

# THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

Volume 63, Number 11

Editor ~ Wade Stanley

Publisher ~ Doug Twaddell

November, 2021

## Gratitude

Kevin Crittenden

*Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).*

Can any of you think of other verses in the Bible that mention gratitude? Raise your hand if you would like to share.

*With praise and thanksgiving, they sang to the Lord: "He is good; his love toward Israel endures forever." And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the Lord because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid (Ezra 3:11).*

When I was asked to contribute an article for November, I naturally thought of Thanksgiving. On this day, we are to be thankful for all that we have, including, of course, the de rigueur green bean casserole and the breed of turkeys that have pop-out belly buttons to indicate that they're done roasting.

*Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever (1 Chronicles 16:34).*

We often meet with our families on Thanksgiving, and this "together time" is most precious. My wife and I, as grandparents, take special joy in the growth of our family and seeing the seats around the Thanksgiving table beginning to fill again.

*Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts (Colossians 3:16).*

I like to preface our Thanksgiving meal by asking each person to name something for which they are grateful. It reminds us of our many blessings and puts us into a proper frame of mind for our prayer, giving thanks for what we have received.

*I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds (Psalm 9:1).*

I ask my ESL students about their impressions of America. All mention freedom, something that we too often take for granted. We have freedom of speech, freedom of thought, freedom of opportunity, freedom from want, freedom of

choice. But what do you think is our greatest freedom? I'll come back to this later.

*I will give thanks to the Lord because of his righteousness; I will sing the praises of the name of the Lord Most High (Psalm 7:17).*

One freedom that I am exercising right now is the freedom to write this religious article without fear of retribution or persecution. So, yes, we have freedom of religious assembly in this country. How wonderful is that?

*Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing (1 Thessalonians 5:11).*

But should we just be grateful on Thanksgiving? Is this the only time to be mindful of all that God has done for us? An exercise for you: Please fill in the blanks in the following sentence. "Please help me to express my gratitude to you, Lord, \_\_\_\_\_ and every \_\_\_\_\_."

*And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him (Colossians 3:17).*

Getting back to the question, "What is our greatest freedom," I believe it is a freedom not only for one country but for all humanity. Namely, the freedom from sin that the agonizing sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross at Calvary gave freely to us out of His unbounded love.

*Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices, God is pleased (Hebrews 13:15-16).*

We celebrate this gift every Lord's Day by partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine in remembrance of His sacrifice on our behalf. I know it is not yet time for making resolutions; that comes on New Year's Day. But surely, as we are blessed daily, wouldn't it be an act of gratitude to Him who offers us salvation to remember His sacrifice daily?

But how should we express our gratitude to God? We can't very well send Him flowers and a note of thanks. What, of course, comes to my mind, and probably yours as well is to praise Him in prayer, offering up our heart-felt gratitude before turning to our many petitions for healing and comfort.

And indeed, God has expressed through His Word how He would have us give thanks.

*continued on the next page...*

We see in Micah:

*With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of olive oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:6-8).*

And from Luke:

*And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19).*

Thanksgiving Day is a day marked out to express gratitude as a nation. Let us, as Christians, be mindful of our gratitude to our Savior every day.

Soli Deo Gloria

~ 19130 Meiggs Ln. Cupertino, CA 95014  
kcritt2@aol.com

## The Multitudes

Jay Graham

*And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated, His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying, (Matthew 5:1-2).*

By this time in Matthew, the word was getting around about this Man they would know as Jesus. Multitudes were attracted to Him, for neighbors were probably speaking to neighbors, and family members were speaking to family members about this Man from Galilee. Multitudes were flocking to him. Why? Probably for various reasons. Some wanted to see a "show," for they heard of His miracles and hoped to see some. Some were taking loved ones with the hope of their being healed by this Man. Some wanted to be fed, for they heard of Him feeding multitudes. Some even wanted to try to find fault with His teachings. The Jewish leaders enlisted some to spy on Jesus for this purpose, hoping to find something they could accuse Him of. They felt threatened by this Teacher, for they saw their power ebbing away and wanted to put a stop to it. And yes, there were a few of the Jewish leaders such as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, who liked what they heard of and from this Man, and they wanted to hear more.

However, many, possibly most, were truly attracted to His messages and manner. This Man spoke with authority, especially in contrast with the Jewish leaders, as noted at the close of this particular sermon in **Matthew 7:29**. Jesus' teachings were of a higher source. His teachings reflected Truth, and the people could hear it. His teachings gave the people true hope that their God had not forgotten them. It is my thought the people were looking for such messages. They had heard their leaders' teachings, and they found them empty. When combined with the hypocrisy and arrogance of their spiritual leaders, who seemed to lack true godliness, the people could hear and see great differences in Jesus' words from what they had grown accustomed to in addition to His righteous life. This Man's words had power and true answers for their lives. The people were ready for something much better, for Jesus had come at just the right time, as noted in **Galatians 4:4**. I am convinced the people were looking for answers, and Jesus came at the right time to give them answers of spiritual substance.

It is my thought Jesus was paving the way for something glorious to come that would take place shortly. But, again, consider who Jesus was teaching in this sermon? Perhaps a good portion of this multitude would be the first fruits of the coming gospel that would be openly proclaimed in less than three years. How many of those original 3,000 and later 5,000 new Christians in the first chapters of Acts were in attendance here at this mountain? How many others in Judea, where the gospel would be first preached throughout the first half of the book of Acts, were present? I would say many, if not most of them. And Jesus was laying the groundwork for their conversions as His new Christians, though they surely did not know this at the time.

To be sure, the vast majority, if not 100%, of those in attendance in **Matthew 5-7** probably were not aware of what was coming. They were attracted to these words for what they could gain in the short term. Perhaps they were a bit befuddled by the complete meaning of these words and teachings at the time. However, I am convinced Jesus was laying the groundwork for the people who would later hear this new gospel. Perhaps these lessons would be mulled around the various hearts and minds for the next three years as those who heard meditated and wondered at the power and meaning of these words. I can certainly see many people who heard these messages come to a conclusion, later at or after their conversions, that now they made perfect sense! It clicked!

Just consider some of the various words, phrases, and paragraphs from **Matthew 5-7** that Jesus spoke. First, he begins teaching the proper attitudes of the heart, such as humility,

mercy, purity, spiritual healing, and hungering for true righteousness. Next, Jesus speaks of how His people will be salt and light to the world. He speaks of His purpose to come to the world. He speaks of how sin begins in the heart and works its way out to the actions, and the great danger sin is. He speaks of the importance of loving our enemies. He teaches prayer. He teaches on laying treasures in Heaven and the danger of allowing worry in our lives. As a matter of fact, Jesus teaches the very opposite of many of the messages and examples of the Jewish leaders.

Note the number of times Jesus addresses those in this multitude as "you." "You" are the salt of the earth. "You" are the light of the world. "You" have heard it said. This emphasizes, I am convinced, that Jesus was specifically addressing those He knew would be His first Christians. Many of this number would be among those in **Acts 8:4** who went "everywhere preaching the word" of this new gospel AND the words of Jesus they heard here in Matthew.

Yes, Jesus was speaking from sure knowledge and total conviction. He was speaking words the Father gave Him for this glorious purpose. Why? Because He knew of the great and glorious workings that were beginning in the hearts of all those who seek truth and righteousness. These messages would change the hearts and minds of those seeking a better way.

~ 7715 Quarterhorse Cir, Flagstaff, AZ 86004  
jayhgraham@live.com

## *Glory to God!*

The **Chapel Glen Church of Christ, Indianapolis, IN**, rejoiced when **Addison Owens** was baptized September 12.

The angels rejoiced with the church in **Pleasant Hill, IA** when **Dominique Blackman** confessed her Savior and was baptized for remission of sins on September 19. The brethren also received **Bailey Righi** as a member of the congregation.

The brethren who meet on **Prince Road, Alton, IL** welcomed **Carl McMurray, Lorna McMurray, Forrest McMurray** and **Andrea Hooker** as members of the congregation on September 29.

## *Blessed Are the Dead*

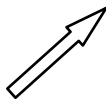
**Jackie (Jack) DeLane Gray**, 83, born January 9th, 1938 and passed August 6 at home in Blue Springs, MO. He was married

to **Evelyn A. Parrish**, on January 15th, 1960, in **Raytown, MO** by Wilford Landes and celebrated 61 years in January 2021. Jack was baptized at an early age in **Chillicothe, MO** and was an active member of the **church of Christ in Blue Springs**. His favorite Bible book to read from was **Ecclesiastes**, specifically **3:1-8**. Jack was a faithful member of the Blue Springs church of Christ serving in many capacities. He was diligent in looking for ways to help the brethren. He is survived by his wife Evelyn, three daughters and sons-in-law, five grandsons, seven granddaughters, a grandson-in-law and two great-grandsons, and one sister-in-law.

**James Edward "Jim or Jay" Edington, Sr.**, 80, of Burlington, KS, passed away September 21, 2021. Jim was born April 27, 1941, at Hartford, KS, the son of James Leo and Virginia Edington. On September 10, 1960, he was married to **Juanita Maye Osborn** at the Emporia, KS, church of Christ. They became the parents of three children and took in an additional three to raise. Jim served in the United States Army and then in the active Air Force Reserves for a total of twenty-seven years of service. Brother Jim recently became a member of the **Rock Creek Church of Christ, Ottawa, KS**. He is survived by his wife Juanita; two daughters, and a daughter-in-law; three grandchildren; three step-grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; many other relatives and friends.

**Dale Franklin Botts**, 86, passed away on October 3. Dale was born in Meadville, MO on February 8, 1935, to Elgin and June (Brobst) Botts. On April 7, 1957, he was united in marriage to **Sarah MacDonald**. Dale served in the United States Army. He spent many years as an auto mechanic working at Wolfe Auto in Brookfield and as a dairy farmer. Dale loved the church and was an Elder at the **Meadville Church of Christ**. Dale is survived by his wife, Sarah, of the home, one daughter and one son, five grandchildren and one sister.

**Rex James Farthing**, 90, of Nixa, MO, passed away October 7. Rex was born Jan 10, 1931, in Ozark, MO, to **Rex and Erma (Bilyeu) Farthing**. **Rex and Emily Nadine (Stine)** were united in marriage on Nov 25, 1954. Rex was a hard-working man who wore many hats including truck driver, gas station owner, seventeen years with Ozark Wholesale Grocers, farmer, bus driver for Ozark Schools, Christian County's first paid ambulance director, and he loved selling and developing real estate. Rex was a long-time member of the Nixa Church of Christ serving as an elder and deacon. He is survived by his wife of over sixty-six years, Nadine, one daughter and one son, one sister, nine grandchildren, ten great-grandchildren, one niece, one nephew, one great-nephew and many other family and friends.



***Please check your expiration date!***

*Continued from page 3: "Blessed Are the Dead"*

**Wesley Groves**, 75, of **Linneus, MO** died September 26. Wesley Eugene, son of **Delbert and Mary (Cokerham) Groves**, was born July 29, 1946. On November 24, 1967, he was united in marriage to **Nancy Gudge** of Meadville. Wesley served his country for six years in the United States Air Force, where he was a pilot in Vietnam as a Forward Air Controller. Wesley then spent thirty years as a math teacher. He also was a crop and hog farmer, a carpenter and woodworker, and a Burrus Seed Dealer. Wesley was a member of the **Brookfield Church of Christ**. Survivors include his wife Nancy, of the home; three children, thirteen grandchildren, three sisters, one brother as well as many nieces, nephews, and other relatives.

**Viola Davis**, 95, of **Worthington, MO**, passed away on October 12. Viola was born on December 15, 1925, the daughter of **William Pearlie and Leota Bell (Mahoney) Wiles**. She married the love of her life, **Glen Davis**, on May 21, 1944. Viola drove the school bus for the Martinstown and other rural schools, then later worked as substitute postmaster at the post office in Worthington, becoming postmaster in 1981, where she worked until she retired in 1988. She enjoyed doing crosswords, jigsaw puzzles, word searches, crochet, spending time with her grandkids, great-grandkids, and great-great grandkids. Viola was a faithful member of the **Martinstown Church of Christ** and served the church as an elder's wife until Glen's death. Viola is survived by her sister, sister-in-law, two children, five grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, five great-great-grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews.

*And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them." (Revelation 14:13)*

## *Here and There*

After many spiritually fruitful years, the congregations in **Grand Haven** and **Coopersville** have merged into one

congregation, and are no longer meeting individually. This new congregation is now known by the name, **Randall Street Church of Christ**, and it is meeting at:

**557 W Randall St. Coopersville, MI 49404.**

To accommodate the need of all of our members the church meets Sundays from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm and Wednesdays from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm. For more information please contact: **Keith Owens, (616) 212-6464** or **Tom Palmer (231) 206-5303**. You are certainly welcome any time you are in the area.

## *Special Meetings*

### **2021 Meetings**

November 6.....Youth Workshop, Ottawa, KS

December 28-30...Youth Rally, Gregory Blvd., Raytown, MO

December 28-30.....College Study, Lone Jack, MO

## **The Gospel Message**

To renew a subscription, add a new subscription, inquire about a subscription, or cancel a subscription, please contact **your publisher**:

**The Gospel Message, % Doug Twaddell, 1700 S. Ann Ct. Independence, MO 64057 twadsquad@earthlink.net**

If you would like to announce baptisms, new members, deaths, or special meetings in **The Gospel Message**, please contact **your editor**:

**Wade Stanley, 18078 State Highway 149, Unionville, MO 63565 wadestanley@gmail.com**

If you have any questions or concerns about the content of this paper, please either contact **the author** of the article or **your editor**.

**THE GOSPEL MESSAGE** (USPS:576-040) (ISSN:1054-7991) is published monthly for \$7 per year by **THE GOSPEL MESSAGE**, 1700 S. Ann Ct., Independence, MO 64057. Periodicals Postage Paid at Independence, MO. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to **THE GOSPEL MESSAGE**, 1700 S. Ann Ct., Independence, MO 64057