First Fruits Offering

Daily Devotional Guide

This devotional guide is designed to help lead you and your family to our First Fruits Offering, Sunday, June 3. This is your opportunity to make a one-time sacrificial cash gift to our Heavenly Father, as an act of worship – above and beyond your other giving. During your prayer time this week, pray that God will reveal to you what He wants to do through you as your part in the First Fruits Offering.

MONDAY, MAY 28 - What is a First Fruit Offering?
The first reference to First Fruits Offering is found in Exodus 23:16-19. God tells His people how to worship and says, “The firstfruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the Lord your God.” God is requiring that His people, even before the harvest of their crops (their income), give the first part to Him in His House. It was to be given before anything else. The First Fruits Offering was to be in proportion to how God blessed His people. It is also a time of rejoicing and celebration of God’s provisions. The offering provided the means of doing God’s work but its primary purpose was to enable His people to “Honor the Lord with the firstfruits of their wealth.” In turn, God promises to bless them.

Have you ever noticed that at times God requires first place in our life?
Jesus said the first commandment is to, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment.” (Matthew 22:37-38) When we can do this, everything – every other facet of life, will be in its proper place.

Next, Jesus says that we are to, “Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you.” (Matthew 6:33)

How much should your First Fruits Offering be?
No one can answer that for you – no one but God. If you pray earnestly, He will give the answer. He may surprise you with the amount He suggests but remember He already knows how He intends to bless you. You can trust Him! No one knows what your situation is, except God. All He wants from you is for you to talk it over with Him.

- Listen as He suggests an amount.
- Have faith to believe He will make it possible.
- Obey as He leads.
- Place your First Fruits Offering in His hands on June 3.
**TUESDAY, MAY 29 - Honor the Lord**

*Proverbs 3:9 (NIV)*

“Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops.”

In this passage the Holy Spirit challenges you to “Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.”

Jesus is called Lord 430 times in the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. He is Lord and sovereign of our lives because:

- **He is God** incarnate. (John 1:1)
- **He is Creator**; we belong to Him. (Genesis 1:1; Psalm 24:1,2; Colossians 1:16,17)
- **He is Redeemer** – He bought us. (I Peter 1:18; I Corinthians 6:19)
- **He is Sovereign** – We surrendered everything to Him when we accepted Him as Lord and Savior.

“He is Lord of all” as Peter says in Acts 10:36 and when Jesus Christ is Lord, some wonderful things happen:

- **It Simplifies Life** for it means the management of your time, talent and treasure is according to His divine plan in His wisdom.
- **It Unifies Life** for it blends all motives and activities to please Him.
- **It Purifies Life** for it expels anything that is disapproved by Him.
- **It Amplifies Life** for it enables Christ to work His will through you.
- **It Glorifies Life** for it makes you a blessing to others and a praise to Him.

When Jesus Christ is Lord of our life, we will have no problem honoring Him. It will be the deep desire of our heart. Our only problem will be how we honor Him.

The word honor means, “To show greatest respect and highest regard for.” In light of this it simple means, “To do as He demands – to obey Him.” In fact, Jesus said, “Why do you call me Lord and do not the things I say?” (Luke 6:46)

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 30 – There are two words that can summarize what honoring Him as Lord actually means:**

The first word is **SERVICE**.

When God was delivering His people from Egypt, He told Pharaoh, “Let my people go ... that they may serve me.” (Exodus 7:16 & 8:1) In Deuteronomy 10:12, God said, “Serve me with all your heart.” Our Lord expects us to serve Him and when we do, we end up serving others.
The second word is SACRIFICE.

This is what Paul means in Romans 12:1 when he says, “I plead with you that you present your lives ‘living sacrifices’ to your Lord. This means sacrificing your time, your talent, your touch, your treasure, and your testimony.

This sacrificial giving of self to our Lord is essential for:

- Your maturity in Christ.
- Your church’s achieving the will of Christ.
- The world coming to know Christ.

Only this sacrificial giving of ourselves will “honor the Lord”.

**THURSDAY, MAY 31 - How do we determine what sacrificial giving is for us?**

It has been pointed out that “Sacrificial giving reaches its highest expression in the purposeful altering of one’s standard of living or lifestyle” to make a commitment to Christ. This means that one allows his lifestyle to be determined by God’s will and not by the size of the income. A clear example of this type of sacrifice is seen in II Corinthians 8. These Macedonian Christians “first gave themselves to the Lord”. They then gave sacrificially – far beyond their ability even though they “were in deep poverty”. They begged for the privilege of making such a sacrificial gift.

As we look forward to our First Fruits Offering, we begin to ask ourselves, ‘How much should my sacrificial offering be to ‘honor the Lord’?’ We all want to do God’s will but how do we decide? Someone has said, “The way you know the will of God is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength; love your neighbor as yourself; and then go where that love leads you.”

**FRIDAY, JUNE 1 - The Privilege We Accept**

II Corinthians 8:5 (NIV)

*They gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God’s will.*

Here the Holy Spirit, speaking through the Apostle Paul, challenges us with the example of the Macedonian Christians. They were the embodiment of sacrificial giving even in the midst of extreme poverty. The scripture tells us that they suffered “great trial of affliction.” In addition, they were experiencing extreme poverty. We do not know for sure, but in all probability both the “severe trial” and the “poverty” were the results of their persecution as Christians as well as
the great drought and famine of the time. It seems that Paul did not intend to ask them to give. They however, “begged” Paul to allow them to give. For them this would mean a great sacrifice. Usually, we do not think that poverty and giving go together. How often have we heard the cry, “I’m too poor to give”. Why then did these Macedonians plead for the privilege of giving? They heard Paul quote Jesus, “it is more blessed to give than to receive.” They believed Paul and Jesus. They knew that they would be cheating themselves if they did not give.

What if they had not given? We would never have heard of them; and they would have missed the blessings of faithful giving, and we would have missed their lesson on sacrificial giving. They gave in spite of poverty.

SATURDAY, JUNE 2 – The Prayer We Make
I Chronicles 29:13
“Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name.

Tomorrow is the day we have been planning for, praying for - First Fruits Offering Sunday.

Imagine the Lord Jesus receiving the largest offering our church has ever given. That is exciting beyond our comprehension. In fact, most of us would probably think it impossible if it were not for the miracle-working God we worship and the commitment our congregation has already made to the vision God has given us. With the combination of faith and sacrifice - victory is inevitable.

Pray that you will know God’s plan for you and come with determination and commitment to the First Fruits Offering that will honor your Lord; that will be acceptable to Him; that will be pleasing to Him; so that you can hear from Him:

“Well done! Good and faithful steward
You have been faithful in a few things
I will make you ruler over many.
Enter into the joy of your Lord.”
Matthew 25:21-23

TO GOD BE THE GLORY!