

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Givers and Takers

(Jerry Fite)

Recently, a tragic event gave me an opportunity to sit and talk with a number of police officers. Listening, I was reminded of how dedicated they are to their work. They are givers which involves risking their own lives daily for our protection and well-being. In a sobering moment with one veteran officer, I asked if he saw any change in our society over the years he has served the community. He said there seems to be today “more takers than givers”.

When a police officer is called to deal with thieves and murderers, he or she is facing “takers”. They have taken property that belongs to another, to the ultimate taking of another’s life. In a self-centered world, takers may even justify taking, thinking in a perverse way that they deserve to do so. The danger of having more takers than givers is not new. Fifty one years ago John F. Kennedy’s memorable line of “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country” reflects the constant problem.

If “takers” are on the increase in this dark world of sin, the Christian should shine even brighter (*cf. Philippians 2:15*). The Christian is a “giver”. The Christians in Macedonia were liberal givers, even though they were experiencing persecution and poverty. Paul said, “...they gave of their own accord” to the extent of doing so beyond one’s expectations (*2 Corinthians 8:3*). What was the secret to such giving? “...first that gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us through the will of God” (*2 Corinthians 8:5*).

Christians are givers because they have put on Christ who is the ultimate giver. He showed sacrificial love by “laying down his life for us”. Therefore, “we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (*1 John 3:16*). While Jesus gave his life, we should at least give of our livelihood to help our brethren in need. But the Christian is giving something deeper than the gift. He or she is giving “compassion”, not just cash, and manifesting “love”, not just cold cash (*1 John 3:17*). Following the Lords example, the Christian looks to the needs of

others, not seek one’s desires alone (*Philippians 2:3-8*).

Paul saw more than just the gift he received from the Philippians. While graciously acknowledging the gift, Paul says, “Not that I seek for the gift; but I seek the fruit that increaseth to your account” (*Philippians 4:17*). When the Christian gives, God gives him or her even “more seed for sowing and increase the fruits” of righteousness the Christian is manifesting (*2 Corinthians 9:8-10*). Liberal giving of the Christian also produces “many thanksgivings” unto God by those whom have been helped (*2 Corinthians 9:11-12*).

Other’s being helped; God being thanked; doing what is right; having even more to give are just a few of the fruits enjoyed by the giver. The spiritual blessings received as a giver is a greater blessing than receiving material gifts. Have you experienced the truth of Jesus’ statement: “It is more blessed to give than receive” (*Acts 20:35*)? Be a giver! The dark world of “taking” needs the light.