

**SOWING GENEROUSLY - HARVEST
THANKSGIVING.**

THEME:

Giving thanks to God for all he has given us.

**Grace, peace, and mercy, from God our Father, and
the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Have a listen to this quote: C.S. Lewis said, “In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy him.” God wants our worship to be motivated by love, thanksgiving and delight not duty.

Today we are doing a ‘Thanksgiving Day’ service, so it is only appropriate that we glorify God in all we say and do, and in what we can give back to him, from what he has first given us. And just as the second part of this quote by C.S. Lewis, he says, “God wants our worship to

be motivated by love, thanksgiving and a delight not a duty.

Let us not be duty-bound as we worship God with all our minds, bodies, souls, prayers, supplications, thoughts, words and deed, as we remember all that God has done for us!

In the text I have chosen for today’s sermon [2 Corinthians 9:6-14] chosen especially for today, Saint Paul begins by telling us, [v 6] Remember this: **Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.**

While it’s good to put on display what we bring to God: we are also putting on display our expressions of gratitude and thanks through the inner spiritual core being which is within all of us. God is looking and searching deep within us, the attitudes we display, the true nature we possess which no one knows about.

He knows what lies at the very core of who you truly are. We all display to the world what we want them to see, and no more. God knows us, he's observing the heart/mind application in all that we say and do for him. How we action church and how we act at home may be two worlds set apart?

Saint Paul uses a farmer's analogy and mindset in this lesson, when talking about the generosity of people who follow after Christ and God in what they have in their spiritual core being [DNA make-up].

What Saint Paul is saying in the same context in every day language is: 'what you sow, so shall you reap'. In saying that, we are all aware that the way we live our lives today on this planet in this time, day and age, is what we have to give an account for: come Judgment Day when we **will** all shall stand before our Maker. No one will escape this day in future, so remember this, what

we do now, will determine what our rewards will be, in eternity.

So back to the farmer analogy; when you sow your crops, by and large; the best results you can expect is a bountiful harvest, providing the weather and other conditions prevail and turn out right. That would be the ideal thing that could ever happen every single time a crop is planted.

But as we are all well aware, *this whole country is experiencing drought conditions* and it has been for quite a number of years, and unless you live in an area that receives good rainfall and other ideal conditions, farmers may very well be struggling.

This *drought* is affecting many people who live on the land. You only have to talk to them or read in the papers of banks foreclosing on properties. Sadly though, when this happens, these people have to start all over again, if

they can. Closer to home, the River Murray has now become the largest land-locked lake in the world, because there is no water traversing the length and breadth of the river system emptying out to the sea.

The troubles with the water issues are enormous and we all hope and pray to God that he sees fit to bring about a solution to this problem [perhaps yesterday], sooner rather than later. But he knows what is best for all of us.

So, by all accounts, when you think about who is in control of the weather and all other conditions that prevail upon the earth? It is God who gives and provides in all his wisdom: and even though we worry that he may have looked elsewhere for the moment; right at the time when we need him the most [which by the way, is all the time], we need to remember that he is still on the throne and that he is still in control of everything!

To the farmers analogy, when you sow your seeds you would do so fairly liberally, so as to expect a good return. You wouldn't just stand out in the middle of the field and scatter a handful of grain out into the paddock; and then expect there to be the biggest harvest from one little handful of grain, would you?

But funnily enough, there are people and companies in the world, who are just like that; they expect to get a lot for giving up so little. Perhaps you know someone like that? We read about it all the time and it happens to us all the time. How about unscrupulous landlords, who charge sky-high prices for bad housing accommodation?

The big shopping heavy weights who hold a monopoly on the food they sell? They do so at a slightly higher price than they normally should. They do so because they can get away with it. How much money does the land producer get for his sheep; what do the supermarkets sell it for?

What about the petrol prices that fluctuate all the time? They go even higher when the school holiday seasons begin! What about bank fees, they're now talking about ATM fees being as high as \$10.00 a transaction in some isolated or late night venues!

Our next verse brings that into context for us. 'Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.' So, how do you give? Do we expect to give something and expect something in return, otherwise why give something in the first place? Or do you give and don't expect anything back in return, for whatever is given in return, would be an unexpected gift and surprise!

I guess that what God expects each of us to do, is to give generously expecting nothing in return; and to do so cheerfully; with no begrudging heart or conditions

attached. We could quite easily give away a few things to show that we can do so [fruit, clothes, vegies, small donations to charities, etc.], but what about something that has some kind of sentimental value attached to it.

Is there something in particular that tugs at your heartstrings every time you hold it, look at it, caress it, stroke it; is there something that you hold very dear that you would not part with it, no matter what: end of argument?

It seems that we all have something very dear and special that we like to hang on to. There is always some kind of memento/keepsake, a special gift from someone special, ring, jewellery, a photograph and memory of someone who has passed away, a letter written in love, there are just some things that we would never even consider giving away.

A few weeks ago in Port Lincoln [where I came from] there was the bushfire that threatened the city and two houses were completely destroyed. One of them belonged to a man who lived very near to the rubbish tip. You may have it on TV. The house he built with his own hands was razed to the ground. He was married to my auntie.

When I saw the devastating effect of the fire and what it had done to him, the tears and emotions were hard to hold back as I thought of all the photos and memorabilia my auntie had built up over the years.

Now everything was all gone. My auntie when she was alive; had a good faith, and I mused to myself that if she was still alive to witness the devastation at what had happened, I imagine that she would have given thanks to God that they still had their lives intact. And also that each new day is a day that has challenges within itself,

whereby whatever our circumstances; [for those who are able bodied] we can do something about our situations.

As Christians we are taught to give away, to pass forward, so that God's kingdom grows. We come in to the world with nothing we take nothing out with us. But while we inhabit the earth, then there is that opportunity to do the best we can; so that others can come into God's kingdom, and not end up in the other place hell!

Living for God and following after Jesus is not an easy life to live in this day and age. Not because there are mockers out there; but that there are many voices that are calling out for your attention. You hear it and see it all the time in the media. There are many gadgets and aids to make your life fulfilling and wholesome, many things that are aimed at the self, the ego; the sexy, sensuous, sensual spoiling of the whole person. Nothing is missed!

But to the followers of Christ, let's not forget that blessing do flow from God to his beloved children. And the blessings that flow from God are much better than the world can give, and the world can't take it away. What God has given to us, we could never repay. God has given his most precious gift of all for us.

I alluded before within the sermon that there are some things we could never ever part with because it is so precious and dear to us. So remember this: God is the ultimate giver [Romans 8: 32] 'He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things.' He was willing to sacrifice Jesus so that he could gain us. That's mind-blowing stuff!

So today in a small way, we giveback our fruits and labours of what he did for us and we give our lives of worship and adoration back to him in response for his

sacrifice of Jesus' life so that we become his beloved children.

Let us pray: Heavenly Father, we give of ourselves completely for your kingdom. Our lives, our worship, our responses and all that we have; search deep within us so that nothing is held back and that we are giving our all for you, we ask this; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.