

# Youth messenger

Vol. XXXIX, No. 4

*I am  
Thankful  
for*



Fellowship | Baptism | Great Commission . . .



I'm thankful for

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## EDITORIAL

# THE GLORY OF GRATITUDE



**T**here are a few positive emotions that play an important role in our personal development and happiness. Love and forgiveness are two of the most important ones, but I find that thankfulness might be one of the most underrated traits in today's world full of competition (you always want more), when we tend to take for granted all personal achievements or take credit for most collective successes.

The Bible gives several examples of great men expressing thankfulness—and most notably, the psalmist. But the book with the highest concentration of thanksgiving language is the book of Colossians (9 mentions in 4 chapters), followed by 2 Corinthians (16 mentions in 13 chapters).

If I were to choose the most complete Bible text on thankfulness, it would be 1 Thessalonians 5:18 which urges us to be thankful in everything in all circumstances. But since the number of pages in the *Youth Messenger* magazine is limited, we chose to focus on some of the most common ordinances, practices and activities our church encourages the young people to be thankful for, especially as we near the end of another year.

Enjoy!

Adrian Finaru



# I'M THANKFUL FOR *Fellowship*

BY ELIE MAKE

## **PICTURE THE SCENE AT PENTECOST IN THE TIME OF THE APOSTLES:**

“Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour

out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: and I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:14-21).

When the first disciples preached the prophecy about the arrival of His Spirit, were they rapidly approaching the great and dreadful day of the Lord? No, it was still many years away. They had only just received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the early rain.

Yet likewise at the end, in the spreading of the gospel, “the work will be similar to that of the Day of Pentecost. As the ‘former rain’ was given, in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the opening of the gospel, to cause the upspringing of the precious seed, so the ‘latter rain’ will be given at its close for the ripening of the harvest.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 611.

The Bible is telling us that there will be another outpouring of the Spirit of God at the close of the gospel just before Jesus returns. When will the latter rain be poured out? What are the conditions for receiving it?

### **PURE POWER BESTOWED UPON A PURE PEOPLE**

Looking at the eternal gospel in Revelation 14, where three angels are seen giving a message, we can see that the second angel is being introduced differently

than the first and the second angels. In verse 7 the first angel is “saying with a loud voice,” and in verse 9 the third angel is “saying with a loud voice.” But in verse 8 the second angel is “saying” not with a loud voice. Have you ever wondered why?

The answer is found in Revelation 18:1, 2, where we are told about another angel. What is interesting is that this other angel in Revelation 18 has the same message as the second angel in Revelation 14. The way he says it, however, is quite different. He says it in a powerful way. Why is the message of Revelation 14 repeated by this angel in Revelation 18 in a more powerful way? How does this happen?

“This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6).



# NOT ONE IN TWENTY WHOSE NAMES ARE REGISTERED UPON THE CHURCH BOOKS ARE PREPARED TO CLOSE THEIR EARTHLY HISTORY.

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## WHEN DOES THIS OCCUR?

The Spirit of Prophecy pinpoints that time as the short time of trouble which will take place just before the seven last plagues.

“ ‘The commencement of that time of trouble,’ here mentioned does not refer to the time when the plagues shall begin to be poured out, but to a short period just before they are poured out, while Christ is in the sanctuary. At that time, while the work of salvation is closing, trouble will be coming on the earth, and the nations will be angry, yet held in check so as not to prevent the work of the third angel. At that time the ‘latter rain,’ or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, will come, to give power to the loud voice of the third angel, and prepare the saints to stand in the period when the seven last plagues shall be poured out.”—*Early Writings*, p. 85.

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE LATTER RAIN?

As mentioned above in *The Great Controversy*, p. 611, the work will be similar to the day of Pentecost. Just as “the early rain” **was given at the opening of the gospel** when the Holy Spirit was poured out **to bring the seed to**

**germinate**, so “the latter rain” **will be given at its closing to ripen the harvest.**

## WHAT HAPPENS AT THIS TIME?

It has been prophesied that signs and wonders are to follow the believers (as in Acts chapters 2 and 3). They are not afraid to suffer for Jesus (Romans 8:35) and it is written that visions and dreams would be given under the inspiration of the Spirit of God (Joel 2:28, 29).

All of the above are included in the effects of the outpouring of the latter rain. However, the primary purpose of the latter rain is found in Joel 2:23, 24. “Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. **And the floors shall be full of wheat**, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil.” [Emphasis added.]

“The time is coming when there will be as many converted in a day as there were on the day of Pentecost, after the disciples had received the Holy Spirit.”—*Evangelism*, p. 692.

## **WILL THE WHOLE CHURCH RECEIVE THESE SHOWERS OF BLESSING?**

“For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness” (Isaiah 10:22).

“Esaías also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved” (Romans 9:27).

“It is a solemn statement that I make to the church, that not one in twenty whose names are registered upon the church books are prepared to close their earthly history, and would be as verily without God and without hope in the world as the common sinner.”—*Christian Service*, p. 41.

“Those who have had opportunities to hear and receive of the truth and who have united with the Seventh-day Adventist church, calling themselves the commandment-keeping people

of God, and yet possess no more vitality and consecration to God than do the nominal churches, will receive the plagues of God just as verily as the churches who oppose the law of God.”—*Last Day Events*, p. 172.

“Men of talent and pleasing address, who once rejoiced in the truth, employ their powers to deceive and mislead souls. They become the most bitter enemies of their former brethren.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 608.

## **FROM WHERE WILL THE MAJORITY OF THOSE WHO RECEIVE THE LATTER RAIN COME TO JOIN THE REST?**

“In the eighteenth chapter of the Revelation, in a message which is yet future, the people of God are called upon to come out of Babylon. According to this scripture, many of God’s people must still be in Babylon. And in what religious bodies are the greater part of the followers of Christ now to be found? Without doubt, in the various churches



# THOSE WHO RECEIVE THE SEAL OF THE LIVING GOD AND ARE PROTECTED IN THE TIME OF TROUBLE MUST REFLECT THE IMAGE OF JESUS FULLY.

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professing the Protestant faith.”—  
Ibid., p. 383. [1888 Edition.]

## WHY DOES THE CHURCH NOT ACHIEVE SUCH SUCCESS TODAY?

“Christ declared that the divine influence of the Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. But the promise is not appreciated as it should be; and therefore its fulfillment is not seen as it might be. The promise of the Spirit is a matter little thought of; and the result is only what might be expected—spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and death. Minor matters occupy the attention, and the divine power which is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, and which would bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, though offered in its infinite plenitude.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 21.

It seems as if we do not want to trouble the Lord with our petitions and ask Him for the gift of the Holy Spirit. But the Lord wants us to “disturb” Him about this! He wants us to press our petitions to His throne, beseeching Him to pour out this refreshing in latter rain power. The great sin of those who profess to be Christians

is that they do not open their hearts to receive the Holy Spirit.

“The Lord God is ready to give, but many do not realize their necessity of receiving. They are weak, when they might be strong; powerless, when they might be powerful through receiving the efficiency of the Holy Spirit.”—*Testimonies to Southern Africa*, p. 69.

“Learning, talents, eloquence, every natural or acquired endowment, may be possessed; but without the presence of the Spirit of God, no heart will be touched, no sinner be won to Christ. On the other hand, if they are connected with Christ, if the gifts of the Spirit are theirs, the poorest and most ignorant of His disciples will have a power that will tell upon hearts.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 328.

“There must be no neglect of the grace represented by the former rain. Only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light. Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it.”—*Maranatha*, p. 219.

## HOW ARE WE TO RECEIVE THE LATTER RAIN?

“Christ has promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to His church, and the promise belongs to us as much as to the first disciples. But like every other promise, it is given on conditions.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 672.

## WHAT ARE THESE CONDITIONS?

“Those who receive the seal of the living God and are protected in the time of trouble must reflect the image of Jesus fully. . . .

“I saw that none could share the ‘refreshing’ unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action.”—*Early Writings*, p. 71.

“When we have entire, wholehearted consecration to the service of Christ, God will recognize the fact by an outpouring of His Spirit without measure; but this will not be while the largest portion of the church are not laborers together with God. God cannot pour out His Spirit when selfishness and self-indulgence are so manifest; when a spirit prevails that, if put into words, would express that answer of Cain—‘Am I my brother’s keeper?’ ”—

*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 52.

## WHAT DID THE DISCIPLES HAVE TO DO?

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one


place” (Acts 2:1). What was the reason for this?

“The convocations of the church, as in camp meetings, the assemblies of the home church, and all occasions where there is personal labor for souls, are God’s appointed opportunities for giving the early and the latter rain.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 246.

“When the way is prepared for the Spirit of God, the blessing will come. Satan can no more hinder a shower of blessing from descending upon God’s people than he can close the windows of heaven that rain cannot come upon the earth.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 133.

The whole purpose of gatherings is to spend time together. Not to spend time together as brothers and sisters of the church but mostly to know each other, to reach the stage of friends. God was not only Abraham’s Father, He was His friend.

Are we brothers and sisters only—or are we friends? We may be brothers and sisters but we sometimes do not even know the person we’re sitting next to. That’s the whole purpose of gatherings—spending time together, working together, worshipping together, loving one another together. God will not bestow the latter rain upon just an individual. He will give it to His church. Let us prepare wholeheartedly to receive it!

God bless you all, Amen. 



BY EBENEZER BULAYA

# I'M THANKFUL FOR *Baptism*

I love the gospel story of Jesus' baptism—that time when He came before John at the Jordan River. John lowered Jesus into the murky waters and when Jesus broke the water's surface, the Holy Spirit came down and the voice of God was heard, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17).

Through God's love and affirmation, Jesus began His earthly ministry, teaching, healing, calling people to a life grounded in love. We, too, are met at the fountain of blessing with love, claimed as God's beloved children. Baptism is a sacred Christian ceremony in which Christians are immersed in water as a sign of their commitment to Jesus as their Lord and Saviour and of the forgiveness of their sins. We spend our whole lives growing into the person in whom Christ can see His reflection. This is not always comfortable or comforting. While baptism reminds us that this is offered to us freely and abundantly because we are God's heirs, the tough part is living out this baptismal truth. It is hard remembering who and whose we are. You have been claimed as God's beloved. You can choose to remember, recalling who you are and living out this truth in every moment, in every breath—or you can dangerously forget who and whose you are.

Following Jesus is not a one-time decision, but a lifelong journey. No matter how long we've been a Christian, we all have a next step in our walk with Jesus. If you have asked Jesus into your life, but have yet to be baptized, baptism is your next step!

## 4 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BAPTISM

### 1. Baptism is about going public.

Like wearing a jersey to a football game, baptism is our opportunity to identify with a person and a team. When we take our next step in baptism, we're letting the world know we belong to Jesus and we're on His team. There is no such thing as a private faith. Jesus died publicly for us, and baptism is our opportunity to go public for Him.

### 2. Baptism is about being obedient.

Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19). The first thing Jesus tells us to do after His resurrection is baptism. We can't say we'll do anything for God if we won't even do the first thing. If you have not been baptized since asking Jesus into your life, baptism is your next step.

There is no such thing as a private faith.

### 3. Baptism comes after repentance.

In the first recorded sermon in the early church, Peter preached to a crowd of thousands. Around 3,000 people were saved, and Peter told them that after repentance, baptism was next (Acts 2:38). The pattern continues through the rest of the early church. Baptism is a public proclamation of the spiritual transformation that occurs when we commit to following Jesus.

### 4. Baptism is a powerful reminder.

Through baptism, we remember how Jesus saved us. Being lowered into the water is symbolic of how we were dead in our sins. Coming out of the water is symbolic of how our faith in Jesus saves us from death and gives us eternal life. Every baptism is an opportunity to share Jesus' story. Jesus died to pay for our sins and restore our relationship with God. Then He rose from the grave, showing His power over death. Remember your baptism—remember when God chose you; remember your baptism—remember when you chose God; remember your baptism—when the transforming, transfiguring power of God was manifest in your life; remember your baptism—when Christ claimed you and personally introduced you to God as if for the first time: "This is my sibling. . . . I am well-pleased with this soul and am sending him/her out into the world with a mission."

# WHAT DOES BAPTISM SIGNIFY?

Baptism is an outward sign of an inward grace. In other words, baptism is a symbol of what God has already done in our lives. These are some of the things that baptism signifies:

## 1. Cleansing.

In the same way we wash away dirt from our bodies, God cleanses us from our sins. Baptism is a way of saying publicly that we are turning from our sins and receiving Jesus' forgiveness (see Mark 1:4, 5 and Acts 2:38). In the New Testament, this is the instruction to a new believer: And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on His name. (See Acts 22:16.)

## 2. Faith.

Baptism is also the Bible way that people identify themselves as Christians. In Scripture, when people put their trust in Jesus, they were baptized.

## 3. Union with Jesus.

The apostle Paul speaks of being united with Him by baptism (Romans 6:5). "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ," the Bible says (Galatians 3:27), much like you might put on a new set of clothing. When we are immersed in water and feel the water all around us, we experience something of this sense of being "united" with Jesus. By baptism we are also united with all other true Christians as part of Jesus' church (1 Corinthians 12:13), not just in friendships or community but through the life, death and resurrection of Christ—and with all Christians we celebrate "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5).

## 4. New Life.


The Bible also refers to baptism as a symbol of dying to the old life and burying it when the believer goes down under the water. When he or she comes up out of the water after baptism, the Bible likens it to rising from the grave with Christ to a new life (Romans 6:3, 4; Colossians 2:12).

## I'M THANKFUL FOR MY BAPTISM.

It doesn't look like much. You've probably seen it countless times. A man in a robe, immersing a person into the water, speaking a few simple words. Then, in a matter of minutes, it's all over. No, it doesn't come at you with flashing lights or lots of pizzazz. But it's a true miracle each time it happens. Simple water, used by God's command, connected with God's Word, working a wonder of epic and everlasting proportions. We're speaking, of course, of holy baptism.

Maybe you remember your baptism. I remember mine, but that doesn't matter. With my baptism I have a divine gift from which I can take tremendous comfort every day of my life. On that day I was clothed with Christ, washed of all sin, born anew, rescued from death and the devil. My baptism tells me I am now God's child through faith in God's Son. As His child and heir I have the sure hope of eternal life. In a mysterious way I was actually buried with Christ in baptism—my old, dead, sinful self buried forever in my Saviour's tomb. Through my baptism, God gives power to drown my old self, which constantly tries to reassert its wicked ways in my life. In my baptism, God gives strength so that my new self can daily arise and live before God in righteousness and purity both now and forever. Simply put, when I was baptized, God took the victory and power of Christ's cross and empty tomb and made them personally mine. I am thankful; through baptism I have been given the greatest power of all—the power of the Holy Spirit.

God's greatest miracles don't come in showy, flamboyant ways. A humble manger bed was God's crib. A bloodied cross His altar. An empty grave His portal to life without end. Simple water and a handful of words bring sinners into an everlasting kingdom.

How thankful I am to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost! 



# I'M THANKFUL FOR THE

# Lord's Supper



## A PIVOTAL MOMENT

Ever since I was a child, the Lord's Supper was sacred to me. Even though I did not participate, I could feel that there was something special about the event and I longed to partake of it. In the summer of 2010, when I was accepted into the church through baptism, I stood together with church members ready for the Lord's Supper. Excited, I thought, "Now I am a part of them and I can finally join in this sacred ritual." However, I did not understand the spiritual meaning until I heard the sermon. In the past, I had listened to various sermons presented at such meetings, but at this time I was determined to focus more. I placed myself into the words that the minister was touched by God to share, and I saw myself a sinner, unworthy to follow Christ's example 2,000 years before. In that moment, a thought came to my mind: "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Corinthians 12:9). It was then that I realized that this

sacred ceremony was instituted for me also. Since then, I have always kept in mind that I am who I am because of Christ my Saviour.

## HOW DID WE GET THE LORD'S SUPPER?

During their daily walks together, Jesus was always trying to prepare His disciples for the coming trials. Unfortunately, being focused on their own personal worldly progress, the disciples could not understand what He was talking about. Despite their poor insight, however, Jesus still wanted to leave them with a comforting gift. In the very last moments before His night of trial, Jesus gifted the disciples with something that would remind them of Him. "As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the

new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matthew 26:26-29).

"Christ was standing at the point of transition between two economies and their two great festivals. He, the spotless Lamb of God, was about to present Himself as a sin offering, that He would thus bring to an end the system of types and ceremonies that for four thousand years had pointed to His death. As He ate the Passover with His disciples, He instituted in its place the service that was to be the memorial of His great sacrifice. The national festival of the Jews was to pass away forever. The service which Christ established was to be observed by His followers in all lands and through all ages."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 652.

Just like my own past experience with the Lord's Supper, the disciples did not at first understand the spiritual meaning behind it. It was only when the Lord departed from them that they gained true insight. As they "waited for the fulfillment of the promise, they humbled their hearts in true repentance and confessed their unbelief. As they called to remembrance the words that Christ had spoken to them before His death they understood more fully their meaning. Truths which had passed from their memory were again brought

to their minds, and these they repeated to one another. They reproached themselves for their misapprehension of the Saviour. Like a procession, scene after scene of His wonderful life passed before them. As they meditated upon His pure, holy life they felt that no toil would be too hard, no sacrifice too great, if only they could bear witness in their lives to the loveliness of Christ's character. Oh, if they could but have the past three years to live over, they thought, how differently they would act! If they could only see the Master again, how earnestly they would strive to show Him how deeply they loved Him, and how sincerely they sorrowed for having ever grieved Him by a word or an act of unbelief! But they were comforted by the thought that they were forgiven. And they determined that, so far as possible, they would atone for their unbelief by bravely confessing Him before the world."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 36.

The disciples longed to be with their Saviour again, and while they were meditating on these thoughts "they realized what a privilege had been theirs in being permitted to associate so closely with Christ. Sadness filled their hearts as they thought of how many times, they had grieved Him by their slowness of comprehension, their failure to understand the lessons that, for their good, He was trying to teach them."—*Ibid.*, p. 37. Still, they remembered the comforting words

## TO EAT THE FLESH AND DRINK THE BLOOD OF CHRIST IS TO RECEIVE HIM AS A PERSONAL SAVIOUR . . .

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of Christ, “this do in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19). These words inspired them. As the disciples would take part in the Lord’s Supper, they looked forward to the promised day of His coming and kept the sacrifice that He made for them alive in their minds.

### THE SPIRITUAL BLESSING

“The symbols of the Lord’s house are simple and plainly understood, and the truths represented by them are of the deepest significance to us.”—*The Review and Herald*, June 22, 1897. “Till He shall come the second time in power and glory, this ordinance is to be celebrated. It is the means by which His great work for us is to be kept fresh in our minds.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 652, 653. Meditating on the Lord’s Supper helps us to plainly understand the plan of salvation and how this plan applies to us personally if we are willing to accept Jesus as our Saviour. The Bible declares that “all have sinned,” and that “the wages of sin is death” Romans 3:23; 6:23. Still, Jesus is comforting each one of us. The Contemporary English Version of the Bible translates His declaration as follows: “This is my blood, and with it God makes His agreement with you. It will be poured out, so that many people will have their sins forgiven”

(Matthew 26:28 ECV). “Christ pledged Himself to them as their Redeemer. He committed to them the new covenant, by which all who receive Him become children of God, and joint heirs with Christ. By this covenant every blessing that heaven could bestow for this life and the life to come was theirs.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 656, 659. This new covenant is open to each one of us through His grace, and every time we partake of the Lord’s Supper, we renew this covenant with Him. Christ pledged Himself to us as our Redeemer, and when justice asks for our blood, He presents the marks on His hands in our behalf.

“To eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ is to receive Him as a personal Saviour, believing that He forgives our sins, and that we are complete in Him.”—*Ibid.*, p. 389. The Lord declares, “ ‘He that eateth My flesh,’ He says, ‘and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me.’ John 6:54, 56, 57. To the holy Communion this scripture in a special sense applies. As faith contemplates our Lord’s great sacrifice, the soul assimilates the spiritual life of Christ. That soul will receive spiritual strength from every Communion.”—*Ibid.*, p. 660.



### **THE FEET WASHING—A PREPARATION FOR THE NEW EARTH**

Before the disciples were able to have the Lord's Supper, a preparatory work had to be done so that they could leave aside their evil thoughts and be able to assimilate the meaning of this sacred event. Jesus therefore invited them to join Him in an unexpected practice. Normally, in that culture, the servants had the duty to wash the guests' feet.

However, on this day, "The pitcher, the basin, and the towel were there, in readiness for the feet washing; but no servant was present, and it was the disciples' part to perform it. But each of the disciples, yielding to wounded pride, determined not to act the part of a servant. All manifested a stoical unconcern,

seeming unconscious that there was anything for them to do. By their silence they refused to humble themselves."—*Ibid.*, p. 644. In response to the disciples' misguided attitude, Jesus explained to them that, in reality, if they wanted to become first in the kingdom of God, they must take the role of a servant. It was then that Jesus set the ultimate example by girding Himself with a towel and washing their feet. This "action opened the eyes of the disciples. Bitter shame and humiliation filled their hearts. They understood the unspoken rebuke, and saw themselves in altogether a new light."—*Ibid.*

"Christ was here instituting a religious service. By the act of our Lord this humiliating ceremony was made a consecrated ordinance. It was to be observed by the disciples, that they might ever keep in mind His lessons of humility and service."—*Ibid.*, p. 650.

In His last prayer for the disciples, Jesus prayed both for them and for everyone who would believe in His name throughout the ages. Christ prayed that they all might be one with Him, with the Father, and with one another.

"The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. In mind, in purpose, in character, they are one, but not in person. By partaking of the Spirit of God, conforming to the law of God, man becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ brings His disciples

# A TRUE UNDERSTANDING OF THE SACRIFICE MADE ON OUR BEHALF CHANGES US.

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into a living union with Himself and with the Father. Through the working of the Holy Spirit upon the human mind, man is made complete in Christ Jesus.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 286.


When the disciples first came to Christ, their characters were unfit for Heaven. By beholding Christ and following His teachings, however, their characters were transformed and the unity between them and Christ can be clearly seen in their later life. The same the Saviour wants to accomplish such a transformation in each one of our lives to prepare us for Heaven. If we are to live unitedly in Heaven, this unity must begin here. “Christ gave His disciples the ordinance of washing feet for them to practice, which would teach them lessons of humility. He connected this ordinance with the supper. He designed that this should be a season of self-examination, that His followers might have an opportunity to become acquainted with the true feelings of their own hearts toward God and one another.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, pp. 201, 202.

## CONCLUSION

“Looking upon the crucified Redeemer, we more fully comprehend the magnitude and meaning of the sacrifice made

by the Majesty of heaven. The plan of salvation is glorified before us, and the thought of Calvary awakens living and sacred emotions in our hearts. Praise to God and the Lamb will be in our hearts and on our lips; for pride and self-worship cannot flourish in the soul that keeps fresh in memory the scenes of Calvary.

“He who beholds the Saviour’s matchless love will be elevated in thought, purified in heart, transformed in character. He will go forth to be a light to the world, to reflect in some degree this mysterious love. The more we contemplate the cross of Christ, the more fully shall we adopt the language of the apostle when he said, ‘God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.’ Gal. 6:14.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 661.

A true understanding of the sacrifice made on our behalf changes us. It is through daily meditation on Christ’s sacrifice for us, through having a desire to become like Him, and through a daily yielding to His transforming power that we will experience the same transformation that the disciples did—and such a transformation enables us to be complete in Jesus and thus fitted for Heaven. 

# I'M **THANKFUL** FOR THE *Health Reform Movement*

BY ESTEBAN CASTELLANOS

## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT AND STRENGTH**

When God created the world, He placed Adam and Eve in the healthiest, most appropriate place for them to be—the Garden of Eden. Besides the environment, the diet was also designed to give Adam and Eve all they needed. There was no need for vitamin and mineral supplements; the diet was perfect for that environment. God having created everything, knew exactly what was the best diet for humanity to live a long healthy life. In fact, our digestive system was designed for the specific type of food provided. All the macro and micro nutrients that our body requires were present in this diet: “And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat” (Genesis 1:29).

At the beginning, our first parents had the blessing of eating fruits, grains, nuts and legumes. There was however, one exception to their diet. They were given a wise restriction: “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17).

## **THE SNARE OF TEMPTATION**

From the beginning, appetite has been a temptation that has taken millions of lives to the grave. The consequences of Adam and Eve eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil were so great that it had an impact on the environment itself. The female reproductive system was modified, the land was cursed and the behavior of animals changed. The consequences of that disobedience have affected every generation thereafter. Ever

# E Message



since the fall of the human race, the battle between good and evil has been ever present, each side fighting for human soul.

Jesus Christ, the Friend and Saviour of humanity, has fought for us since before the fall, giving all who come to Him health and eternal life. Yet Satan, the archenemy of every soul made in the image of God, has also worked. Some of the enemy's tactics have worked so well since the beginning that he has had no need of changing them—he makes only slight modifications and tweaks for today's era. Satan has perverted everything that God created perfect. The Sabbath, marriage, a healthy diet, and everything else that God called good the enemy has twisted and perverted—and everything God has warned us of as bad is now perceived as good. It's totally backwards.

After the flood, humans still had the strength and vitality

that came from Adam and Eve. However, with bad behavior and the introduction of meat and indulgence as a common habit, our race began to decline in strength, health, and longevity. The Bible records a gradual decline in the human lifespan. Adam lived 930 years, compared with Abraham who lived 175 years, and today, the average life expectancy is 79 years. In 6,000 years, humanity has shortened life to only 0.085% of what Adam lived. Indeed, the story of humanity would be of a sad ending if Jesus had not come to save us, yet the consequences of bad habits are still unavoidable.

When the people of Israel came out of Egypt, Satan corrupted their taste buds during slavery to such a degree, that manna was unpleasant compared to meat. God attempted to make a health reform in the desert, but Israel refused God's plan. They cried

“give us flesh (meat) to eat!” until God reluctantly went ahead and gave them meat. So corrupt was their desire that they accumulated piles of meat and gobbled it up in a degraded animal-like form. Such was the scene, that God’s anger killed them while the meat was still in their teeth. They ate meat, just to die from it. God’s plan was to reform the people of Israel; He desired to bring Israel back to a way of life that would heal and prepare them for a holy life. But they refused and thus suffered the consequences. (See the history in Numbers chapter 11 and Psalm 78.)

### DANIEL’S STRENGTH

Unlike the people of Israel, Daniel and his friends saw the importance of a health message. If they were going to stay faithful to God in foreign lands, they would need a sharp mind and a healthy body. Sadly these standard bearers were a minority among the Hebrews. If more captives had been like Daniel and his friends, more would have given a good example in Babylon. Daniel and his friends were only four of the many captives, but they were the only ones who declined to eat the flesh food provided by the king. Their choice to follow the Creator’s original diet was the beginning of a successful life, both spiritually and in the ranks of Babylon. It was no coincidence that Daniel received dreams and revelations from God. His unquestionable obedience to the moral and natural laws of God,

allowed him to be an instrument of God and for the kings of Babylon and Medo-Persia. God wants to exalt His people just like He did for Daniel and his friends, but few place themselves in a position to receive the heavenly blessings. Daniel and his friends began a life of success with a healthy diet by asking for just vegetables to eat and water to drink. (See Daniel 1:12.) So simple, yet so powerful; it only took 10 days to reveal the big difference between Daniel and his friends compared with the others. At the end of 10 days they looked better and healthier than all the young men who were eating the king’s food. (See verse 15.) Through constant discipline and healthy habits, their mind was sharpened and cleared, so much so that no one in the kingdom came even close to their wisdom and intelligence. The king interviewed them, and among all of them, no one was found equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So they began to serve in the king’s court. In every matter of wisdom and understanding that the king consulted them about, he found them 10 times better than all the diviner-priests and mediums in his entire kingdom. Daniel 1:19, 20.

The health reform message is not a useless protocol—it is a message full of wisdom and power. It is God’s plan to restore His people’s health; a road of preparation to live in heaven and eat alongside Jesus. By appreciating and practicing the


health reform message, we honor our God. It allows us to receive blessings from Heaven and puts us in a position to make an impact in society by partaking in a work of great responsibility.

## **A BLESSING BOTH HISTORICALLY AND NOW**

A health message is not a new concept of the 21st century. Since the fall of humanity, God has delivered a message of health to His people. It did not have the title of “Health Reform Message” but the idea was the same. It was in 1863 when our benevolent Creator revealed the health reform message to His people through inspired messages given through Ellen G. White. Today more than ever, we need to appreciate the benefits and purpose of the health reform message. This world is plagued with an epidemic of malnutrition and intemperance. In 2016 at least 2.6 million people died from obesity.<sup>1</sup> The vast majority—nearly all—premature deaths are due to an unhealthy lifestyle, meaning they are preventable.<sup>2</sup> However, since health is not appreciated as it should be, many people refuse it. It is not until sickness comes that many decide to make a change in their life, and in times of sickness a window of opportunity is opened to give the health reform message. It is an opportunity to change the life of a person and introduce Jesus to a new soul. But would you receive a message of health

if the person giving the message had a sick face? . . . No! How can a sick SDARM preach about health or about Jesus? In order to speak of Jesus and health we must have them in our life.

By not following God's health laws, our health is affected and we give a false testimony of our Lord. As representatives of God on this earth, we must do our best to represent God as best as we can. This will create an appreciation and a desire to practice the health reform message. Let us give thanks to the Lord, who gave us the best guidelines to live a life full of health and happiness. With invigorated minds and healthy bodies we can prepare ourselves to receive the latter rain and preach the gospel to every corner of the earth.

Dear friend, I pray that you may prosper in every way and be in good health physically just as you are spiritually. 3 John 1:2. 

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# I'M THANKFUL FOR *Marriage*

BY JACKSON ZAMY

God has established marriage to be not only the center of society but also a great blessing. One of the most important unions in life is that of uniting with someone you love. But the actual marriage institution has been so perverted that Christ pointed to the present distortion of it as a sign of the last days. Not that marriage should not be contracted in our days—but we are simply warned that the unholy way in which this solemn covenant would be entered into nowadays would mark the fulfillment of a prophecy. (See Matthew 24:37,

38.) Considering these facts, it is of great importance that all young men and women who are thinking of engaging in marriage know the steps to follow for an ideal marriage.

As we go through this topic, may the Holy Spirit impress the minds of all young adults so His words may have a positive effect on their heart.

## THE GOAL OF MARRIAGE

The marriage union is one of the oldest institutions established at creation. God designed it to be a blessing for humanity. After



creating man and all that he needed, God who is the source of wisdom and knows what is for the good of man, declared, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him” (Genesis 2:18). Thus, God instituted marriage as He blessed the couple in their Edenic home.

Marriage should not be seen as a fountain of joy for those who hope to be happy only when they get married, but it rather constitutes a blessing also for all those who follow the guidelines given in the word of God. And

while in and of itself, it does not guarantee to be a source of happiness, “it guards . . . the happiness of the race.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 46.

For Christians, marriage not only unites two people, but also helps them in their preparation for heaven. It is a school where lessons of great importance are learned, and where couples can help each other perfect their Christian character—“the husband to obtain the pure affections of a woman’s heart, the wife to soften and improve her husband’s character and give it completeness.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 99.

## PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE

Many things that people engage in life, require sufficient preparation and much care. If one needs to take special care before engaging in the things of life that will perish, should not marriage be preceded by special consideration? I believe so. As was mentioned above, marriage is a blessing from God, but if the necessary care is not taken while contracting marriage, many problems can come as a result.

Many pastors have wisely determined that before they can perform a marriage between two young people, they would make sure to instruct them on what marriage is and what to expect from it. Thus, just like they would study with someone to prepare them for baptism, they would do

the same for those who plan to get married. This is a wonderful idea as it prevents so many difficulties in the married life.

Let us now see some of the things that are needed for an ideal marriage:



### PRAYER:

Dear youth, before you start entering a relationship with someone, be certain to make prayer a priority in your life. First, you need to strive to be the type of person you want your companion to be. Do not ask God for a spiritual person if you are not consecrated—it would not be a fair deal. And as you prepare for marriage, think also of your salvation. If you are a young man, remember that after you are married you will hold the position of a priest in your home. It will be your privilege and duty to present your family before the Lord morning and evening. So it is important that you get into this habit even before you get married.

As you get closer to making the decision to unite with someone, increase your prayer

for wisdom from above. This is a sacred and important union that you are entering for life. The pen of Inspiration says that “If men and women are in the habit of praying twice a day before they contemplate marriage, they should pray four times a day when such a step is anticipated.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 460.

Now, if it has not been your custom to pray and consecrate yourself to the Lord, do not think about marriage yet. Give yourself to the Lord first and ask Him to guide you. If you proceed without considering this matter, you may not only do harm to yourself but also the person with whom you are going to unite. Where Christ is absent and a spirit of consecration is lacking, difficulties will arise that may be hard to manage.

### MATURITY:

One of the things that is necessary is maturity. Some enter marriage too early; though this may end up working out okay for some, but it certainly does not for all. Young men and women need a level of maturity before entering marriage. When we mention maturity, we are not referring to age only, as age is not an indication of maturity in some cases. Therefore, one needs to be sure that he or she has sufficient development and capability to lead a home.

Another problem that may occur is that of raising a child. We often see young women with a

child in their arms, and sometimes they are confused on how to even give the proper education to their baby. If immaturity is seen in the life of the parents, there is great risk that the child will not be raised in the fear of God.

A married person also needs to be able to exercise judgment, especially in moments of crisis or difficulties in life. If there is no maturity, wrong decisions could be taken which would ruin the life of the couple—and this can be even worse if they have children. Some young men still need the helping hands of their parents before they can stand on their feet and take care of a wife, and many girls still need the precious care of their mothers and fathers before they can attend to a man.

But “many youth act from impulse. This step, which affects them seriously for good or ill, to be a lifelong blessing or curse, is too often taken hastily, under the impulse of sentiment.”—*Ibid.*, p. 453. My dear youth, wait until you are mature enough to take upon yourselves such a great responsibility. It is better to wait than to suffer.

### **FINANCIAL ABILITY:**

Though you may not expect to be rich or possess everything you desire before you get married, special preparation should be made. Jesus said something that can be applied to many situations. He declared, “For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth

not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?” (Luke 14:28). These words uttered by Christ embrace many things in life including marriage. The Bible says, “Prepare thy work without and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house” (Proverbs 24:27).

In the world, of all the causes that are at the root of divorce or difficulties in marriage, money constitutes a significant one of them. It is reported that couples with no assets at the beginning of a three-year period are 70 percent more likely to divorce by the end of that period. It is also estimated that a lack of preparation for marriage increases the risk of divorce by 41%. We thank Christ for power to change and bring hope to those who have made mistakes, but it is not a good idea to take this risk if you are not yet married. Move wisely.

Another important thing is money management. Young men and women need to learn how to manage their own money before they get married, as a deficiency in this may bring unhappiness in their marriage. A man will not be happy to see his wife spending money



unwisely; that is why before you marry a girl, ask yourself, “will the one you marry bring happiness to your home? Is [she] an economist, or will she, if married, not only use all her own earnings, but all of yours to gratify a vanity, a love of appearance?”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 46. Young men should also manage their money well, as a neglect in this matter can affect the family. The fact is, if you cannot take care of yourself financially, you will not be able to take care of a wife.

## THE CHOICE OF A PARTNER

This is one of the most difficult things in life if you are a Christian. Not that your wife or your husband will save you—only Christ can save. But if you want to avoid unhappiness in marriage, this is something to take into account. Besides that, a wrong choice might ruin your life and put your eternal life at risk. I remember when I was thinking more seriously about marriage, I decided to read the book *The Adventist Home*. One of the quotes I came across made me stop and think carefully as I was considering marriage. The quote reads, “it is from the marriage hour that many men and women date their success or failure in this life, and their hopes of the future life. . . . Marriage is something that will influence and affect your life both in this world and in the world to come.”—*Ibid.*, p. 43.

The first thing you need to put on top of your list is to seek God for wisdom. “Trust in the Lord

with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding” (Proverbs 3:5). Some young men and women have a list in their hands and they start scanning every characteristic of prospective mates to see if it fits in this list. I have seen some young people do this and they had to wait for years—and some ended up not getting married at all. Go to the word of God and see the qualifications He has placed in His word for you to go by. If anything there is beyond your understanding, then seek the Lord for guidance. Remember that there are many things that you cannot see—yet God who reads the heart can. Therefore “a sincere Christian will not advance his plans in this direction without the knowledge that God approves his course. He will not want to choose for himself, but will feel that God must choose for him.”—*Ibid.*

## COURTSHIP

As you now go about courtship, keep moving on with wisdom. Courtship is the time when you begin to know each other. This is also known as a closer friendship that is different from a regular friendship, as it may lead to a serious relationship. Now, this is where it may become a little difficult. If you are gaining the friendship of a girl with this purpose in mind, you need to inform her parents of that relationship (not everyone from church but her parents). If the

parents are spiritual and do not agree with the idea or if you have not even spoken with them at all, is a red flag to stop. In the sight of God, to thus steal a girl's affections is dishonesty. (See *Ibid.*, p. 58.) It's hard to think of it this way, but this is the reality.

"A young man who enjoys the society and wins the friendship of a young lady unbeknown to her parents does not act a noble Christian part toward her or toward her parents. . . . **Marriages contracted under such influences are not according to the word of God.**"—*Ibid.*, pp. 57, 58. [Emphasis added.]

But what if the parents disagree with me marrying their daughter or even my having a friendship with her, should not I move on, as we are from the same faith? In reality, you would do well not to insist. It is better to wait and leave everything in the hands of God. If this is the person that the Lord has chosen for you, He will take care of that. Be still and wait for God's time.

## MARRIAGE WITH UNBELIEVERS

In the instructions given to the Israelites, we can find a lesson for today. Regarding the other nations, God commanded the people of Israel not to unite with the other nations in marriage, as they would be a continual snare to them. (See Deuteronomy 7:3, 4.)

It was a danger for the people of Israel to mingle with the other nations in marriage. Solomon

neglected these instructions and ended up abandoning God's way. The same danger exists today. Since love for Christ is not in the heart of the unbeliever, Satan will fill the place and make the life of this Christian miserable.

This principle also applies for those who may be in Christ—but just because they are not of your faith, it is a big risk to marry such a person. There will not be harmony. And anyone who is engaged in such a relationship cannot claim God's protection.

## CONCLUSION

Marriage is really a blessing, a sacred relationship that can help in spiritual growth if entered into carefully and following God's instructions. Therefore, young men and women who want to enjoy the privileges of marriage should make God their counselor and His word should be their guide.

If marriage is contracted the way the Lord has ordained, it will be a pure relationship and the angels will bless the home by their presence. Would you want God to be honored even in your marriage? Would you like your marriage to be an encouraging light for those around you?

May the Lord guide you not only in your spiritual life but also in your choice of a partner. And if you have made a mistake in the past, Christ is there for you, to help you and show you the way that leads to eternal life. Amen. 🍷

# I'M THANKFUL FOR THE *Great Commission*

BY JOSHUA KRANENBURG

One of the aspects of the plan of salvation that amazes me is that God calls us to be part of it! Matthew 28:19 says, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 28:19).

A few Sabbaths ago, I was able to take part in an outreach and evangelism project in Washington, DC. All day, we all talked and prayed with people as we passed out copies of *Steps to Christ*, *The Desire of Ages*, and *The Great Controversy*. In total, we passed out about 50–60,000 thousand books and prayed with countless people. Some people even sat down and started reading the books right then and there, while others in our group were walking around the national mall with mics and speakers, preaching about the good news and the Sabbath. This experience and many others have shown me how God is working on people’s hearts. And that many are wholeheartedly seeking after the truth.

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ALL THE

We are told: “The distribution of our literature is one means by which the message is to be proclaimed. Let every believer scatter broadcast tracts and leaflets and books containing the message for this time. Colporteurs [workers] are needed who will go forth to circulate our publications everywhere.”—*The Southern Watchman*, January 5, 1904.

This is the great commission that Christ gives to His disciples. And these are some of the last words Christ said while on earth. But this was not something new that He only told the disciples at that moment. This had been His calling for them since the start, when He gave the invitation and assurance, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

Like Christ called the disciples to be fishers of men, He is calling every one of us to do the same.

“All true believers will become fishers of men. They will pray for wisdom and will walk in accordance with the prayer: ‘Ye are the light of the world.’ ‘Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.’ ”—*Christ Triumphant*, p. 231.

All true believers will become fishers of men because a true disciple is a disciple-maker.

## SIGNS OF URGENCY

We are awaiting the second coming of Christ. And as we wait, we tend to look for signs that tell us we are living in the last days. Matthew 24:4-12 tell us of false Christs, wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes and natural disasters, persecution, and false prophets. We tend to focus on these verses, but we are missing the most important verse.

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14).

This is the sign of the end! And it is the same commission quoted above from Matthew 28:19.

“The heaven-appointed purpose of giving the gospel to the world in this generation is the noblest that can appeal to any human being. It opens a field of effort to everyone whose heart Christ has touched.”—*A Call to Stand Apart*, p. 64.

We are to be partners with Christ in the gospel mission. God has had workers in every age of human history, and the Lord is calling every one of us saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Our reply to this divine call should be: “Here am I; send me” (Isaiah 6:8).

God is not dependent on anyone to support His work;

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the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy clarify that He could have used the angels in heaven—or even the very stones—to proclaim who He is and what He has done. He is not dependent on our resources; every beast of the forest and the cattle upon a thousand hills are His! (Psalm 50:10, 11). God does not call us into the work because He needs us. God calls everyone because it is in our best eternal interest to be collaborators with Christ.

“There will be no one saved in heaven with a starless crown. If you enter, there will be some soul in the courts of glory that has found an entrance there through your instrumentality.”—*The Signs of the Times*, June 6, 1892.

If we as believers are not working together with Christ to seek and save the lost, we are missing the whole point of our salvation.

God blessed Israel so they could bless all nations. God tells Abraham, “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” Why? “Because that Abraham obeyed my

voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws” (Genesis 26:4, 5).

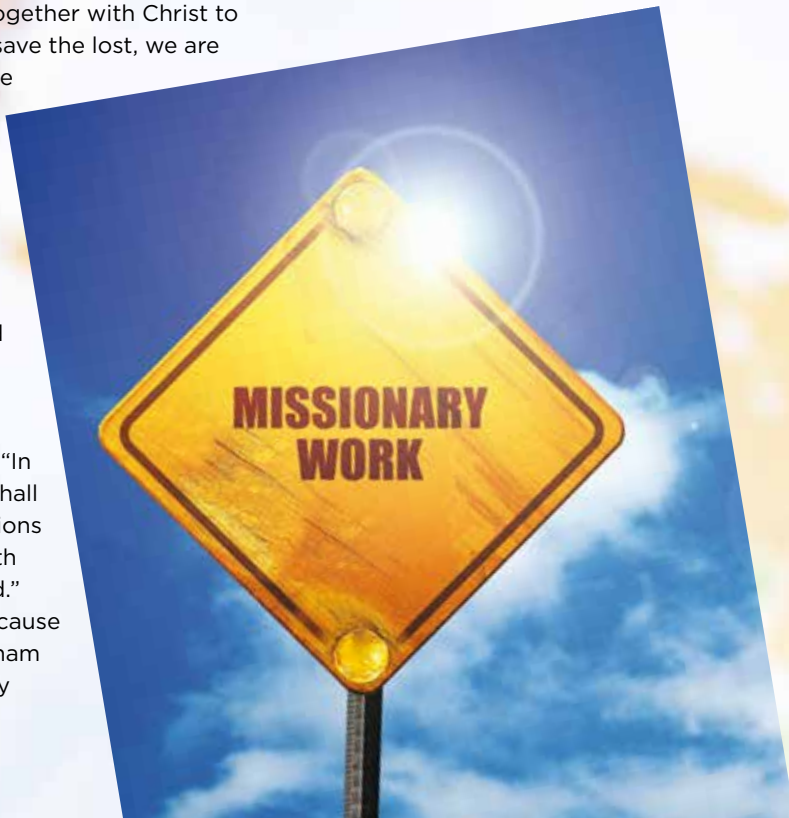
Making this personal, God called you to Him so you could call others! In Revelation 22:17 it says, “Let him that heareth say Come.”

If you have heard God’s voice in your life, then you will tell others, “Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?” (John 4:29).

## AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU!

Everyone has a part to play!

Paul describes the church as a body where each member plays a critical part in its function, and no one is left out. Yet, as modern-



day Christians, we tend to go to church, listen to a sermon, and then go about our lives until the next Sabbath comes along. For many of us, it has become a religion of complacency and consumerism. But Christianity was meant to be a religion of action!

“Who will go forth to labor in wisdom and grace and the love of Christ for those nigh and afar off? Who will sacrifice ease and pleasure, and enter the places of error, superstition, and darkness, working earnestly and perseveringly, speaking the truth in simplicity, praying in faith, doing house-to-house labor? Who at this time will go forth without the camp, imbued with the power of the Holy Spirit, bearing reproach for Christ’s sake, opening the Scriptures to the people, and calling them to repentance?”—*The Colporteur Evangelist*, p. 26.

This year is coming to a close; what have we done as individuals to further the great commission? How many people have you told about the love of your life, Jesus Christ? How many invitations

have you given to church or Bible studies? Do people even know who you serve? Are we living lives that embody Romans 1:16—“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek”?

The Lord is calling every one of us to stop being a pew warmer and instead to do our part according to our talents. His command is to multiply! Who will respond to His call to become a fisher of men? Who will become an active part of the body instead of just dead weight?

Jesus risked everything to save you and me. Will you, with a grateful and thankful heart, do the same? What will you risk to make an effort to save at least one soul for the eternal kingdom—to have a star in your crown, as an everlasting thank-you note to Jesus for what He did for you? Are you grateful for the part He has given you to play in this plan of cosmic and eternal proportions? If so, answer God’s call today! 🍋

**Editor** Adrian Finaru, **Layout** Bethany Muresan.

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Eunice Braidman

# THANK YOU, LORD

Thank you, Lord, for all the blessings  
You bestow so faithfully,  
For all the things I don't deserve  
Yet still, in grace, you give me.

Thank you for each breath of life,  
Each flow'r that cheers the way,  
For each sunrise that you paint  
At the start of every day.

Thank you for the answered prayers,  
For always taking time.  
Though you're the God of everyone  
You hear each prayer of mine.

Thank you for the evening breeze  
That breathes your love into my ear;  
Thank you, Father, for the peace  
You give for every fear.

And for one very special gift,  
I thank you, God above:  
For all the ones whom I hold dear  
Who fill my life with joy and love.

Thank you also for the strength  
That comes when needed most,  
For the comfort when I grieve,  
For your guidance when I'm lost.

Thank you for the little birds  
That remind me of your care.  
Thank you also for your pledge  
Of always being there.

But most of all, I thank you, Lord,  
For Your Son's beloved hands  
Pierced and nailed upon that cross  
So I could have a chance.

Thank you, Lord, for oh so much!  
Your goodness overflows  
Like a river does its banks  
With melting sheets of snow.

Father, may I always have  
A heart that's full of thanks to Thee  
For blessings great and small—  
And Your great favor shown to me.