



GOD IS FAITHFUL HE KEEPS HIS PROMISES

2025 OFFERTORY DEVOTIONAL READINGS

Dr. Mundia Liywalii



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FOREWORD

Dear Church Leaders,

I am thrilled to introduce the 2025 Offertory Devotional Readings “God Is Faithful—He Keeps His Promises,” written by Dr. Mundia Liywalii, the Stewardship Director of the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division. While reading these weekly reflections in advance, I was impressed by how our dear colleague has blended Bible truths and personal experiences to inspire and educate God’s children to put Him first. He is offering a unique faith-building material to the world church.

Additionally, as forgetting is listed among the top factors that lead church members to neglect participating in systematic benevolence, these texts will serve as regular reminders. They will act as signposts for our spiritual journey.

Foremost, these weekly readings, and later the videos that they will inspire, will enhance our collective or personal giving experiences. They will help transform recurring giving practices from being a mere participation in a collection or completing some online payments to real seasons of worship, gratitude, and commitment to put God first.

The GC Stewardship Ministries Department will take responsibility for producing the Portuguese, Spanish, and French versions of the offertory readings, in addition to the English version. We encourage each church administrative entity to assist in making these texts are available in other needed languages. Together, we build a God First Culture.

Yours in His service,

Aniel Barbe
Associate Director
General Conference Stewardship Ministries



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DR. MUNDIA LIYWALII



Pastor Mundia Liywalii hails from the beautiful country of Zambia, fondly called by its citizens as the “real Africa.” He has a BA in Theology from Solusi University, a Master of Pastoral Theology, and a Doctor of Ministry–Mission Emphasis from the Adventist University of Africa. The thesis for his MA was “A Theological Strategy to Increase Tithing in Northmead Church.” His connection with the stewardship department began in 1989 when he served as a local church stewardship secretary while pursuing a diploma at a local ministerial school. Upon completing his studies there, he served as a pastor of a multi-church district for four years before accepting a call to head the Stewardship Department in West Zambia. After serving in this capacity for four years, he left for his undergraduate studies. Barely six months after graduation, he was elected Stewardship Director of the same field, and he held that position for another three years. He became the Zambia’s Union Mission first Stewardship Director when it was organized into a union conference in 2004. He continued in that position from 2004 to 2014, when he received a call to be the President of the Central Zambia Conference. During his term as Stewardship Director of the union, the church experienced significant growth in tithe and offering income. Until he was elected Southern Africa Indian-Ocean Division Stewardship Director, he served as Executive Secretary of the Northern Zambia Union Conference.

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

"Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful."

-1 Corinthians 4:2



Today is the first Sabbath of 2025, and we look forward to great accomplishments. Many people around the world have made resolutions for the new year.

Such resolutions may include building a family home, relocating to a new city, pursuing a childhood dream of a better life, or attaining higher academic qualifications.

GENERATIONS BEFORE US DID THEIR PART IN SPREADING THE GOSPEL.

Others have made it their goal to walk the aisle with their dream man or woman. And yet others have not made any resolutions at all.

As an Adventist living in the closing stages of this world's history, what resolution have you committed to regarding Jesus's words in Matthew 24:14: "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come"? The gospel will not be preached in all the world without individual believers making resolutions to support its propagation.

Generations before us did their part in spreading the gospel. We, too, should do our part in furthering it. While we may not be able to cross borders and oceans to preach to God's people in distant lands, we can do so in the comfort of our homes through tithes and offerings. As we give, we can reach people we will probably never meet in this life.

Appeal

As you prepare to give your tithe and offerings, make it your resolution this year to actively participate in spreading the gospel. Make a resolution that you will continually worship God with your tithe and percentage-based offerings.

HASTENING JESUS'S RETURN

"As cold water to a weary soul,
so is good news from a far
country."

- Proverbs 25:25

Last Sabbath, we read Matthew 24:14, which reads, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come."

According to Jesus, the end of the world will come when the gospel has gone everywhere in the world.

If the return of Jesus in fulfillment of this

verse depended solely

on how the gospel has penetrated your community, would Jesus's coming be near or decades away? Now, how about comparing that with people living in the 10/40 Window?

From the human perspective, going by the numbers of those who have not yet been reached with the gospel, our Lord's coming appears to be far away. True as this might be, the Bible says God will cut short His work in righteousness as recorded in Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."

Although God is all powerful and has all avenues at His disposal to accomplish this, we know that our giving is one way God uses to cut short His work in righteousness. Through the tithe and offerings given, missionaries are able to go to distant places to reach God's people with the gospel of salvation. What we give helps sponsor programs on television networks, create and disseminate content through the World Wide Web, publish materials in different languages, and build schools and medical facilities from which people come to know about God's love for them.

Appeal

Thus, we see that our giving helps hasten the coming of Jesus. Is it not your desire to help the gospel go everywhere so that Jesus can come and take us home? If that is your desire, prayerfully return tithe and generously give offerings. Let us pray that we may help to hasten our Lord's return.

CONTINUING WITH JESUS' WORK

“On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper.”

1 Corinthians 16:2

In Matthew 9:35, we read that “Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness” (NIV).

What a blessing it was living in the time of Jesus! Imagine you were sick and then healed by Jesus. I am sure the vigor that comes with Jesus's healing cannot be fully explained. It can only be experienced.

The church continues to heal the sick through its many medical facilities around the globe, mirroring Jesus's healing ministry during His time on earth. Many of those who come to these facilities have never been to our churches. They have not heard of Jesus, let alone His soon return. By coming to these facilities, they receive medical attention and the knowledge of Jesus, the Great Physician. In fact, in some places, the only way of sharing the gospel is through our medical and educational institutions.

THE CHURCH CONTINUES TO HEAL THE SICK THROUGH ITS MANY MEDICAL FACILITIES AROUND THE GLOBE, MIRRORING JESUS'S HEALING MINISTRY DURING HIS TIME ON EARTH.

Appeal

For the gospel to reach many people in areas where preaching publicly is prohibited by law, medical institutions are needed more than ever before. However, for these to be built and operate well, resources are needed. Our offerings help build and take care of workers in these facilities. May we therefore give handsomely the Promise offerings—our percentage-based offerings—so that many people can hear about Jesus through our medical facilities.



SHOWING APPRECIATION

“And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured it on His head.”

-Mark 14:3

The woman in this verse anointed Jesus with “very costly oil of spikenard.” Apparently, the value of the oil made the disciples to disapprove of the woman’s act. It seems they would not have had challenges if the oil had been of less value.

Though the Bible does not clearly explain what prompted her to pour such expensive oil on the head of Jesus, it

is evident that she held Him in very high regard. If she did not consider Jesus to be of such great value in her life, she would not have done what she did.

Commenting on the above incident, Ellen G. White wrote, “But few appreciate all that Christ is to them. If they did, . . . nothing would be thought too costly to give for Christ, no self-denial or self-sacrifice too great to be endured for His sake,” (The Desire of Ages, p. 565). Our level of appreciation influences the quality of our giving!

OUR LEVEL OF
APPRECIATION INFLUENCES
THE QUALITY OF OUR GIVING!

Appeal

As we give our tithe and offerings today, let us give generously as people who know and appreciate what Jesus is to us.

GOD BLESSES IN HIS OWN WAY

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

—Romans 8:28



Dexter, his wife, and her friend went to the fresh vegetable market. As they drove home, the ladies had to stop at another store. After they exited the car, Dexter looked for his two phones' intending to occupy himself, only to discover that they were missing. That's when he remembered he left them on the car's side rails as he was loading the car at the vegetable market. He hastily drove back to the vegetable market.

Upon arrival, Dexter sought for the shop attendant who had helped them push their trolley to their car. The shop attendant remembered Dexter putting the phones on the car rails, but did not know what happened to them afterward.

Feeling frustrated, Dexter proceeded to the police station to file a report. As he drove past the premises, he saw two individuals across the road. After reporting the case, Dexter came to where the men were. As he approached them, he called out, “A distressed brother is looking for lost phones.”

A stout man who was standing next to his car, said, “Come here, and tell us how you lost your phones.” After recounting the events, the man looked at him and said, “We picked up your phones. Go and see Freddy in that car.” Freddy gave him his two phones, valued at over \$1,000. Dexter gave them a token of appreciation.

This episode taught Dexter a valuable lesson that when we return tithe and give offerings, God blesses us in His own way. God did not bless Dexter in monetary form, but by giving back to him his two phones which contained crucial work information.

Appeal

Brothers and sisters, God has promised to bless those who return tithe and offerings. The blessings may not come in monetary form, but we can be rest assured that God will bless us in His own way. May God bless us as we give to Him what we prepared, and as we plan to bring something for Him next Sabbath.

TEACH THEM YOUNG

"But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

-2 Timothy 3:14, 15



Paul encouraged Timothy to continue "in the things" he had learned, emphasizing that he knew from whom he learned. Paul further stressed the importance of family training by reminding the young man how he had known the Holy Scriptures from childhood.

We can conclude that Timothy's spiritual standing was a result of the training he received in his family. What he was taught early in life in the family setting prepared him for greater future responsibilities.

Ellen G. White also underscores the importance of the home influence in shaping the church and its overall well-being. She wrote, "In the home the foundation is laid for the prosperity of the church. The influences that rule in the home life are carried into the church life; therefore church duties should first begin in the home" (*Adventist Home*, p. 318).

Appeal

As we return our tithe and offerings to God today, let parents and guardians begin early to teach the children under their care to worship God with their little tithe and offerings. As the children grow, they will continue this practice for the benefit of God's church.

THE GOD WHO SHARES

“For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.”

-Colossians 1:16

There are a lot of things in God's creation that never ceases to amaze us, from the vast expanse of the universe teeming with its myriad of stars and galaxies to the intricate ecosystem of the earth. Consider the wealth of minerals waiting to be discovered and unearthed, and the diverse array of animals and birds that inhabit our planet. Yet the Bible also mentions the invisible things. All these, the Bible declares, “were created through Him and for Him.”

Precious minerals such as gold, diamond, and uranium, along with resources like oil, which significantly impact life on earth, were all created through Jesus and for Him. In essence, both the visible and the invisible were created for Jesus, not for us.

We use these resources because Jesus graciously shares them with us. In return for His blessings, He simply asks us to acknowledge His ownership by returning a mere 10% as tithe, along with offerings. Isn't it strange how we sometimes deny the Owner what rightfully belongs to Him? Each time we are blessed, there is a call to acknowledge our Saviour's ownership of everything we claim as ours.

IN RETURN FOR HIS BLESSINGS, HE SIMPLY ASKS US TO ACKNOWLEDGE HIS OWNERSHIP BY RETURNING A MERE 10% AS TITHE, ALONG WITH OFFERINGS.

Appeal

May God bless you today as you acknowledge His ownership and benevolence through returning tithe and offerings.



I GOT RID OF IT

“Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”

—Luke 6:38

A story is told of two friends who had a nice day discussing everything that crossed their minds. But regardless of what they discussed, the issues of money kept coming up. It seemed they could not divorce themselves from that topic.

As they kept on talking, one of them said that he had been saving some loose coins, which he now didn't know what to do with. Though many in number, their value was so insignificant that they could not buy anything meaningful.

He then asked his friend a question: “What should I do with those coins?”

In response, the friend asked if he had tried giving them to his children.

“I did, but they don't want them.”

At this point the friend said that he knew the best place to take them. “The best place you can take them is to the church. The church accepts any amount.”

“Are you sure they won't reject them?” the friend asked.

“No, they won't.”

“Thank you so much. I will take them there.”

A few days later, they met again. The friend wanted to know if his advice was carried out. “Did you give your coins to the church?”

“Yes! I got rid of them.”

There are people who give offerings to God as a way of getting rid of what they have no use of. Consider your giving pattern. Have you been giving to get rid of what you didn't want or had no use of?

THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO GIVE OFFERINGS TO GOD AS A WAY OF GETTING RID OF WHAT THEY HAVE NO USE OF.

Appeal

As we give our tithe and offerings today and in the future, let us not give to get rid of what we have no use of. Let us give the best we have, just as God gave us the best He had.

UNCLE, THIS CANNOT BUY ANYTHING

“And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?” says the LORD of hosts.”

-Malachi 1:8



A young girl lived happily with her parents in a city with over two million people. This girl, Kezia, enjoyed buying little things children her age like so much.

One day, a visitor from overseas visited her family. Everyone was very happy because they had not seen him for a long time. Kezia and her family spent every available moment with him, chatting and sharing old memories. It was a good time indeed.

DO WE GIVE GOD MONEY
THAT CANNOT BUY
ANYTHING, EVEN WHEN WE
ARE ABLE TO GIVE MORE?

Three days after he arrived, the visitor decided to explore the city to see the changes that had taken place since he left. When he came back, he brought some goodies for Kezia, which she gratefully received. To her surprise, she was given a monetary bill along with the goodies. Without looking at it carefully, she ran to her bedroom to feast on the delicacies she was given.

After she had finished eating, it was time for her to take the bill to the nearest shop to spend it. She looked at it carefully, and her joy turned into sadness. Kezia came screaming from her bedroom to the living room, where her father and the visitor were enjoying their stories. She interrupted them as she came to where the visitor was and said, “Uncle, this cannot buy anything!” Kezia’s father tried to calm and interrupt her because he was embarrassed by what she was saying.

The visitor asked Kezia’s father if it was true that the bill Kezia was holding could not buy anything valuable. He answered, “Yes, it cannot buy anything. You need two of those bills to buy something.”

Dear friends, what about us today? Do we give God the money that cannot buy anything? If Kezia did not want the bill that could not buy anything, what about God? If the smallest amount you give is your best, God accepts it. But if that is not all you have, don’t give God what you can’t use yourself. God gave us the best gift in the person of Jesus. Let us give Him also the best.

Appeal

As we give our offerings today and in the future, let us remember to give God the best we have.

I DON'T GIVE

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

-Proverbs 22:6



Kezia and her family lived in Lusaka, the capital of Zambia. They lived in the church compound, which housed union workers. With such proximity to the church, Kezia did not walk a long distance to go to church.

One day during their evening worship, the discussion centered on tithe and offerings. This was a subject that was very dear to the family because Kezia's father was the stewardship director of the union. As the discussion continued, Kezia's father encouraged everyone to faithfully return tithe and give offerings systematically.

Before the closing prayer could be offered, Kezia put her hand up, and her father gave her permission to speak. She asked, "Daddy, did you say we all return tithe and give offerings?" The father said yes. She shook her head and said, "No, Daddy. I don't return tithe and give offerings myself." The father and mother understood what she meant because they gave tithe and offerings as a family. They thought that was enough, but to Kezia it was not.

The following week they gave each child pocket money and reminded them to remember God. When they had an evening worship after Sabbath, even before people could be given the floor to share what they learned at church, Kezia's hand shot up, and when she was given the floor, she said, "Daddy, today I gave tithe and offerings." Everyone smiled and said amen. From thereon, Kezia's parents gave their children money so that they could learn to return tithe and give offerings on their own.

Kezia's experience encourages parents to give their children money so they, too, can learn to worship God through tithe and offerings.

Appeal

As we give our offerings today and in the future, let us let us pray for children like Kezia to start giving when they receive some money.

WHY HAS JESUS NOT COME?

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”

—2 Peter 3:9



One day at church the preacher preached about the second coming of Jesus. One of the people who were in the church that Sabbath was a little girl we will call Vicky. She was very happy to hear that Jesus is coming very soon to end the suffering that is in the world.

Vicky had lost her cousin whom she loved so much, and she excitedly came home,

ready to tell her parents that Jesus is coming very soon and there will be no more death. The parents reaffirmed the truth that Jesus is coming very soon.

Two months after the discussion of Jesus's return, Vicky asked her parents why Jesus had not yet come, when the preacher had said that the coming of the Lord was near. The parents sadly said, “Yes, Jesus is coming very soon, but He is waiting for people to hear about Him.” They added that there are still many people in the world who have not yet heard about Jesus. When the gospel has gone everywhere, as recorded in Matthew 24:14, Jesus would come.

Vicky asked her parents, “What can we do to help the gospel to go everywhere?” They explained that one way of helping spread the gospel is by returning tithe and offerings. She interrupted them with another question, “Are you returning tithe and offerings?”

“Yes,” they replied.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus wants to come and end the sufferings we are going through. But He is still waiting for many of His children to also hear and know Him. For these people to hear about Him, tithe and offerings are needed so that preachers, books, and programs can be sponsored to reach them. We are here as the products of other people's faithfulness.

THERE ARE STILL MANY PEOPLE IN THE WORLD WHO HAVE NOT YET HEARD ABOUT JESUS.

Appeal

Are you not going to do your part? Is it your desire to give so that others may hear about Jesus?

SURRENDERED HEARTS

"My son, give me your heart,
and let your eyes observe my
ways."

-Proverbs 23:26



One of the pleas that God makes is for His people to give their hearts to Him. As we surrender our hearts to God, we are no longer under the guidance of the devil. We are directed by God, who guides in decision-making. When the heart is surrendered, we can say with the apostle Paul: "I have been crucified with Christ; is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me" (Galatians 2:20).

WHEN THE HEART IS NOT
SURRENDERED TO JESUS,
IT IS DIFFICULT TO GIVE FOR
THE ADVANCEMENT OF
GOD'S WORK.

When Jesus lives in us, obeying Him becomes a joy. But when the heart is not surrendered to God, we cannot keep His requirements. We cannot love and bring offerings to Him. When the heart is not surrendered to Jesus, it is difficult to give for the advancement of God's work. Ellen G. White stated in *The Desire of Ages*, "If we have given our hearts to Jesus, we also shall bring our gifts to Him" (p. 65).

The reason giving is hard is because our hearts are not surrendered to Jesus. Giving is easy when the heart is given to Jesus. Today we shall pray for us to give our hearts to Jesus so that He dwells in them. God's work will not be supported unless our hearts are given to Jesus. Do you want to see the gospel go everywhere? Then give your heart to Jesus. Do you want Jesus to come and close this era of sin and suffering? Give your heart to Jesus.

Appeal

As we give our tithe and offerings, let us prayerfully surrender our hearts to Jesus and ask Him to live in us.

MAULED BY LIONS

"My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you."

-Daniel 6:22



A story is told of a now retired pastor who was itinerating in his district. As his wife was busy that day, he decided to take his son with him. Since he had no car or motorcycle, he put the son in a carton box, which he tied on the bicycle carrier, and off they went.

After cycling for some time, the pastor found himself amid a pride of lions. They were on either side of the road. Not knowing what to do, he got off his bicycle and began to think of what should be done. Meanwhile, the boy inside the carton box on the carrier was too terrified to say a word to his father.

The pastor quickly tore a piece of the carton box and began to scribble on it. He wrote on the carton box his name and that of his son, alerting the would-be passersby to the particulars of the people mauled by the lions. After writing his name and that of his son, he threw it on the road.

While wondering what to do, a thought came suggesting that he should continue pushing his bicycle. He began to push the bicycle while the lions' eyes were fixed and followed him with intense interest. He continued pushing his bicycle until he reached where he was going.

When we give tithe and percentage-based offerings, we help support God's workers who continuously endanger their lives so that others may hear about Jesus.

Appeal

As you give today, and plan to do so in the coming weeks, give so that the mission of taking the Word of God everywhere may be finished so that we can go home.

FAITH IS IMPORTANT

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

—Hebrews 11:6



One of the important ingredients of a healthy relationship is faith. A couple without faith in each other cannot have a healthy relationship. Couples who work far from each other need faith for them to stay happy.

Just as faith is important in a human relationship, it is equally important in our relationship with God.

WITHOUT FAITH, A PERSON WITH A SMALL INCOME CANNOT TAKE SOMETHING FROM IT TO GIVE TO GOD.

“Without faith it is impossible to please Him” (Hebrews 11:6). One area that requires faith in our relationship with God is giving. With the cost of living skyrocketing every year, we need faith to give to God what is due to Him.

Without faith, a person with a small income cannot take something from it to give to God. But with faith that is possible. Faith takes God at His word. Faith accepts that God will fulfill His promise. In Malachi 3:10, God says, “Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,” says the LORD of hosts, ‘If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.’”

My brothers and sisters, each time we give, we are to exercise faith in God and His ability to fulfill the promise of Malachi 3:10. When we do not give, it displeases God because we exhibit a lack of faith in Him.

Appeal

As we participate in tithe and offerings, let us put our faith in action by giving faithfully and generously. If you are not prepared today, I invite you to exercise your faith through tithe and percentage-based offerings the next time you receive money.



THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE

*“When a man’s ways please
the LORD, He makes even his
enemies to be at peace with
him.”*

—Proverbs 16:7



Love is a universal language. It does not matter which continent you are on or which country you go to, love is a common language. Yes, there are so many languages worldwide, but that common language unites us.

But what is that common language of love? The Bible gives us a clue about it. We find it in John 3:16. “For God so loved the world that

**BY GIVING US JESUS,
GOD WAS SPEAKING THE
LANGUAGE OF LOVE. YOU
CANNOT SEPARATE GIVING
FROM LOVE.**

He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” By giving us Jesus, God was speaking the language of love. You cannot separate giving from love. Wherever love is, giving is there too. People abuse the word “love” when their giving has other motives.

Because God loves us so much, He gave us Jesus. When we love Him, we also shall give Him our hearts and tangibly show that love through the offerings we present to Him. His love was overflowing and could only be expressed in one gift—Jesus.

Appeal

We, too, today and in the coming weeks are called upon to show our overflowing love for God by giving the best we have. May God bless us as we speak the language of love through giving tithe and offerings.

BECAUSE WE ARE CONCERNED

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

—Matthew 24:14

In 2 Corinthians 8:9, we read, “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.” This verse reminds us of what Ellen G. White wrote. She said, “Jesus did not count heaven a place to be desired while we were lost. He left the heavenly courts for a life of reproach and insult, and a death of shame. He who was rich in heaven’s priceless treasure, became poor, that through His poverty we might be rich. We are to follow in the path He trod” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 416).

JESUS GAVE HIMSELF AS AN OFFERING FOR OUR SINS BECAUSE HE WAS CONCERNED. A CONCERNED PERSON NEVER FOLDS HIS OR HER HANDS IN THE FACE OF DUTY OR THE PLIGHT OF OTHERS.

What made Jesus leave the riches of heaven and come here to earth to become poor? Love made Him do this. One characteristic of love is concern for others. Jesus was so concerned with our situation that He left heaven.

Jesus gave Himself as an offering for our sins because He was concerned. A concerned person never folds his or her hands in the face of duty or the plight of others. The millions of people who are still in darkness should evoke a sense of concern from all who were once in darkness.

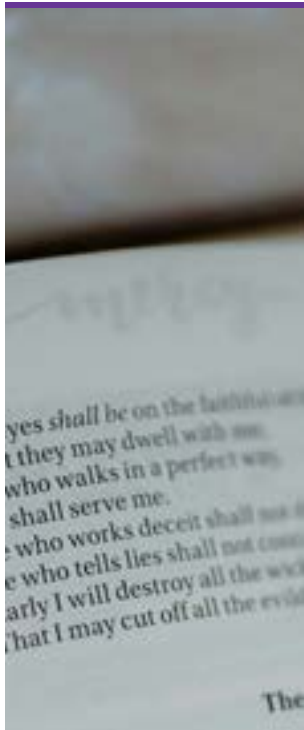
Those who realize that the coming of Jesus is near, and yet much remains undone, should be led to give and help reach those in darkness with the message of salvation.

Friends, how can we pray that the Lord Jesus will come when most of the people in the 10/40 Window in post-Christian communities, and in large cities or elsewhere have not heard of God’s love? The question is: What are you doing to provide your brothers and sisters in those countries and beyond an opportunity to know Jesus? Offerings given tell a story of how concerned we are for those still not yet reached.

Friends, how can we pray that the Lord Jesus will come when most of the people in the 10/40 Window in post-Christian communities, and in large cities or elsewhere have not heard of God’s love? The question is: What are you doing to provide your brothers and sisters in those countries and beyond an opportunity to know Jesus? Offerings given tell a story of how concerned we are for those still not yet reached.

Appeal

Let us, therefore, give generously and in proportion to our earnings so that the gospel can reach everyone.





PROTECTED BY ROBBERS

“For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

—Romans 6:10, 11



Pastor Driany (not his real name) was on his way to visit his members in the South West Malagasy Conference when he met five robbers. The area was well chosen by the robbers because it was sandy, bushy, and isolated. They knew that motorcyclists had no choice but to get off their motorcycles because of the sand.

On this fateful day, the robbers put a very big log across the road. Seeing the log, Pastor Driany knew something was wrong. He got off his motorcycle, and within seconds was surrounded by five robbers who demanded everything he had. He told them that he was a Seventh-day Adventist pastor going to visit his members, but that did not deter the robbers.

He then remembered the name of one of the church members, and asked if they knew him, though he doubted it because the member lived far away from where they were. However, the pastor was taken aback when one of the robbers intervened, instructing his colleagues, “Leave him alone. The person he mentioned saved my life. When somebody speared me, this man helped me.” Seeing that he was now safe, the pastor asked them if he could share some Bible verses with them, to which they agreed. Then the robbers offered to guarantee his safety for the remainder of the journey.

Sometime after that incident, Pastor Driany was surprised when a new convert asked him if he recognized him. The pastor admitted he did not. The man then inquired if he recalled meeting five robbers on his way to visiting his members. The pastor replied that he remembered the experience well. The man revealed that he was one of the five robbers and that he was ready to be baptized. The pastor thanked God that an encounter that was meant to hurt him became a means of saving somebody.

Appeal

Brothers and sisters, the tithe and Promise offerings (percentage-based offerings) we give help sustain pastors around the world who spread the gospel at the risk of their lives. May we give generously so that many more people like that former robber may hear about Jesus.

LITTLE IS MUCH

“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,” says the LORD of hosts, ‘if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.’”

—Malachi 3:10



Liywalii (Lee-ywa-lee) understood this verse very much. He had \$10 remaining until the end of the month, which was still some fifteen days away. He was pastoring a multi-church district some 150 km west of Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia. One Sunday morning, as he was basking in the sun before it became hot, he saw his best friend’s mother coming to his house. He stood up to welcome her. She said her errand was to ask for money to pay the hammer mill. Liywalii didn’t know what to say. He had only \$10 left, with half a month yet to go. If he gave it now, he would be left with nothing. Trusting that God would see him through, he went into the house and returned with the \$10, which he gladly handed her.

She left happily, while the pastor remained thinking about how God would come through for him. Hardly ten minutes after giving away the \$10, somebody knocked on his door. Liywalii went to open the door and found there the head of the institution, whose house he was living in, standing there. He invited him into the house. After the visit as he was leaving, he pulled out a \$10 bill and gave it to the pastor. He prayed and left.

Pastor Liywalii was shocked. He gave away \$10 and God gave him back \$10! He thanked God for His care.

Appeal

As we continue supporting God’s work and helping each other, let us never forget that after we have given that which may be our last, God will take care of us. Therefore, let us always give with joy.



PROVE GOD

“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,” says the LORD of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.”

—Malachi 3:10



In 2022, Doreen (not her real name) lived with her husband and their little daughter in Livingstone, the tourist capital of Zambia. Every year Livingstone receives thousands of tourists from all over the world who come to see the majestic Victoria Falls.

One day Doreen and her husband discussed the need to increase the amount they gave as offerings. After a lengthy discussion, they settled on giving 10% as offerings in addition to tithe. This was a bold decision. Already things were not alright as they were surviving only on one salary—her husband’s as a teacher. Nevertheless, they decided to take that leap of faith.

The new government that was just voted in advertised jobs for teachers. Doreen, a trained teacher but unemployed for over two years, quickly submitted her application and waited for the outcome. After what seemed to be a year of waiting, an announcement was made for those who applied to check for their names in the national newspapers. To their amazement, Doreen was picked. When others in her church who also applied but were not picked heard that she was picked, they asked her what she had done or if she had some connections which led her to be picked. She assured them that she did nothing and had no connection with anybody in the government.

Doreen and her husband believe that God abundantly rewarded their leap of faith.

AFTER A LENGTHY DISCUSSION, THEY SETTLED ON GIVING 10% AS OFFERINGS IN ADDITION TO TITHE. THIS WAS A BOLD DECISION. ALREADY THINGS WERE NOT ALRIGHT, AS THEY WERE SURVIVING ONLY ON ONE SALARY.

Appeal

I challenge you to take a leap of faith and prove God. God is faithful. Give tithe and the best as percentage-based offerings, and see if He will not fulfill His promise as given in Malachi 3:10.

THE ULTIMATE ROLE MODEL IN GIVING

“But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”

–2 Corinthians 9:6, 7



In various domains of life, there are numerous role models in the world who inspire others. In soccer, Ronaldo and Messi are revered as role models by many. Similarly, basketball boasts icons such as Michael Jordan and LeBron James.

Those who enjoy athletics often look up to individuals like Usain Bolt. Some young Adventist preachers in college might mention E. E. Cleveland, Charles D. Brooks or Mark Finley as their role models.

**THERE IS ONE ULTIMATE
ROLE MODEL IN GIVING—
GOD HIMSELF.**

When it comes to giving, who can we take as our role model? Throughout history, many individuals have given generously to God, serving as inspirations. Yet, there is one ultimate role model in giving—God Himself.

The Bible says in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” God gave us His only Son—Jesus. There was nothing more God could have given outside this one gift of His Son. He gave us everything. Jesus was the most valuable gift He could give to demonstrate His love for each one of us. In giving as He did, God is the Ultimate Role Model.

As His children and followers, we should emulate God, the Ultimate Role Model in giving. For us to give as He did, we should, by His grace, give the best of what He has blessed us with. The task of urgently taking the gospel of salvation to those who need it will not be accomplished without looking to God as our role model in giving.

Appeal

Do you want God to be your role model in giving? Then, let us always give generously as we are blessed.

OPPORTUNITIES NEVER LAST FOREVER

“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.”

—Ecclesiastes 9:10



The word “opportunity” is defined by the *Longman Dictionary* as “a chance to do something or an occasion when it is easy for you to do something.” If that is the case, it means that moments don't last forever, as we all know. They come and go.

Every one of us in this church is given this chance to do something. Being alive is a chance for us to do something we cannot do in death. Being in church and listening to the Word of God is a chance or occasion that allows us to give our lives to Jesus. Having good health is a chance to engage in evangelistic outreach. Listening to this offertory reading is an occasion that allows you and me to give for the advancement of God's work. But these chances don't last forever.

Appeal

If you have means, count it as a chance for you to support God's work. The opportunity to support God's work with our means will not last forever. As we give today, and continue to give, let us take those opportunities to advance God's cause.



OPPORTUNITIES LOST MAY NEVER PRESENT THEMSELVES AGAIN

Opportunities do not last forever. There is a saying about opportunities: "Opportunities lost may never present themselves again." If we fail to utilize present opportunities, we have no guarantee that we shall have the same opportunities in the future.

Words left unspoken today may never be spoken tomorrow. Those we fail to reach today may never be reached tomorrow. Those we fail to preach to today may persecute us tomorrow. The opportunity to give, if neglected, may not come around again tomorrow. And even if it does, it may not achieve what it could have achieved today.

IF WE FAIL TO UTILIZE
PRESENT OPPORTUNITIES,
WE HAVE NO GUARANTEE
THAT WE SHALL HAVE THE
SAME OPPORTUNITIES IN
THE FUTURE.

"Make good use of every opportunity you have, because these are evil days."

-Ephesians 5:16, GNT

Appeal

I ask you, therefore, to make good use of every opportunity presented to give to the cause of God because, these opportunities we have today may not be there tomorrow. Return your tithe and Promise offerings with a prayerful heart and a confident spirit, knowing that someone, somewhere, will meet God through your giving.



THE PASTOR DELAYED

"I will hasten and not delay to obey your commands."

-Psalm 119:60, NIV



One pastor was assigned to conduct an evangelistic campaign in a certain town. The following day, while walking in the town, he unexpectedly met an old classmate whom he had not seen in years. Both were happy to meet after such a long time.

The friend inquired about the reason for his visit. The pastor explained that he was conducting a pre-campaign in preparation for the public campaign scheduled in three months' time. The friend was very excited by the news and pledged to be the first person to be baptized during the upcoming campaign.

The friend's enthusiasm convinced the pastor that his friend would have accepted an immediate invitation to give his life to Jesus. The pastor considered inviting his friend to church the next day, but he refrained from doing it, comforting himself that he would do so in three months' time. They parted ways, hopeful to reunite in three months.

Exactly three months later, the pastor arrived, feeling optimistic by the thought that he already had one precious soul ready for baptism. It was rare to start a public campaign with someone already committed to baptism. The pastor took this as a promising sign of a bumper harvest; surely, there would be many conversions after three weeks.

On the morning of the first meeting, the district pastor and the speaker went to the meeting site. Upon arrival, the speaker noticed a tent mounted about a hundred meters away. Assuming it was for a funeral, the speaker inquired about who had died. The pastor shared the name of the deceased. It was the speaker's friend who had promised to be baptized at that very meeting.

The speaker was very sad. He regretted that he delayed in inviting his friend to accept Jesus.

Appeal

We, too, can delay in reaching people. Let us give now while we can reach others with the message of God. Tomorrow, some of the people we could have reached will be beyond the reach of mercy.

OFFERINGS SHOW MY LOVE FOR PEOPLE

"I will pay my vows to the LORD now in the presence of all His people, in the courts of the LORD's house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem."

-Psalm 116:18, 19



Jesus gave the two greatest commandments in Matthew 22:36–40. The second greatest commandment reads, "Love your neighbor as yourself." We show love for our neighbors in several ways. One of the ways to show our love for them is by being there for them when they are going through difficult life challenges—visiting them in the hospital when they are sick, or giving them a helping hand when they are in need.

OUR LOVE FOR OUR NEIGHBORS SHOULD NOT ONLY MANIFEST IN MEETING THEIR PHYSICAL NEEDS; WE SHOULD ALSO INVEST IN THEIR SALVATION.

Ellen G. White indicates another means for us to show our love for others. She writes, "The more we invest in the cause of God to aid in the salvation of souls, the closer to our hearts will they be brought" (*Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, p. 405*).

Our love for our neighbors should not only manifest in meeting their physical needs; we should also invest in their salvation. When we return our tithe and offerings, we're investing in God's work. By giving to the cause of God, our hearts will be drawn closer to the men, women, boys, and girls for whom Jesus died. As stated by Ellen G. White, "If you love God supremely, and your neighbor as yourself, we believe you will give tangible proofs of the same in freewill offerings for our mission work" (*The Review and Herald, January 8, 1889*).

Appeal

I invite you to show your love for God and your neighbors by giving liberally for the salvation of your brothers and sisters who are in search of the truth.

A NOTORIOUS STUDENT IS BAPTIZED

“For with God nothing will be impossible.”

—Luke 1:37



While Mundia was pursuing his BA degree in Theology at Solusi University in Zimbabwe, the late Dr. Cornelius Matandiko, a renowned evangelist and church leader, conducted a week of spiritual emphasis on campus. Mundia, accompanied by his wife, and their two young boys, sat in the back row of the church, a place reserved for parents with children.

OUR SCHOOLS PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN INTRODUCING YOUNG PEOPLE TO JESUS.

Each evening, as they sat in church listening to the captivating message, there was a young man in front of them who consistently talked and laughed with his companions. Mundia realized that unless the young man changed his behavior, many people, including himself, would not benefit from the messages preached. This prompted Mundia to start praying for this young man. However, it seemed that the more he prayed, the more the young man intensified his disruptive behavior.

Before the week ended, during Dr. Matandiko's appeal for attendees to accept Jesus through baptism, Mundia was surprised to see the troublesome young man stand up and walk to the front. Mundia wondered whether the young man was serious. The following day, the young man returned to his usual seat, but this time, he behaved differently. He sat quietly, listened attentively, and was one of the many who got baptized.

Our schools play a crucial role in introducing young people to Jesus. We need these schools everywhere, but establishing them requires substantial financial resources.

Appeal

May we continue to generously give our percentage-based offerings—the Promise offerings—so that many more young people who come to study in our schools learn of Jesus Christ.

BECAUSE OF WHAT LIES AHEAD

“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

—Isaiah 53:5, 6



One of the chapters of the Bible that depicts the work of Jesus is Isaiah 53. He is depicted as a suffering servant. The question is, what is it that made our Lord and Savior endure all that He went through with no murmuring? In *The Acts of the Apostles* we read,

“What sustained the Son of God during His life of toil and sacrifice? He saw the results of the travail of His soul and was satisfied. Looking into eternity, He beheld the happiness of those who through His humiliation had received pardon and everlasting life. His ear caught the shout of the redeemed. He heard the ransomed ones singing the song of Moses and the Lamb” (Ellen G. White, p. 601).

“WHAT SUSTAINED THE SON OF GOD DURING HIS LIFE OF TOIL AND SACRIFICE? HE SAW THE RESULTS OF THE TRAVAIL OF HIS SOUL AND WAS SATISFIED” (ELLEN G. WHITE).

The joy of seeing the salvation of those for whom He suffered motivated our Lord and our Example to endure all He went through. Brothers and sisters, in anticipation, He heard your shout of victory. He heard you and me singing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

Following our Master’s example, let us endure hardships and sacrificially give to the cause of God for the sake of those who will be saved by our acts of generosity. There is joy awaiting us when we reach our heavenly home. Imagine the shout of someone saved because of your giving. Picture someone singing the song of Moses and the Lamb because you faithfully returned tithe and offerings.

Appeal

Let us give with the future in mind. When Christ is at the center of all we do, we can rejoice, knowing that our giving is making a difference.



GIVING CONNECTS

“Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.”

—Genesis 28:12



Giving holds significant importance in our lives. When people exchange gifts, something profound happens which isn't necessarily visible to the eye. It develops a bond between the two, drawing them closer to each other.

When God gave His only Son to this earth, something happened between heaven and earth. Perhaps you are familiar with the story

BY GOD GIVING US JESUS, HE WAS CONNECTING HEAVEN WITH EARTH. HE WAS CONNECTING US WITH HIMSELF.

of Jacob fleeing from the wrath of his brother and how he dreamed of the ladder extending from heaven to earth. This ladder represents Jesus. Ellen G. White wrote in *The Acts of the Apostles* that “this man of faith beholds the ladder of Jacob's vision, representing Christ, who has *connected* earth with heaven” (p. 512, emphasis added).

By God giving us Jesus, He was connecting heaven with earth. He was connecting us with Himself. We can rightly say that a gift connects people. This is what happens when we give our Promise offerings (systematic offerings). We forge a connection with God. Moreover, we also create a network of connection with those people who benefit from our offerings.

Appeal

As we give today and in the future to support God's work, let us remember what the Promise offerings (regular and systematic giving) accomplish—they connect us with God and to those He sent His Son to redeem.

GIVE—EVEN IF IT IS TOO MUCH

“But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.”

—Luke 12:48

When Fabian (not his real name) was doing his final high school class in Zambia, his brother sent him money for the examination fee. Upon counting, Fabian realized it was almost twice the required examination fees. When he saw that, he began to wrestle with the idea of giving tithe and an offering equivalent to tithe—meaning another ten percent. This was a challenging decision for a poor young student. After much thought, he decided to return tithe and give another ten percent as offerings.

While he was counting the tithe and offerings, his friends arrived and inquired where he was taking the money he just put in an envelope. He explained that his tithe and offerings were given to God.

His friends laughed and told him in no uncertain terms that the amount was too much. One of them said, “Why can’t you give a small fraction of it? God knows that you are a student and need money. When you’ll begin to work, then you can give God more money, not now. Keep some of the money for yourself.”

Fabian calmly told his friends that what he was giving to God was insignificant compared to what God gave Him in the person of His Son Jesus. The following day, he took that money to church.

Appeal

Brothers and sisters, as we return our tithe and offerings, let us remember what God gave to save us. Nothing should be considered too much to be given to God.





GOD REWARDS FAITHFULNESS

"But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more."

-Luke 12:48

Fabian's friends tried to dissuade him from giving. One of them said, "Why can't you give a small fraction of it? God knows that you are a student and need money. When you begin to work, then you can give God more money, not now. Keep some of the money for yourself." Fabian disagreed and joyfully took the money to church the following day.

Unfortunately, Fabian fell ill shortly afterward and was rushed to the hospital on a stretcher by his friends. Upon examination, the medical personnel could not identify the cause of his suffering. As Fabian was being examined, the doctor explained that he was probably suffering from examination stress. Given Fabian's academic record as an A student, this explanation did not sound plausible to his friends.

Fabian continued to struggle with the illness, often unable to study due to the pain. At times, he even contemplated giving up studying, convinced that he might die before taking the examination or before the results were available. Despite these challenges, he continued attending school whenever his health allowed, studying during those intervals when the pain subsided.

When exam time arrived, Fabian was surprised to find that the questions came from the areas he had focused on in his studies. As a result, he passed with flying colors and was among the top students in his class who were accepted at the only university in his country. God repaid his faithfulness. He did not pay him back in monetary form, but made it possible for him to succeed academically.

Appeal

God rewards faithfulness. He will never forget our faithful acts. The reward may be delayed and probably not received in this life, but it will surely be given. Let us therefore give cheerfully our tithe and offerings, knowing that God rewards faithfulness.



A SURPRISE I CAN'T EXPLAIN

*“Whoever is kind to the poor
lends to the Lord, and he will
reward them for what they
have done.”*

–Proverbs 19:7, NIV

One businesswoman shared her challenges with getting debtors to repay her. She expressed frustration when people who genuinely needed help came asking for assistance but then failed to pay her back.

However, something surprised her. Whenever somebody needy came by and she helped that person, debtors who had defaulted many times, some whom she had even forgotten, paid her back without her asking for them to do so. This has happened several times, and she says, “It is a surprise I can’t explain.”

From her experience, she testifies that God loves the poor and is happy when those with means to help them do so. God keeps His word that “whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward them for what they have done” (Proverbs 19:7, NIV). The businesswoman learned that by caring for the poor, God helped her by convicting her debtors to pay back what they owed her.

Appeal

Let us remember the poor, and God will bless us. Remember, what we do for others may not seem like much, but our “little” becomes much and the source of blessings for others. The Lord is so good. Little is much when God is in it.



GOD FIRST IN ALL SITUATIONS

"A soft answer turns away
wrath, but a harsh word stirs
up anger."

-Proverbs 15:1



Kudakwashe Chipatiso is a businessman who is soft spoken. One day as he was on his business errands, he stopped at a gas station to add air in one of his tires. Unfortunately, another motorist who had arrived earlier had parked improperly, leaving Kudakwashe with no choice but to park in front of this individual.

When the man came out of the shop, he was unhappy with Kudakwashe's parking and began shouting, hurling unkind words at him. Despite this, Kudakwashe remained composed, offering a smile and a greeting as he promptly moved his car.

As Kudakwashe drove away, the man drove close to him, bombarding him with questions: "How were you able to remain calm and even greet me when I was trying to provoke you? Why didn't you answer back? If you had said a word, something bad might have happened to you."

Kudakwashe replied with a smile, saying, "I am a Christian who fears God. What you observed wasn't forced; that's simply who I am." Kudakwashe went on to talk about God and how God wanted him to change so that he, too, could treat others well. This prompted the man to open up and share with Kudakwashe the challenging situation he was going through. Kudakwashe promised to pray for him and assured the man that God would see him through any challenges he faced.

Kudakwashe chose to put God first in his interactions with the man. When asked how he remained calm under serious provocation, Kudakwashe attributed that to God.

Appeal

When we choose to put God first in our everyday lives, it becomes natural to put God first in whatever He blesses us with. Returning tithe and offerings will be easy when God holds the first place in our lives. Why not put Him first today?



GOD HAS OUR INTERESTS AT HEART

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’”

—Jeremiah 29:11, NIV

Pastor Shangala, the Stewardship Director for the Southern Zambia Union Conference, recounts a story of a family's response to his teachings on tithing. The family, filled with excitement, made a decision to give tithe and offerings to the Lord from their cattle. The day came for the counting of the tithe animals. Almost everyone from the community came to witness how the tithing of animals was done.

An interesting incident happened on this occasion. A few days earlier, the couple had purchased two Brahman bulls. They were so big that they became tourist attractions to the community. When the counting started, the family became worried that their cherished bulls might end up as tithe.

As they feared, the two bulls followed each other to the counting for tithe and offerings. The family realized that their bulls might be designated as tithe and offerings; anxiously, the couple quickly went behind the crowd to avoid witnessing the outcome. But as the bulls were about to be counted as tithe and offerings, they went back into the kraal due to the noise the young bulls were making. This allowed other bulls to pass as tithe and offerings. The couple recognized this as a sign that God had their interests at heart.

Appeal

As we return tithe and give Promise offerings, let us not fear that we shall suffer loss because God has our interests at heart.



WHAT DOES GOD KNOW ABOUT YOU?

“And He said, ‘Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now, I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.’”

—Genesis 22:12

Abraham faced a daunting test that many pray they'll never have to endure. He was asked to do something that would break both his heart and that of his wife Sarah. Despite the immense pain it would cause, Abraham was willing to execute what he was told to do.

This verse teaches us two important lessons.

Today, we'll focus on

one of them, and we'll explore the other in the next offertory reading. Abraham demonstrated his fear for God by what he did—he obeyed Him. God told him to sacrifice his son, and he obeyed Him. He did not make excuses or remind God that he was his “only son,” the promised son.

Obedience to God's commands is one trait of people who fear Him. One of God's directives is recorded in Malachi 3:10: “Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house.” Like Abraham, we, too, should demonstrate our fear of God by faithfully bringing “all the tithes into the storehouse.”

OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S
COMMANDS IS ONE TRAIT OF
PEOPLE WHO FEAR HIM.



Appeal

The call to give provides an opportunity to demonstrate our obedience to God's commands. Let us show our fear of God by obeying the directive to bring tithe and offerings to the storehouse. Just as Abraham obeyed God's directive, and God said, “Now I know that you fear Me.” So, the question stands, what do my actions reveal to God concerning my commitment to serve Him?

THE DAY HEAVEN CHEERED

“And He said, ‘Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.’”

—Genesis 22:12



In our previous offertory reading, we discussed how obedience to God's directives is a trait of those who fear God. Today, we are considering the second lesson from Genesis 22:12. Abraham did not withhold his son from God. From Abraham's example, we learn that those who fear God will not withhold anything back from Him. They won't only give when it pleases them; they'll count nothing too dear, too costly, or too precious to give to God.

THEY WON'T ONLY GIVE WHEN IT PLEASES THEM; THEY'LL COUNT NOTHING TOO DEAR, TOO COSTLY, OR TOO PRECIOUS TO GIVE TO GOD.

When Abraham successfully passed the test by yielding his son as an offering, it didn't go unnoticed by God and all of heaven. Ellen G. White eloquently describes this moment: “All heaven beheld with wonder and admiration Abraham's unflinching obedience. All heaven applauded his fidelity” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 155).

Heaven erupted in celebration as Abraham demonstrated his obedience. In modern terms, we might say that heaven cheered and gave father Abraham a standing ovation. It was a moment of jubilation as Abraham presented his offering of Isaac.

The devil may try to discourage us from obeying God and from giving faithfully and generously. However, it's crucial to remember that both God and all of heaven are watching our choices—whether we will listen to God's voice or to the devil. When we listen to the devil, heaven is sad. Yet, like Abraham, when we obey God and withhold nothing back from Him, heaven resounds with joy as it cheers us on.

Appeal

My prayer is that as we give tithe and offerings, our actions will bring joy to heaven as we obediently give our best to God.

GIVING EVEN WHEN YOU DON'T FEEL LIKE GIVING

"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."

-Galatians 6:9

Malume lived in a town in the Western Province of Zambia, where there is plenty of fish. He particularly liked the Zambezi River red-breasted bream. This fish was a delicacy to him. However, a frustrating pattern emerged: Whenever he purchased this prized fish, unexpected visitors would come, inevitably leading to the sharing of his cherished meal. This recurring scenario caused him considerable distress.

One day he bought a large, red-breasted bream, and meticulously fried it using its own oil. Anticipating the pleasure of savoring his meal, Malume eagerly approached the table. As he was about to indulge, he heard a knock on the door. He hesitated for a moment, torn between the dilemma of whether to share his meal with the unexpected visitor, or pretend he did not hear the knock and continue eating.

Finally, he reluctantly went to the door and welcomed the visitor inside, where they shared the meal together. These lunchtime visitors continued coming. However, Malume soon discovered that as he continued to share his meals with people, his discomfort lessened. Eventually, he found that he couldn't fully enjoy eating a meal unless he was sharing it with someone else.

Appeal

Like Malume, we should not wait until we feel happy to start giving. Such a time may never come. Instead, it's through continuous acts of giving that we overcome our selfishness that often brings us discomfort. Remember that giving brings more blessings than receiving (Acts 20:35).



GOD NEVER DISAPPOINTS

*“For the Scripture says,
‘Whoever believes on Him will
not be put to shame.’”*

—Romans 10:11



It was a time of camp meetings in Zambia, and Pastor Mundia was assigned to speak at the Lwimba camp meeting, a few kilometers from Lusaka, the capital city. Every afternoon, Pastor Mundia found time to chat with young boys and girls who enjoyed his stories.

One afternoon, Freddy, a fifth-grade boy, approached Pastor Mundia and shared his testimony. Freddy revealed that when he was in third grade, he consistently ranked last in his class, failing while everyone else passed. He contemplated quitting school altogether because he felt embarrassed. Then an idea came to his mind: Why not tell God about his struggles?

After that thought, the boy knelt to pray, saying, “God, You know my struggles with subjects. My friends pass while I fail, and they always laughing at me. Help me to pass too. I have much trust in You. If You can help those who don’t know You to pass, what about me who trusts in You? Please, God, I want to pass from now on. Amen.”

After this pep talk with God, Freddy studied with renewed determination. A few weeks later, during a class test, Freddy was surprised when the teacher announced that he was number one in the class. From that memorable day, Freddy has consistently held the number one position in class, and he thanks God very much for transforming him into a high achiever.

Appeal

Brothers and sisters, the Bible says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame” (Romans 10:11). Give and trust that God will bless and meet all your needs.



DO WHATEVER HE TELLS YOU

"His mother said to the servants, 'Whatever He says to you, do it.'"

-John 2:5

A story is told of a woman who listened to a pastor preach on returning tithe and giving offerings. She was touched because she realized that she hadn't returned tithe nor given offerings for years. However, she could not see herself surviving on what would remain of her modest salary after returning tithe and giving offerings. She convinced herself that God would understand her situation.

The following Sabbath, the same pastor preached on John 2:5, which reads, "His mother said to the servants, 'Whatever He says to you, do it.'" The woman did not fully understand the sermon, but the words of the verse persisted in her thoughts. Despite her attempts to ignore them, the words kept on resounding, "Whatever He says to you, do it."

Feeling unable to escape, she confronted her fears by questioning herself. She reasoned, "*I follow the instructions from my lecturers; I do what my dietitian's advice; I obey what my physician orders. If I do what human beings say, why should I hesitate to do what God commands me to do?*"

She prayed and asked God to forgive her unbelief. Then she started to faithfully return tithe and give offerings. After a few months of consistent practice, she reflected that the blessings she received outweighed what she had given to God. She regretted her initial unwillingness to do whatever God had told her to do—to be a faithful steward.

Appeal

Regardless of your circumstances, do whatever He says to you. Return the tithe and generously give your Promise offerings, the percentage-based offerings.





“THUG” BROTHER

“When a man’s ways please
the Lord, He makes even his
enemies to be at peace with
him.”

—Proverbs 16:7



One day, Dexter went to pay for an item at the store, only to discover that his wallet was not in his pocket. He retraced his steps to his van. Two men were seated on the concrete pavement where he had parked it. One of them appeared to be a dignified gentleman, while the other looked like a hard-core “thug.” Dexter knew that if the wallet had fallen where he parked the van, there was no way he would find it with the thug around. How could he ask him if he had seen the wallet without making him angry?

AS YOU DECIDE ABOUT YOUR
GIVING, THINK OF WHAT GOD
HAS DONE FOR YOU.

Dexter came near his van and found the two men in a heated argument. The aggressor was the “thug.” He was confronting the “gentleman.” In a firm voice, he asked the “gentleman” why he had picked up somebody’s wallet without following him to the shop to hand it over. Dexter did not know what to do. For a minute or so he kept quiet while the two exchanged words, and it was becoming serious. The “gentleman” asked the “thug” why he was bothered. The “thug” replied, “He is my brother. You cannot take his wallet while I am here.”

When Dexter heard those words, he gained courage and said, “He is right. Give me my wallet.” The “gentleman” reluctantly gave him his wallet with everything intact. Probably he, like Dexter, was afraid of the “thug.”

Dexter returned to the shop to pay for the item, and afterward he withdrew some money from the ATM to give to the “thug” brother as a token of appreciation. The “thug” brother was very happy to receive a token of appreciation from his brother. But Dexter was a little bit sad that he did not have much money to give his “thug” brother for what he had done for him.

Appeal

The psalmist asked a question: “What shall I render to the LORD for all His benefits toward me?” (Psalm 116:12). As you decide about your giving, think of what God has done for you. Maybe you have nothing to give today, but commit to give to the God who has done so much for you, the next time you earn money.

I WILL GIVE IT A TRY

“And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God’s house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.”

—Genesis 28:22



Daka, a farmer, struggled to produce enough crops to sustain his family, let alone generate surplus for sale. Despite his best efforts every year, he was disappointed during harvesttime. He was not a happy man. Unsure of how to improve his produce, he found himself at a loss.

One day a friend invited Daka to church. There he learned about the God who blesses those who follow His instructions. At first Daka was skeptical; he didn’t think that it was worth trying. However, considering his ongoing frustrations with his yield, he decided to give it a try. He quietly knelt and prayed as best as he could. In his prayer he told God that if He would indeed bless him as the preacher had suggested, then he would return tithe.

Daka diligently ploughed and planted his field, following the same routine as in previous years. The rainfall was good and the crop was doing very well. Whenever he visited his field, his usual concern was to assess the progress of his crop, much like the previous years. Yet, to his amazement, each time he inspected it, the crop looked better than he left it on his previous visit.

When harvesttime came, Daka was astounded that his yield exceeded five times what he harvested the previous year. Instantly, he recognized that God was testing him to see if he would be faithful to his promise. Encouraged by this abundant harvest, he called the preacher who spoke about God’s blessing for those who follow His instructions. He invited him to come and witness firsthand how God had blessed him. The preacher came, and together they counted tithe and offerings from the harvest.

Appeal

Daka kept his word to return tithe on the blessings God gave him. May we also honor our word and the vow we made when we got baptized to be faithful in supporting God’s cause through tithe and offerings.

MAY GOD COUNT ON YOU?

“But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow.”

—Luke 4:25, 26

These words spoken by our Lord Jesus are crucial for us who live in the end time and are entrusted with unique truth. Though many widows, businesspeople, couples, and single men in Israel could have taken care of Elijah, God chose not to send His servant to any of them. Instead, he bypassed them to accomplish His mission.

HE HAS GIVEN US THE
MEANS TO SPREAD THIS
TRUTH FAR AND WIDE.

God has committed to us a truth that many people are unaware of and do not fully understand. He has given us the means to spread this truth far and wide. If we fail to support the dissemination of this truth, God will bypass us and use unexpected individuals to finish His work. This brings to mind a song that a group sang some years back. One line from the song went, “May God count on you.”

Appeal

When others are proving unfaithful, may God count on you. When others fail to support God’s work through tithe and Promise offerings (percentage-based offerings), may God count on you. As we give tithe and offerings, we say “God, you can count on me.”



GRATITUDE AND LOVE DETERMINE WHAT WE GIVE

“And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured it on His head. But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, ‘Why was this fragrant oil wasted? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.’ And they criticized her sharply.”

—Mark 14:3-5

This passage and the words of Jesus that follow highlight the actions of this woman. We can draw three lessons from this story, and the first one is on the gift itself.

The Bible describes the woman’s gift as “very costly oil of spikenard.” Such a generous gift indicates careful consideration; it wasn’t a spontaneous decision. The woman demonstrated love

HER LOVE AND APPRECIATION FOUND EXPRESSION IN HER BEST POSSESSION—“VERY COSTLY OIL OF SPIKENARD.”

and gratitude towards her Lord for what He had done for her. Her love and appreciation found expression in her best possession—“very costly oil of spikenard.”

Only she truly knew how much she loved Jesus. Only she truly knew the extent of her gratitude to the Lord. No one else can understand the depth of your love for Jesus. No one else knows how much you are grateful to God for what He has done in your life. Our love and gratitude toward Jesus should find expression in the offerings we bring to Him.

She gave the best she had as a demonstration of her love and gratitude to God. What is the measure of your gratitude and love for God? The offerings we present indicate how much we love Jesus and how much we are grateful for what He has done for us.

Appeal

As we give today and in the future, let us remember to fully express our love and gratitude to God by the offerings we give.



WAS IT A WASTE?

"And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured it on His head. But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, 'Why was this fragrant oil wasted? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.' And they criticized her sharply.

-Mark 14:3-5

Mary gave the "very costly oil of spikenard" to Jesus to express her gratitude and love for Him. Let us now consider how the apostles' viewed Mary's gift.

The apostles summed up Mary's gift in one word: "waste."

Without delving into their motives, the truth remains that some people think that giving to God's cause is indeed

WHAT WOULD BE THE IMPACT OF THE GOSPEL MESSAGE IF EVERYONE GAVE AS MARY DID?

a waste. These individuals may sometimes donate huge sums to other causes they deem worthy, but when it comes to God's cause, they only give a pittance because they consider it a waste of resources.

Consider the impact of the gospel message if everyone gave as Mary did. Wouldn't we have taken the gospel to every corner of the world by now? Unfortunately, because some think giving to God is a waste, God's work suffers and is not moving as fast as it should.

There is no better place to put our resources than in supporting God's cause. When we give towards God's cause, we are laying up treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:19-21). This means we are not only supporting God's cause on earth, allowing many people to hear of God's love and His wonderful gift to humanity in the person of His Son, but we're also storing treasures for ourselves in heaven.

Appeal

May God bless us as we continue supporting God's cause and laying up treasures in heaven.

DON'T LISTEN TO SOME VOICES

"And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured it on His head. But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, 'Why was this fragrant oil wasted? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.' And they criticized her sharply. But Jesus said, 'Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me.'"

-Mark 14:3-6

Those who did not give assessed Mary's gift and concluded it was a waste. However, the truth is, when we give, we help to spread the gospel and lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven. Let us closely consider the reaction of those we expected to encourage Mary, and note Jesus's response. Instead of offering encouragement, the witnesses trashed her giving as a waste and "they criticized her sharply." Sometimes, our gifts to God may not receive the encouragement we hope for from our brothers and sisters; instead, we might face criticism. Rather than offering praise to God, some will be unhappy.

Amidst these criticisms, Jesus interposed, saying, "Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me" (Mark 14:6). Don't be discouraged. Jesus is affirming all who give to His cause, saying, "You are doing a good work." Let nothing stop you from giving to God's cause. Very soon, when Jesus comes you will hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:23).

SOMETIMES OUR GIFTS TO GOD MAY NOT RECEIVE THE ENCOURAGEMENT WE HOPE FOR FROM OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS; INSTEAD, WE MIGHT FACE CRITICISM.

Appeal

Let us give generously today. If you don't have something to give at this moment, plan for an upcoming Sabbath, either next week or a later time, because giving is doing a good work.





IT COULD HAVE BEEN YOU OR ME

“God has rescued us from the power of darkness and has brought us into the kingdom of his Son, whom he loves.”

-Colossians 1:13



Pastor J. M. Sitwala pointed at a man lying on the side of the road and exclaimed to the young intern pastor traveling with him, “It could have been you or me lying there.” Pastor Sitwala, who served as the baptizing minister for the district of the young pastor, which included 72 congregations, comprising both churches and companies, shared this observation as they were en route to one of the baptism sites. Seeing the man with beer cans by the roadside, Pastor Sitwala reflected that were it not for the grace of God, they could have found themselves in a similar situation.

That experience made the young pastor realize that so many people worldwide are in similar situations. Witnessing such distressing scenes should always instill a sense of gratitude towards God for saving us from such predicaments. But much more, it should inspire us to reach out to these people with the message that has made us who we are today. While we can minister to some of these people within our local communities, some are far away from us and can only be reached through alternative means such as the media, electronic or print. However, using these platforms and others requires some financial resources.

Appeal

Giving tithe and offerings is one means of reaching people for Christ. As we give the Lord our tithe and offerings, let us remember that we might have been one who is still unreached by the gospel of salvation.

LET THAT SPIRIT COME BACK

"They begged us and pleaded for the privilege of having a part in helping God's people in Judea."

-2 Corinthians 8:4, GNT



Paul mentions that the Macedonian believers were not well-to-do people. They were poor. But despite that situation, they wanted to participate in giving to assist their brothers and sisters in Jerusalem.

In this story, what stands out is that believers begged and pleaded for the privilege to give. This is not

**WHAT WOULD THE
MACEDONIANS DO IF THEY
WERE ALIVE TODAY?**

something common today. Once a person asked, "Pastor, are there still people like the Macedonians, who beg and plead with their pastors or fellow believers for the privilege to give?" The pastor answered and said there were. The person insisted that since he joined the church, he had never encountered somebody doing that.

If the Macedonians begged and pleaded with Paul to be allowed to give because of the dire situation they heard their brothers and sisters in Jerusalem were facing, shouldn't we also be inspired by the same spirit? Today, we have brothers and sisters in various parts of the world who are dying without hearing about Jesus. We are constantly exposed to news of people affected by climate change, conflict, and other myriad crises. How do we respond to such a situation? What would the Macedonians do, if they were alive today?

May we pray for the revival of the Macedonian spirit, to inspire us to help our less fortunate brothers and sisters generously. Let that spirit come so that we give toward finishing God's work and can go home.

Appeal

As we give tithe and offerings, I ask each one of us to pray to have the spirit of the Macedonians.



THE SECRET OF THE MACEDONIAN GIVING

“And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.”

-2 Corinthians 8:5

In our previous reading, we discovered how the Macedonians begged and pleaded with Paul to enjoy the privilege of participating in giving. We also learned that these believers were not rich but poor. While many would use their lack of resources as an excuse for not giving, these believers didn't allow poverty to hinder their generosity.

GIVING ONESELF TO THE LORD IS THE SECRET FORMULA FOR GIVING GENEROUSLY.

What is it that is standing in your way of giving? Is it poverty, low income, debt, or perhaps there's no specific reason? Regardless of what could be standing in our way, we can learn from the generosity of the Macedonian church.

The secret of the Macedonians was giving themselves first to the Lord. Giving oneself to the Lord is the secret formula for giving generously. The poor and rich cannot reach the Macedonian standard without surrendering themselves to the Lord first. True giving does not start with what we have. It does not start with our wallets or pockets. It begins with a heart dedicated to the Lord.



Appeal

As we participate in returning tithe and giving generous Promise offerings (regular and systematic offerings), let us ensure that we have given our hearts to Jesus.

THE GRACE WE SHOULD ALL ABOUND IN

"But as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—see that you abound in this grace also."

-2 Corinthians 8:7

Paul advised the Corinthian church that as they abounded in faith, speech, knowledge, diligence, and love for him and his team, they were to ensure that they did not lack the grace of giving.

Giving doesn't happen naturally for us. Perhaps this is why Jesus said in Acts 20:35, "It is more

**GIVING DOESN'T HAPPEN
NATURALLY FOR US.**

blessed to give than to receive." Someone once mentioned that he would die without hearing somebody say, "I am blessed because my once full living room is now half empty due to my giving to the needy." On the other hand, he cannot count how many times he has heard people say they are blessed because they return with someone giving them something whenever they leave their house.

In order to fulfill the mandate of taking the gospel everywhere and helping the less privileged in our communities, we should pray for the grace of giving. God is not asking us to stop what we are good at; rather, He asks us to add the grace of giving into whatever we already excel at. Whether you're a preacher, a singer, hospitable, merciful, or possess leadership abilities, ensure you abound in the grace of giving.

Appeal

As we serve using God's given talents and gifts, let us also incorporate the grace of giving into our Christian journey.



DON'T WORRY

"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things."

-Matthew 6:31, 32

We are a generation of worriers. We worry about our children's safety at school. We worry about them when they go to bed. We worry about the society our children will grow up in. We worry about what we will eat, drink, and put on. And we worry about the future.

Like Jesus's audience, we, too, need constant reassurance of His

words: "Your heavenly Father knows you that you need all these things" (Matthew 6:32). God knows our need for food, for clean drinking water, for shelter, and for clothing.

God's care for us is so profound that He has made our personal needs His own responsibility. Since He understands our needs, let us joyfully give Him what is His, trusting that He will take care of our needs. It is not in withholding that our needs will be met.

HE HAS MADE OUR
PERSONAL NEEDS HIS OWN
RESPONSIBILITY.

Appeal

As we give, God promises to give back to us even more than we have given to Him. Therefore, let us give to Him today, knowing that He will ensure that our needs are met.



THE DAY LUNCH WAS DELAYED

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

—Matthew 24:14



One morning during my seventh-grade year, I woke up to find my sister-in-law busy preparing our lunch. The ingredients she was using left no doubt about what lunch would be. That morning, before going to school, there was no breakfast.

As I left home, I eagerly anticipated returning for lunch. Throughout the morning, I frequently checked the wall clock, counting down the hours until lunchtime. However, to my disappointment, time seemed to not move. It felt like the longest day I had ever experienced.

After what appeared to be days of waiting, the bell finally rang. It was time for lunch. I quickly grabbed my books and headed straight to the door, when my teacher called out, “Liywalii, sit down!” Sheepishly, I complied. Before I could settle the hunger pangs, the teacher reached for the chalk box and headed to the board. He wrote five mathematics problems and said, “You get them right, and you can go to lunch.” Motivated by the delicious meal awaiting me, I quickly pulled out my book and stood before the teacher, ready to fulfill the assignments.

You could see how elated I was as he marked questions 1 through 4 as correct. Unfortunately, he put a cross on number 5. I returned to the board to make corrections, but I got it wrong again. That day, I was delayed going for lunch not because lunch was not ready, but because the assignment given was not yet completed.

Appeal

My brothers and sisters, it has been over 2,000 years since Jesus promised His return. The delay is not due to unprepared mansions, but because the assignment He gave us is still unfinished. Let us work and give to support the spreading of the gospel so that we can go home and delay no more.

I GIVE BECAUSE I AM WORSHIPPING GOD

"He shall see the labor of
His soul, and be satisfied. By
His knowledge My righteous
Servant shall justify many, for
He shall bear their iniquities."

-Isaiah 53:11

When a newborn baby arrives, gifts are given to them. Friends and relatives visit to see this bundle of joy, and they bring something with them. It was the same when Jesus was born. Let us read what the Bible says in Matthew 2:1-11:

"After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.' . . . On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh" (NIV, emphasis added).

The Magi from the East worshiped the Baby King, Jesus, by giving Him gifts. This story teaches us that giving is worship. When we give tithe and offerings, we are worshipping God. Giving cannot be divorced from worship. Even in the Old Testament, worship at the temple involved offering sacrifices to God.

Appeal

Every call to give is a call to worship. Are you worshipping God to the best of your ability through your giving?



I SPENT ALL!

"They said to Him, 'Caesar's.' And He said to them, 'Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.'"

-Matthew 22:21

One afternoon, after the church service, two sisters were driving home for lunch, engaged in a discussion about the preacher's sermon. The elder sister asked her younger sibling if she heard what the preacher said about giving. The younger sister replied that she did.

The elder sister remarked with a smile that she felt sad because she could not give something to God that Sabbath. Surprised by what she said, the younger sister asked why she could not give, especially since she had a well-paying job.

The elder sister responded, "I overspent during the Christmas and New Year's festive season. I will be more careful next time."

To this, the younger sister replied, "I, too, faced the temptation to overspend, but I put aside what belonged to God first, and then managed with what remained. I think that approach helped me a lot."

I PUT ASIDE WHAT BELONGED TO GOD FIRST, AND THEN MANAGED WITH WHAT REMAINED.

Appeal

As we prepare to celebrate Christmas and New Year's, let us carefully plan our expenses to ensure we don't spend what rightfully belongs to God. What we give every week, including during the festive season, helps reach people with the message of love from God. Let us give generously what belongs to God, and remember to celebrate Christmas and New Year's with evangelism in mind.

I CAN'T WAIT TO BE THERE

"Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

-Revelation 21:2



One day a preacher painted such a beautiful picture of life in the new earth that when he finished preaching, one person shouted from the middle of the church, "Pastor, I can't wait to be there."

Some of the verses the pastor quoted are:

- Isaiah 33:24: "And the inhabitant will not say, 'I am sick'; the people who dwell in it will be forgiven their iniquity."
- Isaiah 11:9: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."
- Revelation 21:4: "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

ONLY ONE THING STANDS BETWEEN US AND THE NEW EARTH—FINISHING THE WORK.

In this world, we mourn, suffer, and die. However, once we have finished the task of taking the gospel everywhere, and we are on the new earth, all these hardships will cease. Are we impatient to be there? Only one thing stands between us and the new earth—finishing the work.

Appeal

Let us therefore faithfully return tithe and give generously our percentage-based offerings so that the work may be completed, and we may get to the new earth. I can't wait to be there. How about you?

WHAT IS THE “PROMISE” OFFERING?

“But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”

2 Corinthians 9:6, 7



“Promise” is a name used for regular and systematic offerings (different from spontaneous offerings), in which:

- It is considered as important and binding as tithe (Malachi 3:8–10).
- The system is proportional (percentage-based).
- It is given as a percentage or proportion of the income (Deuteronomy 16:17; 1 Corinthians 16:1).
- The worshipper chooses the percentage of the income that will be regularly given as “Promise” (any percentage is valid).
- The regularity of giving is determined by the regularity of the blessing which is received (the income).
- It should be given after any income (Proverbs 3:9).
- It is not expected when there is no income (2 Corinthians 8:12).
- The worshipper offers it immediately after the tithe, and before any other expense is met or giving is done (Proverbs 3:9; Matthew 6:33).
- Regularity, percentage, and period of validity must be previously “vowed,” “promised,” or “purposed” by the worshipper (2 Corinthians 9:7).

COMPARING TITHE, PROMISE, AND SPECIAL OFFERINGS

“Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.’”

-Malachi 3:8-10

In Malachi 3:8-10, tithes and offerings are clearly placed under the same system. This implicitly suggests at least three similar characteristics for both tithes and offerings: (1) regularity (according to the income), (2) proportionality (a proportion of any income), and (3) delivery (brought to the storehouse).

Ellen G. White also agrees that tithes and offerings are under the same system. She alludes to the fact that this system includes the concept of also giving offerings as a proportion of the income: “In the Bible system [singular word] of tithes and offerings [both under the same system] the amounts paid by different persons will of course vary greatly, since they are proportioned to the income (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 73).

In another quotation, Ellen G. White says that this offering, along with tithe, is not spontaneous or voluntary but is part “of our obligation.” She writes: “This matter of giving is not left to impulse. God has given us definite instruction in regard to it. He has specified tithes and offerings as the measure of our obligation. And He desires us to give regularly and systematically (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 80).

Features/Offerings	Tithe	Promise	Special (Spontaneous) Offering
Regularity	Determined by the frequency of one's income	Determined by the frequency of one's income	It is sporadic.
System	Proportioned to the income	Proportioned to the income	According to the impression of the feeling or heart
Mandatory	Lifelong	Lifelong	Circumstantially (when prompted by the Spirit)
Percentage	Predetermined by God (10%)	Chosen by the worshipper (___%)	N/A
Possibility of Percentage Adjustment	No	Yes	N/A
Delivered to	Storehouse	Storehouse	Place chosen by the worshipper
Final Recipients	Local, regional, and international range	Local, regional, and international range (suggested)	Chosen by the worshipper

THREE OFFERING PLANS

COMBINED OFFERING PLAN

The Combined Offering Plan was voted as the General Conference promoted and recommended offering plan at the Annual Council of 2002 after a recommendation by the World Stewardship Summit of 2001. It supports all levels of the church by putting total funds collected into one pool. The funds are distributed according to a formula approved by each division, but within the following percentages: 50–60% for the local church; 20% to the General Conference for mission funds, and 20–30% for mission work in the local field. Divisions making use of this plan currently include: ECD, ESD,

IAD, NSD, SAD, SID, SPD (Island Fields), SSD, SUD, WAD, MENAUM. Learn more about this plan here: <https://stewardship.adventist.org/combined-offering>.

CALENDAR OF OFFERINGS

In the Calendar of Offerings, the original option, different destinations for offerings are promoted each Sabbath during the worship service following the approved calendar of offerings as voted by the General Conference committee every year. A calendar of the weeks of each year is drawn with certain offerings designated accordingly. About 26 Sabbath offerings are assigned to the local church, and the others are allocated between the other levels of church organization or designations in the local field. All loose offerings (not in marked envelopes) will go to the offering of the day. There are six Special Offerings days for particular ministries. Divisions ascribing to this plan currently include the EUD, Israel Field, SPD, TED.

PERSONAL GIVING PLAN

The Personal Giving Plan organizes the financial needs of the church into three categories (roughly the same three categories covered by the Combined Offering Plan) and offers a suggested percentage of the member's income to be dedicated to them. They are:

- **Local Church Budget** (3–5%), which would include utilities, maintenance, insurance, school operating expenses, children's magazines, teaching supplies, staff salaries, bulletins etc.
- **Conference Advance Budget** (1–2%) for Christian education, local evangelism, Vacation Bible School, summer camps, union magazines, etc.
- **World Budget** (1–3%) to support the global mission needs of the church as promoted in the approved Calendar of Offerings. Sabbath School offerings are received and treated the same way as in the Calendar of Offerings plan. This plan also makes provision for giving toward special projects. The NAD currently ascribes to this plan.

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO THE OFFERTORY DEVOTIONAL VIDEOS



You may watch the videos
using this link: [https://
stewardship.adventist.org/
weekly-offertory-videos](https://stewardship.adventist.org/weekly-offertory-videos)

The Offertory Devotional Readings you have in hand gave origin to the Offertory Devotional Videos. These two-minute educational and motivational videos are planned to be presented every Sabbath in your church, before the offering collection.

You may play or download the two-minute videos (for this and previous years) by using the QR code below. The following are instructions on how to use them:

- The videos are to be presented in church before the offering collection.
- They do not include the appeal or the final prayer, which should be supplied by the person scheduled to promote the offerings.
- The videos may (and should) also be shared through social media or during congresses, youth programs, small group meetings, camp meetings, church boards, Stewardship Weeks of Prayer, etc.
- The videos were recorded in English, but each division or union is permitted to translate them into their various languages or customize them with regional accents.
- The entire video with original soundtrack—no voiceover/no letterings—will also be available, upon request, to divisions and unions at no charge from the General Conference Stewardship Ministries Department.
- Local church pastors and stewardship ministries directors must be informed about the videos and how to download them and share them in their churches, especially before the offering collection.

“MONEY IS AN EXACT INDEX TO A [PERSON'S] TRUE CHARACTER. ALL THROUGH SCRIPTURE THERE IS AN INTIMATE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A [PERSON'S] CHARACTER AND HOW [THEY HANDLE] THEIR MONEY.”

~RICHARD C. HALVERSON



GOD FIRST
FOR THE TRANSFORMED CHURCH