

The HEARING OF Faith

LIVING STREAM MINISTRY RADIO NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 53, SEPTEMBER 2002

"He therefore who bountifully supplies to you the Spirit . . . does He do it out of the works of the law or out of the hearing of faith?" Galatians 3:5

In THIS ISSUE

- 1 LETTER FROM LIVING STREAM MINISTRY
- 1 WHAT IS MATERIAL GIVING?
- 2 HIGHLIGHTS FROM *LIFE-STUDY OF FIRST CORINTHIANS*
- 2 RESPONSE FROM LISTENERS
- 4 THE PATH OF LIFE—THE SOURCE OF FAITH

Dear Life-study Listener,

Last month we welcomed KPLS 830 AM, a new radio station in southern California, for *Life-study of the Bible*. Our program on this station is a special one-hour program called *On Second Thought*. During the first half, we air a selected *Life-study* program, and afterwards we take live phone calls from listeners. We expect that beginning September 2002, *On Second Thought* on KPLS can be heard on the Internet via streaming audio. Anyone around the country can then tune in using the Internet and call KPLS's toll-free number to participate in the "live" life-study. If you enjoy listening to *Life-study*, you will enjoy participating in our live discussions.

Those of you following our current broadcasts know we have recently finished *Life-study of First Corinthians* and that the concluding message dealt with material offerings. The apostle Paul wrote a marvelous and long chapter concerning resurrection (1 Cor. 15) and then concluded the book by touching the matter of the believers' offering. How we handle our money is a real test to us! Paul makes it clear that when we are truly strengthened by the resurrection life of Christ, we can be saved from the power of material possessions. How different this is from much Christian fund raising that is done in a natural way. May we all see the critical link between the message of resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 and the word immediately following in 16:1: "Now concerning the collection for the saints."

Living Stream Ministry

Life-Study of the Bible

W E L C O M E S

LOS ANGELES, CA
KPLS 830 AM
6:00-7:00 P.M. SUNDAY

EDMONTON, CANADA
CKER 101.9 FM
7:30 A.M. SUNDAY

WHAT IS MATERIAL GIVING?

The believers' giving of material offerings is a crucial factor in the life and walk of a Christian and is affirmed by the apostle Paul in chapters eight and nine of 2 Corinthians. There, he thoroughly addresses the principles involved in ministering to the needy saints. To introduce this subject, Paul focuses on the believers' experience of the grace of God: "Furthermore we make known

(continued on page 3)

MATERIAL GIVING

(continued from page 1)

to you, brothers, the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, that in much proving of affliction the abundance of their joy and the depth of their poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality” (2 Cor. 8:1-2).

Money is very much used by Satan to corrupt us. Every fallen human being is under the deceiving dominion of mammon and material possessions (Matt. 6:19-21, 24-25, 30; 19:21-22; Luke 12:13-19). How was it possible, then, for those believers in Macedonia even in their affliction and poverty to have the abundance of joy abound unto the riches of their liberality? They overcame the dominion of mammon and were freed from greed by receiving the superabounding grace of God. Thus they gave, even in their poverty, of their own material possessions to the needy believers.

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By this we can realize that the grace of God in 2 Corinthians 8 is much more than the unmerited favor we receive from God. The grace of God is Christ Himself in His resurrection coming into us as the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45) to provide us

with God Himself as our life and our full supply. Under the motivating source and liberating operation of His abundant grace in us, our hearts are opened to seek opportunity to distribute to the needs of others. Our material giving then becomes a spiritual matter full of divine life for the building up of the Body of Christ.

Our experience of the abundance of grace causes us first to give ourselves to the Lord Himself and then to give of our material resources (2 Cor. 8:5). The Lord wants us the believers much more than what we have. Hence, the basic and central principle motivating and governing our giving must be the grace of God.

Furthermore, Paul says in 2 Corinthians 9:6 that he who sows sparingly shall also sparingly reap, and he who sows with blessings shall also with blessings reap. This word, like that given by the Lord Jesus when He said, “Give, and it will be given to you” (Luke 6:38), implies that our gathering depends upon our sowing. Through our receiving and enjoying the grace of God, our material giving becomes a sowing of seed for our further supply (9:6). If we sow much, we will gather much. Let us each receive the grace of God to be a cheerful giver, not giving out of sorrow or necessity (v. 7). The apostle Paul encourages us with these words: “God is able to make all grace abound unto you, that, in everything always having all sufficiency, you may abound unto every good work” (v. 8).

For further reading on this subject, please see the footnotes for the above referenced verses in the New Testament Recovery Version; and *Life-Study of Second Corinthians*; *Life-Study of Philippians*, messages 29 and 30, by Witness Lee, published by Living Stream Ministry.

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