



# SHEKINAH

(Heavenly Glory)

## GIFTS FOR JESUS ONLY!

December  
2008

*Thoughts  
from  
my heart...*

Pastor

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“...I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me.” (Mathew 25:36,37)

The economy is going down, and the unemployment rate is rising. Churches are already getting quite a few phone calls for help from the local people. It is a frustrating experience to see people losing their homes and begging for food. As we prepare for this 2008 Christmas season, let us evaluate various choices in front of us. Are we going to blow up the money in giving gifts to those who have everything, or spend it for Jesus? Jesus said, “In as much as you did it to one of the least of these ‘MY’ brethren, you did it to me!” “These MY brethren” are none other than homeless, prisoners, and sick people! Can we focus our attention on giving all our gifts to Jesus this year? **Not just some gifts to Jesus, and the**

**rest for our loved ones. I mean ALL GIFTS FOR JESUS ONLY!**

My little daughter understood this principle perfectly concerning Christmas. She said without any hesitation, “It is Jesus’ Birthday daddy, not ours! We should celebrate His Birthday!” Little ones accept this fact very fast, even though it could affect them very much. But grown ups don’t! Psychologically we become miserable if we do not buy or give gifts. I am not discouraging gift giving completely. Of course, we could give plenty of gifts to our loved ones when it is their birthday, or anniversary, or when we visit them, or anytime we feel like giving something. But during Christmas season, let us focus on giving gifts to “Jesus only”. Let us educate our loved ones that Christmas is all about Jesus and not about us. Let them know clearly that there is no need for gift giving to each other in this season. Instead, we can encourage them to join hands to give one big gift to homeless or some one in dire need. I tell you! Jesus will be smiling at us

when we honor Him through this kind of gift giving!

This is a very important matter during this economic crisis, and we must spend more time praying about it. It is not that easy to stop the habit of gift giving during Christmas season! I suggest that you go to a quiet place, pray, and write down all the people’s names for gift giving. Write the amount you would like to spend on each person. Add up all that. That is the amount you may want to give to Jesus! **What good is it to give to those who have almost everything?** A poor person could use that amount to put food on the table and pay for his room. There are many ways to cut our Christmas budget. We could easily resort to email greeting cards and save some money and paper! What happened to good old Asian way of celebrating Christmas? People take time to visit their loved ones with good homemade snacks, and fellowship

with their friends. Asians were not taught gift giving. Santa Clauses showed up only in the orphanages and needy families' houses. But now, in Asia also the tradition is fast changing and becoming very materialistic! The commercial Santa Claus culture has wrapped

us all up too tightly. But Saint Nicholas, (the real Santa Claus!) who started the gift giving tradition was giving gifts only to the poor and the destitute! It is high time we get out of this materialistic Christmas. How can we celebrate an introverted, selfish Christmas when our

own neighbors and friends lose their jobs left and right? Let us pray seriously and see who really deserves our gifts. God will show us very clearly it is those "MY" brethren who need our gifts desperately! Let us focus on bringing Christmas gifts for JESUS only!



**HAVE A MEANINGFUL JESUS' BIRTHDAY,  
AND A CHRIST FILLED NEW YEAR!**



## Youth Corner

### *Christmas Quiz*

See how well you know the Biblical facts of Jesus' birth

1. What is the name of the angel who spoke to Mary?
2. Did the same angel speak to Joseph too?
3. Where was Jesus born—Nazareth or Bethlehem?
4. Who announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds?
5. How many wise men came from the east to worship Jesus?
6. Did the wise men arrive on the night of Jesus' birth ?
7. Where did the wise men find Jesus?
8. Why did King Herod want to know where baby Jesus was?
9. Where did Jesus and his parents go to escape from Herod?
10. When they came back to Israel, where did they settle?



Answers: 1. Gabriel 2. Dont know as it is not mentioned in the Bible 3. Bethlehem 4. An army of angels 5. No mention is made of the number. 6. No 7. In a house 8. To kill him 9. Egypt 10. Nazareth

## Blessing other people

Last month we learned how Hannah brought her burden to the presence of the Lord to receive an answer from the Lord and how she became a blessing to herself and others. Prayer signifies a symbol of the relationship of a Christian with the redeemer, our Lord.

Acts 4:25-31 is a prayer that was prayed by the apostles after Jesus died and rose from the dead. These are the men who asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. They are the ones who witnessed the praying habit of Jesus. And they started praying like how Jesus prayed.

1. The disciples observed the 3<sup>rd</sup> hour of the day as prayer time. Do we have a specific time to pray? The one who prays receives victory. How is our personal prayer life?

2. Peter and John healed a man crippled from birth in the name of Jesus. They were commanded not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus by Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, and the other men of the high priest's family. They could not deny the healing of the crippled man. When the disciples prayed, they quoted the verse from Psalms 2:1-2 "The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord" and prayed that these things happened to fulfill the word of God. Are we using the Word of God when we pray? Are our hearts filled with the Word of God? The Word of God is a revelation of His prophecies which were told many years ago.

The importance that one gives to the Word of God is a repre-

sentation of devoutness of a person.

3. They prayed fervently for healings and miracles as they believed that the only way for people to believe in Jesus is to do miracles in the name of Jesus. When we pray, are we praying fervently for a revival and to see the glory of God? What is the motive of your prayer?

4. As the disciples were under constant threat, they prayed for the strength to preach the Gospel without fear. They were strengthened by the Lord and preached with zeal. The prayer we do is like a petition to our Almighty God. And whatever we ask our God, He will answer our prayers accordingly. So, we can pray to our God boldly and without any hesitation.

5. Our forefathers prayed using the Word of God, "I have favored you" in many occasions and received mercy. The disciples of Jesus Christ also prayed using the same words when they prayed. Dear brothers and sisters, do you pray with any special words in your family prayers? And is it in your children hearts too? Will it help your children to pray like how you pray?

Looking at Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1:15-23,

Paul prays for the believers that he loved, brothers in Christ, the church people for their spiritual awakening. By this we understand Paul's love for others. He prayed without ceasing for everyone in the church—men, women, maids, and elderly people and called them saints. This is a great witness of Paul's love on the church of God. As we fellowship

with one another in the church, what kind of attitude we have towards others?

Eph 1:17: To receive the wisdom and revelation of God, the sinful lady came to Jesus knowing that Jesus will forgive all her sins and came for forgiveness. The blind man came to Jesus knowing that Jesus can heal him and Zaccheus wanted to see who Jesus was. But, Paul is praying for the wisdom and revelation for the people who are called by God **to know Him better**. The prodigal son returned to his father when he came to his senses. That's

why Paul is praying for the wisdom and revelation as it has to come from Him alone.

Eph 1:18: Paul prays that the eyes of our heart may be enlightened in order that we may know the hope to which He has called us.

Eph 1:19: God has to give us the heart to believe that the very same power that raised Jesus from death is with the people who accepted Him as their Savior to do wonderful things in their lives. 2 Cor 4:4 – "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." One cannot read when the eyes become blind. And Paul is praying for a spiritual awakening. We see how Paul is praying with burden for the church and for the spiritual needs of the people. Are we praying like Paul for the church and for the spiritual needs of others?

### Schedule for the month

Sunday Worship Service

Communion - 10:30 a.m. followed by worship @ 11 am

Children's Sunday School - 10:30am

Prayer Session every Friday @ 7:30 p.m.

Women's Fellowship for this month - cancelled

Kidz Club - Second Saturday @ 4:30 p.m.

### Blessing other people

*Continued from Pg. 3*

Eph 3:14-21 :Apostle Paul suffered for the cause of the Name, Jesus Christ. He also, prayed for others who witnessed his suffering and lifted them up in his prayers. Paul started praying humbly to God since the time that he was told by God that, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting". Are we praying with a humble heart?

Eph 3:16: I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being.

Being a Christian is not following some traditions or not doing some rituals. It is not external,

but it is internal. The inner being has to become new. All old things has to go. That's why our Lord calls people by various name as in Luke 12:20 – "You fool", Luke 12:28 – "O you of little faith", Mathew 25:26 – "You wicked", Mathew 23:13 – "You hypocrites" Paul prayed that all Ephesians should know and taste the love that surpasses all understanding. A person without love cannot know God. That's why all believers have to be bound with God by His love. Even in the midst of all sufferings, Paul was praying for others with burden.

Are our prayers so burdened for our beloved brothers and sisters in Christ? Or do we pray just for the sake of praying for others? Paul's longing and prayer was that the name of God should be glorified generation to generation.

Let us all pray like the disciples and like Paul for others fervently. Praying people have to rise to pray for revival.

You are needed by God as a prayer warrior.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

December 13, 4:30pm - Kidz Club Christmas party

December 21, 10:30 am - Family Sing-song service

December 25, 10:30 am - Christmas Service followed by lunch

December 31, 11:00 pm - New Year Service



### Vision of our Church

- ✠ To reach out to all people for Christ .
- ✠ To reach out to all children and lead them to CHRIST.
- ✠ To help out the mission work in the Indian subcontinent.
- ✠ To be a light to this country and be a blessing to the needy people in the USA.

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