

November 22, 2015

TIME OF REFLECTION

“Gratitude goes beyond the ‘mine’ and ‘thine’ and claims the truth that all of life is a pure gift. In the past I always thought of gratitude as a spontaneous response to the awareness of gifts received, but now I realize that gratitude can also be lived as a discipline. The discipline of gratitude is the explicit effort to acknowledge that all I am and have is given to me as a gift of love, a gift to be celebrated with joy.”

~ Henri J.M. Nouwen (1932-1996), Dutch Catholic priest, professor, and writer

“Anything I cannot thank God for for the sake of Christ, I may not thank God for at all; to do so would be sin....We cannot rightly acknowledge the gifts of God unless we acknowledge the Mediator for whose sake alone they are given to us.”

~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945), German pastor, theologian and author

“I care not for a man’s religion whose dog and cat are not the better for it.”

~ Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865), lawyer, politician, 16th President of the United States

“Act in such a way that all those who come in contact with you will go away joyful. Sow happiness about you because you have received much from God; give, then, generously to others. They should take leave of you with their hearts filled with joy, even if they have no more than touched the hem of your garment.”

~ Maria Faustina Kowalska (1905-1938), Polish nun

“The Spirit of God revolutionizes our philanthropic instincts. Much of our philanthropy is simply the impulse to save ourselves an uncomfortable feeling. The Spirit of God alters all that. As saints our attitude towards giving is that we give for Jesus Christ’s sake, and from no other motive.”

~ Oswald Chambers (1874-1917), Scottish minister and teacher

“Imitation is not just the sincerest form of flattery – it’s the sincerest form of learning.”

~ George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), playwright, critic and political activist

“Imitation cannot go above its model.”

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), American essayist, lecturer, and poet

“Now, it is of course well known that Christ continually uses the expression ‘imitators.’ He never says that he asks for admirers, adoring admirers, adherents; and when he uses the expression ‘follower’ he always explains it in such a way that one perceives that ‘imitators’ is meant by it, that is not adherents of a teaching but imitators of a life.”

~ Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), Danish philosopher, theologian, poet, social critic

Worship through the Word

SERMON – “Offerings of Grace” – *Doug Cooper*

SERMON PASSAGE – *Hebrews 13:7-21 (NASB)*

⁷Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. ⁸Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. ⁹Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited. ¹⁰We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. ¹¹For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp. ¹²Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. ¹³So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. ¹⁴For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come.

¹⁵Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. ¹⁶And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

¹⁷Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

¹⁸Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things. ¹⁹And I urge you all the more to do this, so that I may be restored to you the sooner.

²⁰Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, ²¹equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.