

Gracious Living (Dave McDonald)

I was introduced to the idea of 'gracious living' by some friends—time out, good friends, laughter, rejoicing, wine and cheese, sunsets and oceans, enjoying the blessings of God.

For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, (1 Timothy 4:4 NIV)

But at church this past weekend I was reminded of another kind of gracious living—the grace of giving generously. I had to pause and think. Do I really know what that means? Not just in theory, but in practice? Have I ever truly given generously? Or do I merely give out my surplus, redistributing what I don't need anyway?

Take a look at how the Apostle Paul describes the Christians in Macedonia:

And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.

(2 Corinthians 8:1-5 NIV)

A close look at these verses challenges me to my core. It turns upside down many of my assumptions and expectations about the grace of God.

1. God gives His grace to His people so that they are able to give to others who are in need. This is the idea of it being more blessed to give than to receive. God does a supernatural, gracious work in the hearts of the Macedonian Christians and this motivates and enables them to give.
2. God's grace works to prevent needy people becoming greedy people. The capacity to give doesn't flow from having more than we need, and then giving the surplus away to appease our guilt. It comes from the joy of knowing that God provides, so that even in their poverty the Macedonians gave to meet the needs of others.
3. Gracious giving is costly. It's sacrificial. It's giving beyond our assumed capacity to give. It is generous, not because of the amount that is given or the percentage that is given, but because it gives away what we would normally keep for ourselves.
4. Gracious giving is taking the initiative to give to the needs of others without prompting, pleading, special marketing campaigns, or end of financial year fund raisers. It's common to give when called upon to do so, but unusual to 'entirely on our own' plead for the privilege of being generous.
5. Gracious giving is giving first of all to God and then to others. And it's way more than money—and nothing less than giving our whole selves.

Have you discovered this grace in your life—the grace that moves you to delight in giving your God-given time, money, and resources to him and to others?

There was an Old Testament pattern of giving called a tithe. I grew up on the idea of a tithe, literally a tenth. So every time I earned money, I would set aside 10% of what I earned and give it to church, or missions, or charity, or child sponsorship, or such like. And I thought I was generous. But it didn't hurt because I still had 90% left to spend on myself. Now I'm all grown up and I know how much more complicated it is. Giving 10% doesn't mean that I have 90% for play money. There are never ending bills and expenses. There are the weekly, monthly, quarterly, yearly costs of groceries, fuel... you name it. And it's so easy to be consumed by these things.

It's a rare thing for me to give beyond my ability. To be honest, I don't know if I ever have. Have you? I'm missing out really—missing out on the gracious living that only comes from God. *Please God, lead me to give cheerfully, generously, graciously. Lead me to consider what I can give and then give more. And lead others who know Your amazing grace to do the same. Amen.*



7 October 2018 | Service Times: 9am & 11:30am

Welcome, we're glad you're here!

We are a church family committed to following Jesus Christ as Lord. We do this by getting to know him through his living Word, the Bible, which is why the sermon is the key part of our Sunday services. Find out more about us at www.slechurch.org.au.

This Week: Isaiah #12— The Songs of the Servant

God's mission to give light and hope to His people, and the world, centre on God's servant who will accomplish God's mission in the most surprising way—through being rejected, beaten, and killed by His own people on behalf of sinners. The right response is to humble yourself and repent, not resist and reject.

Next Week:

Isaiah #13 [Isaiah 56-64]



Today's Service

Welcome and Singing	Behold Our God Glorious Day How Deep the Father's Love
Holy Communion	
Offering	
Community News	
Bible Reading	Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Acts 8:26-35
Sermon	By Pastor Steven Tran
Song of Response	Man of Sorrows

Stay Connected

- facebook.com/slechurch
- slechurch.org.au
- +61 7 3371 7589
- info@slechurch.org.au
- 83 Ryans Road, St Lucia 4067

Check out slechurch.org.au/groups to find a group that you can join.

Say hello

Join us for morning tea at 10:30am.
We'd love to have a chat and get to know you better.

Our Pastors

PASTOR BEN HO

Mobile: +61 433 581 335

Email: ben.ho@slechurch.org.au

PASTOR STEVEN TRAN

Mobile: +61 411 621 159

Email: steven.tran@slechurch.org.au

Financial Update

Last Week	\$3,076.25
Weekly Required	\$5,520
Shortfall 2018	\$0.00

Giving by Electronic Funds Transfer

A/C Name: SLE Church
Bank: National Australia Bank
BSB: 084-424
A/C No: 396558544

SLE Church is a branch church of Chinese Christian Church Brisbane

Prayer Points

GIVE HONOUR AND PRAISE TO OUR GOD, the LORD, besides whom there is no other, the Creator, the Holy One, the first and the last, our only rock and only Saviour.

PRAISE GOD THAT THE FULLNESS of 'goodness' is revealed through Scriptures and especially the gospel as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God in three persons. Together, our Triune God displays wisdom beyond our full comprehension, power and beyond our containment, and salvation secured which none can take away.

PRAY IN LIGHT OF THE RECENT EARTHQUAKE and tsunami in Palu, Indonesia. Pray for those who have lost loved ones and much possessions. Pray for rescue workers to be able to get to survivors to provide urgent and timely help. Pray for the aid international and local aid efforts to reach those in need of it. In the midst of such devastation and loss, pray for hope to be seen and found.

PRAY FOR CHRISTIANS WHO HAVE the true hope of a brokenless and suffering-free future to be lights in the midst of this darkness. Pray to the God of comfort to bring comfort. Pray for those who know and experience the comfort of God to bring comfort to those around them.

Community News

BLOOM #3 – 20 OCT 1:30-4PM

At our last Bloom session for the year, we will gather to hear answers to *your* questions about God's design for woman. The afternoon will include a Q&A session with a panel of speakers, book reviews, and testimonies from women who will share their journey in discovering and living out God's design for women.

Don't miss this opportunity to meet with other women to wrestle and think through how we can live out God's design practically and wholeheartedly in every aspects of life.

MISSION DISCUSSION GROUP

Do you have a heart for cross-cultural mission? Are you interested in being better equipped to serve in, or to support, inter-cultural missions? If so, please give your name and contact details to Elder Mike Husband or to Shaopeng Chen so that we can arrange an initial meeting to organize and ongoing discussion—perhaps once per month. Topics for discussion might include:

- Understanding other cultures and languages
- Understanding short term and long term mission
- Open access and creative access nations
- Understanding mission organization requirements and screening processes
- Supporting missions and missionaries—prayer, finance, practical support
- Possible short term trip opportunities

Serving

	Today	Next Week
Chair	Randy	Mervin
Preach	Ps Steven	Ps Ben
Bible Read	Boon Cheng <i>Alice</i>	TBA <i>Marilyn</i>
M.Tea	YF Fri/Sat YF Fri/Sat	YF Fri/Sat YF Fri/Sat
Wash Up	YF Fri/Sat	YF Fri/Sat
Welcome	Esther Richard Georgie	Esther Richard Georgie
Stewards	Philip Graham <i>Stanley</i> <i>Josh</i> <i>DT</i>	Philip Graham <i>Helen</i> <i>Josh</i> <i>Josiah</i>
Piano	Sylvia	Liesl
Guitar	Dom	Mark
Bass	Chuan Yuan	Aaron
Drums	Marcus	Ivan
Vocal	Shaun	Sarah/Joachim
PA	William <i>Daniel</i>	Matt <i>Jowin</i>

The Songs of the Servant (Isaiah 49-55)

Intro:

1. Songs 1-3 (Isaiah 42:1-4, 49:1-6, 50:5-9)

2. Song of songs (52:13-53:12)

3. Shalom (54:1-55:13)

4. Suffering servant bringing peace by His blood

So what:

God's promises fulfilled—so trust!

Come to Him—to trust!

Take Him to the world—so they will trust!