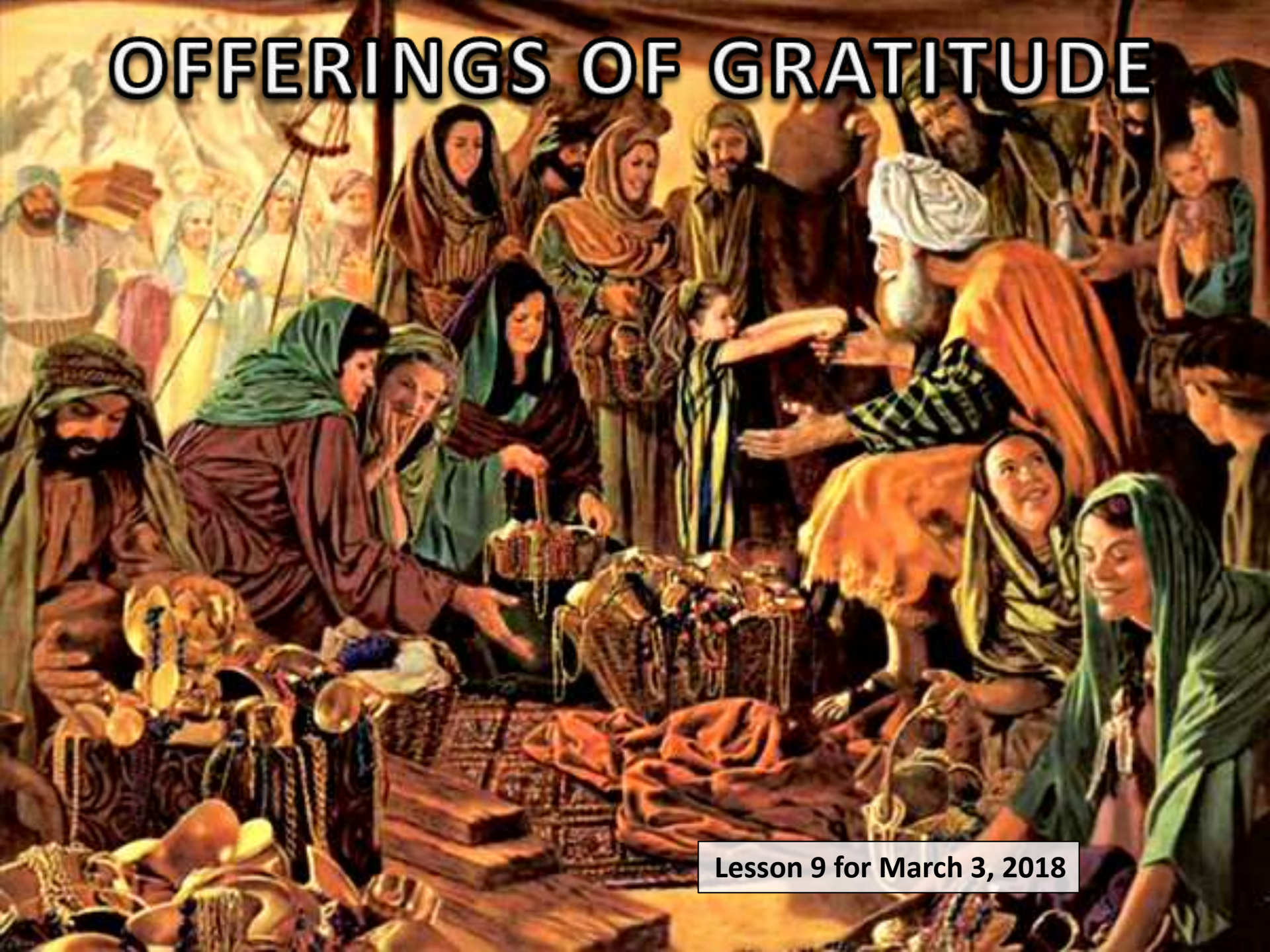


OFFERINGS OF GRATITUDE



Lesson 9 for March 3, 2018

**We are stewards of God, so we should imitate our Lord.
He gives us everything we need generously.**

**We show our gratitude by giving Him our offerings like
our treasures, time and talents generously.**



➤ **Grateful stewards.**

- * Laying up for eternity.
- * Distributing grace.

➤ **Offerings of gratitude.**

- * Quality offerings.
- * Our motive to give.
- * The joy of giving.

LAYING UP FOR ETERNITY

“but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.” (Matthew 6:20)



How can we lay up treasures in heaven?

“For we live by faith, not by sight.”

(2 Corinthians 5:7 NIV). Our thoughts and motives must be based on eternal things.

It’s necessary to care about earthly things and to anticipate future situations (looking for a new job, retirement...), but that should not be the main goal in our lives.

We must live according to our faith. We must put our trust in God and not in earthly things.

DISTRIBUTING GRACE

**"As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."
(1 Peter 4:10)**

The grace of Jesus Christ is the most beautiful gift God has given us, "For by grace you have been saved through faith." (Ephesians 2:8)

God's grace is not for our own delight alone. We are called to share it with others, "Freely you have received; freely give." (Matthew 10:8)



Offering our treasures, talents and time is useful to spread the news of salvation.



QUALITY OFFERINGS

“You must present as the Lord's portion the best and holiest part of everything given to you.” (Numbers 18:29 NIV)



We show our gratitude to God by offering Him the best of the gifts He has given.

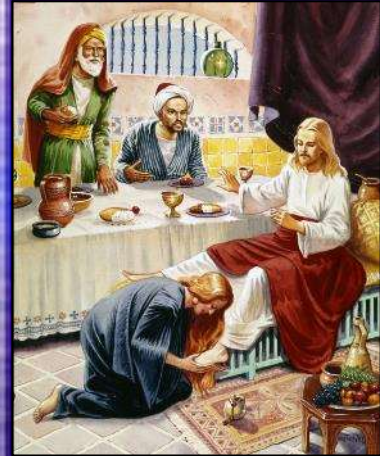
In the old rural Israelite society, they usually offered the best from the product of the land or from the animals they owned, always “without any defect.” (Leviticus 22:20)

Money always has the same value, so how could we apply the concept of giving “the best” today?

We must not give the leftovers (Luke 21:4). We can also give our time and our skills, for example.

Maybe you could give a special perfume to anoint our Lord! (Luke 7:37-47)





“Mary’s heart was filled with gratitude. She had heard Jesus speak of His approaching death, and in her deep love and sorrow she had longed to show Him honor. At great personal sacrifice she had purchased an alabaster box of “ointment of spikenard, very costly,” with which to anoint His body. But now many were declaring that He was about to be crowned king. Her grief was turned to joy, and she was eager to be first in honoring her Lord. Breaking her box of ointment, she poured its contents upon the head and feet of Jesus; then, as she knelt weeping, moistening them with her tears, she wiped His feet with her long, flowing hair... Mary heard the words of criticism. Her heart trembled within her. She feared that her sister would reproach her for extravagance... He [Jesus] saw that she was embarrassed and distressed. He knew that in this act of service she had expressed her gratitude for the forgiveness of her sins, and He brought relief to her mind.”

E.G.W. (The Desire of the Ages, c. 62, p. 558, 560)

OUR MOTIVE TO GIVE

"For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have." (2 Corinthians 8:12 NIV)

Only God knows our motive when giving our offerings no matter how big or small they are. No one else can judge our motive (James 4:12).

There are many different motives to give, ranging from selfishness to generosity.

We may do the right actions for the wrong reasons (e.g. to be congratulated, to get along with someone...)

Selfless generosity is motivated by love. That love is the response to God's love in our lives.



Selfishness

Generosity



THE JOY OF GIVING

“So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:7)

Once we’ve experienced God’s love, we understand that He will always look after us. He won’t ask anything from us that could harm us.

That includes His request to be generous.

Offering is an act of faith. It’s an expression of our gratitude for everything Jesus gives us.

We reflect God’s character by giving. Our trust in Him also grows as we give freely, generously and happily.

Let’s experience the joy of giving God the first and the best of our money, time and skills.





“God will have freewill offerings. Those who give must esteem it a privilege to do so.

Some give of their abundance, but yet they feel no lack. They do not particularly deny themselves of anything for the cause of Christ. They still have all that heart can wish. They give liberally and heartily. God regards it, and the action and motive are known and strictly marked by Him. They will not lose their reward. You who cannot bestow so liberally must not excuse yourselves because you cannot do as much as some others. Do what you can. Deny yourselves of some article that you can get along without, and sacrifice for the cause of God. Like the widow, cast in your two mites. You will actually give more than all those who give of their abundance; and you will know how sweet it is to deny self, to give to the needy, to sacrifice for the truth, and to lay up treasure in heaven.”

