthians. Eight. Nine. We'll. We'll. Correct it before we post it. On the deal. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus.

That though he was rich. Yet for your sake. He became poor. So he left us an example. Is what we're saying here. Jesus lived a surrendered life to God the Father.

And he gave all. All that he was. And all that he had. To the will of God. For his life. And that should be our attitude. A humble attitude of giving.

[60 : 06] Giving ourselves. Deny yourself. Take up your cross. And follow me. So you're asking the Lord. What would you have me do. In my giving to the church. To this church body.

This family. And the work that we're doing. To others. And then to causes that honor your name. All right. Grace giving is purposeful. In verse 14.

Grace giving is purposeful. I don't know if you can see that. At the bottom of the screen. At this present time. Your abundance. Being a supply.

For their need. So that their abundance. Also may be become a supply. For your need. And there may be equality. This is according to a specific need. It has a specific purpose.

In mind. So God's design. Always serves. His greater purpose. In glory. So in grace giving. We are used of the Lord. To meet genuine. Basic needs.

[61 : 00] In the lives. Of other people. Out of the resources. That God blesses us with. This is precisely. What the arrogant landowner. In Luke 12. Failed to grasp.

His resources. Were his own. In his own mind. To be selfishly. Stockpiled. And when he could. Have given others. Whose basic needs. Were going unmet.

He did. He neglected that. Altogether. Wasn't even on his radar. Grace giving. Is purposeful. In another way. Also. We should. We should. Always be prepared.

To reach out. To those. In financial need. Among us. You say. Jeff. Right now. If somebody. Was in need. I could. I could come up. With ten dollars. To give them. Great. Then give.

What you purpose. In your heart. And give them. The ten dollars. Another one. Of you say. Would say. Jeff. Right now. The way. That I am. Situated. And the way. The Lord's blessed me. I could give a thousand.

[61 : 55] Great. Give a thousand. Let me ask you. A question. In concerning. The love of God. And what you purpose. In your heart. Who gave more? Who gave more?

It's irrelevant. Did you give. Out of your heart? Did you give. To the Lord? Did you give. What you could? Was it sacrificial? Did you do it.

Because you love God? You see. You start there. And then you move out. Again. I'm telling you man. It's. I've had people say.

Things to me like that. Like. Man. The Lord just put on my heart. And so we didn't pay the mortgage. Last month. And we sent that money. To so and so. Because we found out. We just prayed about. The Lord just spoke to my heart.

And just. And I'm. I'm. I'm thinking to myself. Hold on brother. There's some first principles here. That are. Not being upheld.

[62 : 52] That need to be in place. Before you do things like that. In other words. I'm saying to you. We're not called to be irresponsible. All right. So there. You see. There's some wisdom here.

There's some wisdom here. All right. Now let me. Let me do this with you. In the way of ending. I've only got a few more. But I want to give them to you. If you'll look at. Second Corinthians chapter nine. Excuse me.

I'm going to give you. Just a few more principles. And close it up. I told you. This was too much. To go in any great detail. You say. Boy Jeff. There's a lot. You didn't talk about.

I know. Don't worry about that. Don't worry about that. Let's just focus on. What we can deal with. In chapter nine. For it is superfluous. For me. To write to you.

About this ministry. To the saints. For I know. Your readiness. Of which I boast. About you. To the Macedonians. Namely. That Achaia. Has been prepared. Since last year.

[63 : 47] And your zeal. Has stirred up. Most of them. Boy that's great. Paul's letting them know that. You've been a great example. In many ways. And other people. Have been spurred on. To do this with us. But I have sent the brethren.

In order that. Our boasting about you. May not be made empty. In this case. So that as I was saying. You may be prepared. Otherwise. If any Macedonians. Come with me.

And find you unprepared. We. Not to speak of you. Will be put to shame. By this confidence. Paul's just covering his basis here. And being responsible. He's being a good shepherd. So I thought it necessary.

To urge the brethren. That they would go on. Ahead to you. And arrange beforehand. Your previously promised. Bountiful gift. So that the same. Would be ready. As a bountiful gift.

And not affected. By covetousness. I don't want to catch you. Off guard. I don't want to guilt you. This isn't about. Guilting you. This isn't about. Playing to your greed. Or anything like that.

[64 : 42] No. We want you to be prepared. To give. Now this I say. He who sows sparingly. Will also reap sparingly.

You see. Paul's laying down. Some principles. For them to think about. As these brothers go out. And get them ready to give. He who sows bountifully. Will also reap bountifully.

Each one must do. As he has purposed. In his heart. Not grudgingly. Or under compulsion. Guilt. For God loves.

A cheerful giver. And God is able. To make all grace. Abound to you. See. Grace giving. So that always. Having all sufficiency. In everything.

You may have an abundance. For every good deed. You know. God wants you. To have an abundance. To give. He wants that. In your life. As it is written. He scattered abroad.

[65 : 33] He gave to the poor. His righteousness. Endures forever. Now he who supplies. Seed to the sower. And bread for food. Will supply. And multiply. Your seed. For sowing.

And increase. The harvest. Of your righteousness. God will give you. What you need. To fulfill this. Turn your heart to him. Look to him. Pray. Ask God for this. You will be enriched.

In everything. For all liberality. Great. Which through us. Is producing. Thanksgiving to God. This is all about. God working. In our lives. To do this.

So that we can give. Thanks to God. And God's glorified. It's just a wonderful. Beautiful process. For the ministry. Of this service. Is not only fully. Supplying the needs. Of the saints.

But. Is also overflowing. Through many. Thanksgivings. To God. God's being worshiped. God's being made known. God's being glorified. Because of the proof.

[66 : 28] Given by this ministry. They will glorify God. For your obedience. To your confession. Of the gospel of Christ. And for the liberality. Of your contribution. To them.

And to all. While they also. By prayer. On your behalf. Yearn for you. Because of the surpassing. Grace. Of God. In you. Thanks be to God.

For his. Indescribable. Gift. That you're involved. With this process. And he's pouring out. His grace on you. Indescribable. Beautiful stuff.

All right. I'll give you a few more. And we'll close it out. All right. Let me give you a few more. Grace giving flows from a heart of love. And surrender to God. I just read it. So we'll just. We'll just say that.

Paul is leading us. To handle this. In a way. That encourage us. To give from hearts of willingness. Love. Devotion. Not from compulsion. In verses six and seven. He makes the point.

[67 : 25] It does no one any good. When you give from a grudging. Greedy. Reluctant heart. Or. Or. When you give from an attitude of guilt. To trying to salve your conscience.

About something. Some people have tried to give. To buy their way out of sin. Or to do penance. You see. That's not right. Penance. The idea that I can do this.

And I can. Show God. And prove to God. How holy I am. Or how serious I am. About dealing with this. So I'll give more. And then. That'll make God happy.

And I'll get on his good side again. That. What do we call that? G. R. E. E. E. D. That's a form of greed. It's a form of greed. You're trying to manipulate.

The God of heaven. So why not give generously? Sow. And why not get back? Reap. A generous return on your investment. Why not? The more seeds you sow.

[68 : 17] The more crops you grow. The more blessings you sow. The more blessings you share with others. And reap for yourself. Remember. We cannot out give God. Grace giving is the expression of a cheerful enthusiastic heart.

Giving should be a joy. Not an exercise. And certainly not a display. A burden. God expresses a special blessing to those who give with a cheerful grateful enthusiasm.

He does. He promises that. Grace giving is backed by God. Wow. That's a good one. Grace giving is ensured by the Lord.

The bank of Jesus. That's a great place to be. When you give from a cheerful obedient heart. God replaces what you give. So that you are not in need.

And so that you can continue to give. God ensures that you have what you need to fulfill your privilege of giving by grace. It's it. It's just great. And notice I use the word need not want.

[69 : 20] God. God. God. Help me with. That was one of the things I told you when God was squeezing me during the economic downturn. And we lost all of our material possessions. As God squeezed.

I had to deal with wants. I had to reevaluate. What are my needs? You see. Because now. Now I'm in a position in need. And the first thing that I need is a job.

It decimated our little church. We had to close it down. I had to go get a job. Folks. That was one of the darkest times in my life. That was hard.

Hard. Hard. All right. And then finally grace giving is in response to God's gift of Jesus. That's an appropriate place to end. God didn't hold anything back in giving us his greatest blessing in Christ.

He lavished us with the blessings of life in Jesus. This should stand as our highest. Our greatest example of how we should sow and reap.

[70 : 21] Now folks you have the priceless privilege to freely give as you purpose in your heart. That's good. You are not bound by your circumstances.

You are not bound by amounts. And you are not bound by percentages or man-made rules. Greg and I just want you to look at scripture and give according to what the Bible tells you.

And give from a joyful thankful heart. So you have the priceless privilege of giving from the overflow of your heart's love for God. And then finally I'll say this.

You have the priceless privilege of giving generously and enthusiastically to God's people. To God's causes. Simply because this pleases the Lord.

We give. We know it pleases the Lord. So we do it. Because we want him to be pleased. Isn't that wonderful? It's the priceless privilege of giving by grace.

[71 : 27] Thank you for your kind attention as always for your prayers. Thank you for the way Greg and I will say. These messages were not preached because we're in financial trouble.

These were not preached because we know that some of you are. No. These were preached to in for you to have joy and thanksgiving in your heart as you give to the work of the Lord and lay up treasure in heaven.

And don't let Satan rob you of that joy. Don't let him guilt you. Don't let him make it compulsive. And sure enough don't worry about it. All right.

Let's pray together. Father is always when you grant us the privilege to be here.

on the Lord's day, gathered as your people to sit under your word, it's always a wonderful honor and privilege for us to hear the truth, for us to be challenged and informed and instructed in how we're to live a life pleasing to you.

[72 : 37] And we thank you that we find in the scriptures all that we need for life and godliness as we follow you and seek to please you in the things that we say and do.

Thank you for a sufficient Bible. Thank you, God, that in Christ Jesus, you have given us our highest and greatest wealth in him, knowing that he is the treasure of our lives and will go on being our greatest treasure for all eternity.

What a high privilege we share together. Thank you for your grace and thank you for ministering that grace to us so that we can then turn and minister your grace to each other.

It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.