

The Joy of Giving (Part 1)

By Pedro Gelabert

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When we talk about *giving*, we sometimes end up talking about *receiving* first, right? Don't you usually ask the question: "What am I going to get in return?" In the world, you don't usually give without knowing what you're going to get. Jesus understood this, which is why He told His disciples what He did in **Matthew 19:24-30**:

24 "Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God." 25 When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?" 26 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." 27 Peter answered Him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" 28 Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on His glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. 30 But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first."

This sure sounds like a good deal! Not only does Jesus promise us a hundred times more blessings in this life when we leave everything to follow Him, but *also* eternal life to come! There is no way you can beat that!

Now let's go to the book of Daniel to examine the kind of *attitude* we need to have in order to understand what it means to give everything up:

Daniel 3:16-19 teaches us about a situation in some disciples' lives that proves the type of "working conviction" that is the cornerstone of *joyful giving*.

16 "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. 17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and He will rescue us from your hand, O king. 18 But even if He does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up." 19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual..."

This sounds scary, doesn't it?! These disciples are about to face the flames, yet, look at the conviction expressed in verse 18. They said that even if God didn't save them from those flames, (provide them with what they wanted at the moment) they would stick to their convictions of not bowing down to false idols (not giving in to the fleshly desires). Not that they doubted that God would save them, but they were so sure of their destiny in heaven that it didn't matter what happened to them here on earth. They would always stand on God's side.

This kind of **assurance**, one that confides in the eternal and the unseen, is what makes possible *joyful giving*.

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“Let your Light so shine...” Matthew 5:16

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We cannot barter (negotiate) with God. We cannot say, “OK, I will serve you and I will follow you and in exchange I am counting on you to give me a comfortable and stress free life!”

Well, God certainly promises His disciples the opposite of comfort:

“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” **Matthew 5:10-12**

A stress-free life, though, is something that He wants for you:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” **Matthew 11:28-30**

So, God definitely challenges us, in so many ways, to entrust our material, emotional, and spiritual lives to Him. Let’s examine the following verses:

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” **Luke 6:38**

““Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,’ says the LORD Almighty, ‘and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.” **Malachi 3:10**

God actually tests us to see if we believe Him! The challenge that we receive from these two verses is to step out of what we can see, measure, and judge, and allow God to lead us into the territory that He desires for us. And, He’s not asking us or requiring us to accept mediocre or run-of-the-mill lives in exchange for the spiritual, unseen blessings. Jesus spoke of measurable, countable, perceivable blessings, and of course, also of the spiritual kind. But, let’s talk about the material blessings for the moment. *(To be continued in the September bulletin).*

“The Lord added to their number...” Acts 2:47 Baptisms

DATE	NAME	TOWN
05/25/03	Johnathan Carter	Medford
06/23/03	Janine Tedesco	Selden

“They first gave themselves to the Lord...” 2 Corinthians 8:5

Weekly Budget: \$ 6,000

DATE	ATTENDANCE	CONTRIBUTION
07/06/03	324	\$ 6,313
07/13/03	317	\$ 6,762
07/20/03	312	\$ 6,546
07/27/03	288	\$ 3,897

Holding on through Faith

By Cheryl Freeland

Have you ever gone through a personal trial that seemed as though it was just too much for you to bear? Did you ever feel that there was no way that you could make it through? If so, you have reached the point where you must, and can only, hold on through your faith in the Lord. Someone once told me that faith isn't true faith until it's the only thing that you are holding on to. I never knew how true that was until now.

During the many struggles that I have encountered through the years, I have learned some great lessons. I would like to share a few with you. One day, I was reading Matthew 17:20, *“Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”* When I read this passage, I felt that God was telling me that with faith, I could physically move mountains. When I meditated a little further on that Scripture, I realized that God was telling me that the mountain I would be able to move was the very struggle in my life that I found to be so unbearable at that time. I finally understood that all I needed was a tiny bit of faith and that mountain in my life would no longer be there. All I had to do was tell it to move!

I also had the opportunity to meditate on Romans 4:20: *“Yet he (Abraham) did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God.”* I thought of God's promise to bear my burdens (Psalm 68:19) and decided to no longer waver back and forth with unbelief because God would take care of everything.

How does one learn to hold on through faith when times are rough?

1. **Reading the Word** - Romans 10:17 - *“Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ.”* We need to be able to read God's Word and learn from great examples like Job, Ruth, Sarah, and Abraham. These people overcame tremendous struggles in their lives by holding on to their faith. When I read of these people and saw how God had worked mighty miracles through their lives, I knew that God would do the same for me.

2. **Prayer** - Philippians 4:6 - *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”* I have really learned to put this one into practice. Psalm 68:19 tells me that God bears our burdens daily. I have learned through these Scriptures to give everything to God. This is what He wants us to do. For example, when I first started the treatment for Hepatitis C, it made me very sick. I had uncontrollable shakes and chills. It was unbearable. I asked God to take it away from me. Within five minutes, my body was calm and I fell asleep. Our God is a comforting God!

3. **Take the focus off of you by serving** - Ephesians 6:7-8 - *“Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.”* I have learned that my struggles are not just about me. God has a bigger plan. I read an article once from Christian Women, which stated, *“Grumbling imprisons us in a self-gratifying life...Most complainers luxuriate in self pity.”* This is why it is so important to place the focus on someone else. Besides, we don't need to worry about it because God has it under control. There are so many ways that we can serve others. Serving keeps us from dwelling on the things that are going on with us. We can serve by simply asking others if there is any way that we could specifically pray for them. We can call or visit those who are sick. Give an encouraging card to someone we know is struggling. Pretty soon, we will be so busy serving that our situation won't seem so tremendous.

Sisters, when you go through hard times, see it as just another reason for you to look to and lean upon the Lord. We don't have to bear it all. We have a Lord and Savior who is more than willing to do that for us. Remember what Jesus told us in Matthew 11:28-30: *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”* I find such comfort in this Scripture because it means that I don't have to worry about anything, I just have to sit back and learn from Jesus. He's got it all under control.

“For the building up of the Body...”

Ephesians 4:12

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 📖 We will not meet for Wednesday night class on August 13th (Long Island) and August 27th (City).
- 📖 If you would like to order a cassette tape of a past sermon or seminar, please see Rob Dixon.
- 📖 If you would like to send a Church bulletin or a Bible study to an interested relative/friend on a regular basis, please contact our brother Jack Peisel.
- 📖 All announcements and address/telephone changes should be submitted to Derek Peterson.

ADDRESS & TELEPHONE NUMBER CHANGES

- ☎ Pramad & Preethi Abraham: Their new address is: 1302 East Broadway, Apt. # 588, Pearland, Texas 77581. Their new phone number is: 281-482-9267

MISSIONARY SUPPORT

- ✚ Good News Stand.....Sayville, New York
- ✚ Paolo Di Luca.....Italy
- ✚ Apologetics PressInternational
- ✚ We Care Ministries.....West Monroe, Louisiana
- ✚ Ron Clayton.....India
- ✚ Oswaldo Sanchez.....El Salvador, Central America

“Your faith toward God has gone forth...”

1 Thessalonians 1:8

COMMUNITY BIBLE CLASS MINISTRIES

Long Island Ministry.....(Wednesday 7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.).....Robert Carr.....(631) 348-7322
New York Institute of Technology Chapel, Carleton Avenue, Central Islip, NY

City Ministry.....(Wednesday 7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.).....Pedro Gelabert(646) 226-2361
Plattdeutsche Restaurant, 1132 Hempstead Turnpike, Franklin Square, NY

UPCOMING KINGDOM EVENTS

For anyone wanting to use his/her vacation in a fruitful way, take a vacation to help bring souls to Jesus. :) Join a “We Care Ministry” soul winning team and help bring people to the Lord. Learn the techniques of the “We Care Ministry” team leaders: Larry West, Bob Danklefsen, and Joe Barker. Room and board will be provided. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Bob Carr.

We Care Campaign Itinerary

2003	Location
September 4 - 14	Wenatchee, WA