

Ministry Moments

In January of 2006 I began writing a correspondence series titled *Ministry Moments* for the monthly supporters of the Sharing Org. In *Ministry Moments* I highlighted key moments that happened in the ministry and my own reactions to those moments. I've since received so many positive comments concerning that series that I have decided to begin adding it to each newsletter. These *Ministry Moments* that I share are my most personal thoughts about what I've experienced in the previous month. My words are not always flowery or politically correct but they come straight from the heart – the heart that is ever being challenged and changed by our God who seems to surprise me every time I turn around.

December 2007

For the Thanksgiving message this year I explained to the residents that when Jesus took the bread at his last Passover meal he gave thanks (Greek-eulogy) and when he took the cup he gave thanks (Greek-eucharist) - a twofold thanks. I explained how during the Thanksgiving meal we also give a twofold thanks. First we give thanks (eulogy – a blessing or a praise) for all that we have been blessed with and that we also give thanks (eucharist – an obligated thanks) for what He has given us. The residents readily understood that when they go to a wedding they take a gift as a blessing (eulogy) to the bride and groom, and they also understood that a “Thank You” (eucharist) card was expected. The point was that as we celebrated Thanksgiving this year we would do well to remember to give thanks to God in the form of a eulogy – *a praise or blessing* and to give God eucharist – the obligated thanks.

If you are yawning right now imagine yourself as an elderly person, who is on medication that causes sleepiness, trying to stay awake after a Thanksgiving meal. As I was explaining all of this to the residents I imagined that I was boring them to sleep with this *great wealth of original language knowledge*. From the very first of my nine services I knew that this message was a stinker, a lead balloon, nothing short of a boring recital of boredom (If Dr. Seuss were still alive I am sure that he could create some interesting rhyme to adequately explain my epitome of blah). But like-it or lump-it, I was stuck with what I had prepared and *unfortunately* so was everyone else.

My too-detailed explanation of the original language may have been a bit dry but it did allow me to explain the Gospel of Jesus and share with the residents that we are *obligated to give thanks* to God for the salvation that he has given to us through Christ our Lord. One of the things that they teach you in preaching class is that you must be faithful to the Scriptures and allow the Holy Spirit to work through the words that you speak – *both good and bad*. They also taught that we serve a Lord who redeems a broken sinful mankind and that he can redeem a broken and bad sermon too. Well, that is exactly what happened!

At the end of one of the early services, I shook hands with a gentleman who asked to speak with me for a moment. As I listened he stumbled over his words a bit but finally said to me, “In my life I have gone this way and I have gone that way but now I need to go the way of Jesus” and he asked me to pray for him. As I went on to the next service I realized that what I had just experienced was a man who had repented and finally recognized his Savior. It was cool that I had the blessing of being a small part of that – *boring message and all*.

~ John