

**Prestonwood Connection 2004**

**#7 YOU ARE BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING**

**Romans 13:8-14**

Wednesday, October 20, 2004 • Dr. David McKinley

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Blessed to be a blessing, called to give and that's really what we've been talking about now for a number of weeks in this service as we've been talking about the life that you are born to give and we've had a wonderful time in these days as we've talked about this subject, learning about a..., well, some life lessons on stewardship and interestingly enough while I've been involved in a series of messages that we've called the life you are born to give we've yet to have a message or a lesson on money. Heh, everything that we've talked about has had to do with some other aspect of stewardship in life, giving in life and a..., so many times when we think about giving we thing a..., only and exclusively about the subject of money and of course a..., whenever we do talk about that subject, it's a subject that brings a lot of discomfort to people.

A..., a lot of people are uncomfortable talking about it, sort of like a little boy I heard about who was in church for the first time, he was sitting out there with his parents and he was on the end of the row. He was about 5 or 6 years of age. It came to the time in the service where they were gonna take the offering and the ushers got in place and the usher turned around when they said "Amen" after the offertory prayer and just put that big plate right down there in front of him and you know what those offering plates look like they're kinda large and oversized and that little boy looked at that plate and looked up at that usher and he said, "Sir, do you have a child's plate?" Heh! [congregation laughter] I'm afraid a lot of us kinda have that attitude and that thought. You know God a..., if I'm gonna hear about giving I might want a child's plate, this seems to be a really big and a really difficult obligation. But in reality giving is one of the greatest opportunities to express the love that you have for God and the love that you have for others and many people in our church have discovered and are discovering the wonderful joy of giving and discovering what can happen in their lives when they give and live to give their lives and of course so many times when we speak on the subject, the subject of giving what we do is that we talk about principles and precepts and look at passages of Scripture that talk about all of these things, but tonight I wanna talk about giving, but I don't wanna do it just through my voice. I wanna do it through the eyes and the faces and the hearts of people. In reality what I want you to see and what I want you to experience tonight is a message, a message about giving, not so much about the responsibility to give, though we've talked about that and will talk about that, but what I want you to see tonight is what I would call the results of giving. What happens when people begin to understand that the

life they were born to live is the life that they were born to give and God has been doing some wonderful things in the hearts and the lives of people in our church who have been discovering the very principle and the very passage that I'm talking to you about tonight and that's Romans chapter 13, beginning in verse 8, Romans chapter 13, verse 8. As I mentioned we've already looked at 6 messages out of Romans 12 and the early part of chapter 13, all on the subject of the life that we're born to give. But tonight as we open to Romans chapter 13 and verse 8 we read here something very important and very significant about living and giving. Chapter 13, verse 8 says this:

*Owe no one anything except to love one another,...*

The word owe, O-W-E that is there is a commercial term from the 1<sup>st</sup> Century, right out of the market place, it's the idea of being in debt. And the Bible says:

*Owe no one anything...*

And a lot of people try to use that as just a proof text to say you should never be in debt. Well, I think it's certainly a wise thing financially to try to live out of debt and live within your means, but that's not the full thrust of this passage of Scripture. It says:

*Owe no man anything except to love one another,...*

And then it talks about living out the law of love and that love is above and beyond all the other commandments of God and then it says here in verse 11:

*And this do,...*

That is love one another.

*...knowing the time that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.*

Jesus Christ is coming again and that's sooner and nearer than when we first believed. It's time to wake up and to live out this idea of love. It says in verse 12:

*<sup>12</sup>The night is far spent and the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. <sup>13</sup>Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in licentiousness and lewdness, not in strife and envy.*

And then look at verse 14:

*But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.*

*...make no provision to the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.*

Most of world lives for fleshly indulgence, to indulge the flesh, to gratify the flesh. Most people do not believe that they are blessed to be a blessing, they believe that they've been blessed to experience a blessing. Heh, they've been blessed just so that they can take and get and soak and store and yet the Bible says it's not all about indulgence, it's all about investment. It's all about being blessed to be a blessing to see that your life is being lived out, not for the indulgence of the flesh but for the investment of love and therefore living to be a blessing to others and to do anything less than that is to rob yourself of the greatest joy and the greatest blessing in life. You will never satisfy yourself by seeking to satisfy yourself. You will be satisfied when you learn the joy and the blessing of serving others and it's in that service, it is in that principle of giving your life away that you begin to discover what it really is to live life. We are blessed to be a blessing and so tonight I want us to hear and to see this message, this living truth, the results of giving in the life and the ministry of Prestonwood. Every time we gather people give, but sometimes we don't stop to really think of what is happening as people are giving and I hope tonight you're gonna get just a glimpse of what's happening as people are discovering that the life they're born to live is the life they're born to give. I've asked Ross Robinson to come and to join me tonight. Ross is our minister of missions and evangelism at Prestonwood and is the point man of leadership and coordination of so many of the ways of which we are networking here in America and around the world to give people opportunities to give their lives away and so tonight as our chief investment officer in world mission endeavor I'm gonna ask that he comes and that he takes time to share with us a..., something about what's been happening and then to let you see the results of this in the life and the ministry of our church. It's amazing what happens when people learn to give.

**ROSS:** Thank you Dr. McKinley, we are blessed I think there's not a person in here that would a..., disagree with that a..., for what God continues to do throughout every ministry of our church. A..., every time the door is opened the gospel is shared, even on the athletic fields. There are sports and fitness ministries in our sports organization a..., as well as a..., obviously what's taking place at Prestonwood Christian Academy. But at Prestonwood our vision through our missions and evangelism ministry is to instill the reality and the privilege that we all share a..., in advancing the Kingdom of God together and we're doing that by introducing fresh innovative effective ways to strengthen the church body, a..., but also to share Christ with as many people as possible a..., it's compatible with our church mission. A..., back on March 28<sup>th</sup> of this year a..., many of you perhaps were at our weekend service, but the pastor issued a challenge a..., to mobilize every Adult Bible Fellowship Class in Prestonwood and there's about 120 of them to, in a sense, adopt a mission project and to go. A..., this past year, the year 2004, has been the best, the most exciting year in missions and evangelism ministries that we've ever had in the history of Prestonwood and I can confidently say that. It's just gets gooder and

gooder every single year. A..., next year will be the best, I'm confident of it as we'll...as we seek to take missions to a higher level a..., in an effort to engage you a..., to...to be a blessing, a..., to get off the bench and into the game, a..., to help us fulfill the great commission together. A..., we've got a lot of dynamic local mission ministries through City Missions, through Bridge Builders, a..., many of you all are engaged in that and that will continue. But next year we're going to increase that, a..., we're starting a Foster Care Ministry. We're going to build a house with Habitat For Humanity, would love to get you all involved in that, a..., after the first of the year. But we're also broadening our tent nationally a..., with increased efforts in the city of Boston where we've planted a church, Hope Fellowship Church and in New York City with the Graffiti Church. Next year we're going to do more international mission ministries, short-term mission projects ever...than ever before. We're gonna continue to go to Eastern Romania and to the Amazon, but we're also going to Budapest, Hungary, to Cuba, back to the Amazon, back to a..., Romania, but we're going to Asia, a..., to the Balkans, to Bulgaria and Greece and also to India and Africa. So there's some wonderful opportunities a..., working with Mike Fechner and our age group ministers, we have assigned down to the adult fellowship class level specific projects both locally, nationally and internationally, so doesn't that sound exciting already? But a..., [applause] there's not a church in American [applause] that's doing this and we in large measure feel that it's our responsibility a..., to hopefully be a motivating factor for other churches to do the same thing, a..., be they Southern Baptist or otherwise, but a..., we're all in this together, me and you, a..., Prestonwood with other churches pullin on the same end of the rope to help fulfill the Great Commission. There's never been a better time than now a..., we don't know the promised hour of Christ's return, but it could be in our lifetime, so I...I pray that you share our heart as a ministry...ministerial staff that we don't wanna be a... caught being lazy and not being proactive in serving Christ. Why do we go? A..., over 2 billion people in the world have never heard the gospel. Of the 2 billion, 1 billion people have never heard the words, Jesus loves me. A..., of the 7,000 language groups in our world over...just 5% of those language groups have an entire Bible. In other words they're not familiar with the 1<sup>st</sup> line of biblical truth. John 3:16 doesn't roll off their lips and besides all that it is a command Jesus gave us to go and make disciples, to help fulfill the Great Commission together. A..., I mentioned several of the trips that have taken place this year. There's never been more Prestonwood members involved on the mission field, nationally and internationally than this year. A... the first person that I'd like very much for you to meet is a young lady, a single, Jennifer Denton, a recent graduate from college. She was part of the Jarrod Stevens led mission to Boston back in April and I happened to be there and participate myself. But a..., we were there around the Boston Marathon time working with Hope Fellowship Church. A..., Jennifer was a key part of what God did there. Please welcome Jennifer Denton. [applause]

**JENNIFER-Relates experience of mission trip to Boston.**

## **MUSIC**

**ROSS:** For the past 13 years we as a church have partnered with Global Missions Fellowship a..., they're headquartered right here in Dallas and they plant churches all over the world as well as a..., conduct leadership training institutes for pastors on foreign soils. They're doin a great...great work. A..., through this partnership we have seen over 400 Prestonwood members go to Eastern Romania, which is the least evangelized half of that former a..., Communist country and have seen over 9000 people come to Christ through Prestonwood members working with nationalists in Eastern Romania a..., over these past 13 years and on top of that a..., we have seen over 100 churches planted by Prestonwood members that are still going strong today. A..., we go 3 different times of the year to Eastern Romania and we'll do that again next year. One of the players this year, a Prestonwood member who went was Shawn Peave. Shawn is here to share his story of the heart of the experience that he had in Eastern Romania.

**SHAWN-Relates experience of mission trips to Eastern Romania.**

### **MUSIC**

**ROSS:** Everybody here knows Joe Perry. He's our minister of sports and recreation a..., it's a privilege to serve alongside him. He just got back from the Amazon Valley. He's gonna lead us in prayer.

**JOE-Relates Amazon and Africa experiences and leads prayer.**

**ROSS:** The Amazon Valley, if you were like me a..., a few years ago the only thing I thought about was Tarzan and Johnny Wisemiller movies back when I was a little boy, but a..., as a church for the past 13 years we've partnered with Amazon outreach in large part because of the leadership of Johnson Ellis our Prestonwood member, a deacon, he and his family very involved in Prestonwood and also Mike Buster our Executive Pastor, in fact Mike is going to be leading a trip back to the Amazon the day after this Christmas. But a..., this past year we've had 3 teams go to the Amazon a part of one of those teams was Bill and Julie Jorgus. Julie is here a..., they brought 2 of their children a..., to participate on the mission project, a..., they're great, great people, Bill's out of town but a..., welcome Julie Jorgus. [applause]

**JULIE-Relates experience of mission trips to the Amazon.**

### **MUSIC**

**ROSS:** Over the past 18 months a..., there have been more Prestonwood members that have been called out from Prestonwood... < [turn tape](#) > ...full time ministry a..., then at any other time a..., in the life of our church. A...a...Julie was talking about Brazil and the Amazon Valley. Our own Lisa LaBlanc is in Sao Paulo with The International Mission Board now. A..., this evening too, just before the service I got to say a quick hello to Teri Carter, who is a..., a member of Prestonwood, God called into full time Christian ministry, she is with The International Mission Board of The

Southern Baptists in China. Teri, you wanna just wave and say hi? But a..., many of you all night know her, she's here somewhere and she's really...there she is, she's very shy, but a..., we're glad you're here Teri, we love you. [applause] She'll be going back on November 8<sup>th</sup> a..., to her location in East Asia. A..., New York City, a..., we were privileged about two weeks after 911 a..., I..., to meet Dr. Taylor Field. Our pastor a..., challenged me, encouraged me, to fly to New York City to see what we could do to help a..., in the aftermath of the a..., tragedy that took place on September 11<sup>th</sup>. A..., Dr. Taylor Field is the pastor of the Graffiti Church, a..., otherwise known as East 7<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church, a..., at that time it was the closest Southern Baptist Church to where the Twin Towers fell. A..., their church is an inner city work, a..., Taylor and his family have been there now for over 15 years and they're doin a great work, but it's right in the middle of Hell's Kitchen. A..., a lot of our Prestonwood members just got back, literally, from New York City yesterday, a..., led by our own a..., Gregg Tonjas, a..., also part of that trip was Zig and...and Jean Ziglar, a..., they made a huge impact there a..., Zig and Jean are here tonight...you...everybody recognizes the redhead, but a..., Zig and Taylor Field are very close friends and have been for many, many years, but a..., to share a glimpse of what this group experienced in the heart of New York City a..., is Jim Haley who was a..., there with his wife Carol. Jim please share your heart.

#### **JIM-Relates experience of mission trip to New York City.**

#### **MUSIC**

**DR. MCKINLEY:** When you learn to give you're amazed what God does for you, you're amazed what God does in you, you're amazed what God does through you and I think you see that and feel that in the hearts and the lives of people who are here tonight. This has all been about the results of giving. Over the course of the past year Prestonwood Church has shared together in giving and distributing a World Mission Offering. A significant portion of that goes to support missionaries, over 4000 of them, who are serving Christ through The International Mission Board of The Southern Baptist Convention, full time miss...missionaries, living in countries, every kind of country, every kind of co...occupation imaginable around the world and then that's happening here in the states. But then we're mobilizing to go and to be there and be a part of it because we're learning that the life we've been born to live is the life we've been born to give and I hope that that's a message that's becoming more apparent and more personal to you.

I'm kinda coming full circle tonight. January the 28<sup>th</sup> of the year I got on an airplane with Ross Robinson, Sondra Saunders, a..., Yvonne Pickens, my son Joseph, Ross' son Ty and we had the wonderful privilege of going to Panama City, Panama and then jumping on airplanes and going out into the a..., inner part of the country and to distribute gifts, shoe boxes that we gather every year here through a wonderful ministry called Operation Christmas Child. Over the course of those days we gave out several thousand boxes and a..., it was an incredible life experience because for

over 10 years I've been a part of this ministry and a..., to actually go and see it and touch it and feel it and to be a part of it was a..., unbelievable in my life and my life journey and I'm so thankful for the fact that this has been such a big heart project for Prestonwood. You know each year for the last few years we've actually launched Operation Christmas Child right here out of the heart of The Connection Service, to the hearts of the people of our church every year. In fact over the last few years you've done some wonderful things and as part of this Connection Service on Wednesday evening we were able to take part in a...an Iraqi food box project where we packed large boxes of food in the early days after the initial impact of the war and sent them into Iraq. A..., we also, last year, were able to be a part of giving Happy Birthday a..., Jesus parties to children in the Ukraine through one of our members who has gone to work there and to be there, but every year for the last few years we've made this the launch point for Operation Christmas Child. Operation Christmas Child is an endeavor where you simply take a shoebox and you fill it with certain items that can be taken and sent to boys and girls around the world and tonight I not only want you to hear about what's happened in giving, but I want you to catch a vision afresh and anew of a new opportunity for you to give. So, let's look together and listen together right now.

**VIDEO ABOUT OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD MAKING A DIFFERENCE ONE HEART AT A TIME.**

**VIDEO MESSAGE FROM FRANKLIN GRAHAM:** You know these boxes not only touch a..., that child, but it touches the entire family and there's literally millions and millions of people each year that come to know that Jesus Christ is God's Son. Thank you for giving. Get involved this year. Get your friends involved. Every box, every gift is important. Thank you! God bless you! I'm Franklin Graham.

**DR. MCKINLEY:** In 1994 Prestonwood became a collection center for Samaritans Purse and the Operation Christmas Child project. That year we gathered 4000 shoeboxes. Last year we gathered a record 33,670 boxes right here on this campus [applause] as a part of that effort [applause] and it's just been amazing to see what's happened. Over 6 million, 6 and a half million boxes distributed last year a..., we have done a total of 207,900 boxes since ~~1974...er excuse me~~ 1994 and so I am just thrilled to death that a..., once again we're launching this project. November the 20...13<sup>th</sup> through the 22<sup>nd</sup> will be the date that we will begin our collection of the shoeboxes and so you're gonna be hearing and seeing a lot more about this. Brochures are gonna be available to help you to begin to know what to do and how to be a part of this. But let me just give you a way to get involved in missions tonight. Tonight, if you would be willing to say I wanna be a part of that project, I can't go anywhere right now, but if there were any way under the sun that I could be a part of somethin between now and the end of this year I would do that in a minute. Well, you can do it and you do it right here and you can touch the world from Prestonwood by being a part of Operation Christmas Child. Inside your worship guide tonight there is a prayer card. This is there every

Wednesday night and certainly if you're here and you have a prayer need tonight you can take it and you can fill that out and just drop it out in the boxes as you leave. But if you would say tonight, you know what? I wanna be a wa...a part of this in any way that I can help and what you can do is tonight you can just write your name, address and either a phone number or an e-mail, phone number or an e-mail on there and put on that card "O.C." just "O.C." The means Operation Christmas Child and what that means is that Ross Robinson and his office will put you in to their e-mail list and their contact list and as they begin to distribute opportunities for volunteers, for packaging, for helping to do the a..., the distribution drop off, all those things that relate to here we'll be glad to help you to be a part of that and there's so many ways that you can be a part between now and middle of November and so if you'd like to say, hey, I wanna be a part of this, I wanna pray about it, touch it, be involved in it a..., we'd love to have you do that. So just write on that card your name, a point of contact and then put on it "O.C." Now, for any of the others of you who are here tonight, the other side of that card is a card that talks about receiving the greatest gift. It's wonderful to us to talk about giving a gift and we give a gift because we receive the gi...greatest gift in the world. God demonstrated His love toward us in that while we were sinners Christ died for us and tonight if you wanna know how to receive that gift, if you know that what you need in your life is to experience something with Christ that would change you the way that you've heard of people tonight who've been changed because of their relationship with Christ and the message that they've shared with others who have heard it, received it and believed it even in these recent trips, we want you to know that tonight. That's why right there in that worship guide it says, Life Connection. You can make a life connection with Jesus Christ tonight, you can receive the gift of eternal life, but if you've received that gift it's too good to keep. You know people will do a lot of things for money. In fact the Bible says the love of money is the root of all sorts of evil.

Just an hour ago I was checking some updates on news and I read an article about a guy who a..., it said had his most expensive preflight meal \$197,000. I couldn't figure out what it was until I learned that it was a guy who boarded a plane in Madrid going to Bogotá, Columbia. When he got to Columbia he was sweating profusely, seemed to be agitated, they got him, they began to do a security inspection, they put him under a..., they put him through a...a detector and then ultimately through a scan and they found that he had swallowed bags of \$197,000 in money into his stomach to smuggle into the country. It's amazing what people will do for money.

I wanna ask you something. What will we do for love?

*Owe no one anything except to love one another,...*

*...and put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh,...*

I hope that you've gotten that message tonight. I hope that you've caught the spirit of giving and tonight far more than anything that I could teach you about the responsibility to give I just hope you realize that the



results of giving are absolutely incredible and that you won't miss the opportunity to give, yes, of your gifts, of your tithes, of your offerings. That's what enables all these projects and things that we do. But to give of yourself, give first yourself and then all of these other things, because if you love the Lord Jesus Christ with all your lo...heart, mind, soul and strength you won't wanna do anything but to give your life to Him and to His purpose.

I thank God for all these wonderful testimonies we've heard tonight and for all that God is doing in and through the life and the ministry of Prestonwood.

Next Tuesday evening, let me be sure you hear this clearly, next Tuesday eveing we're gonna gather together while The Southern Baptist Convention of Texas is here meeting in our facility and we're gonna gather at 7 o'clock in a great rally called, America's Heritage And Hope. Our full choir and orchestra are gonna be there, Dr. Jerry Falwell is gonna be the special speaker, information is about that in your worship guide. We will not be here next Wednesday night. So I wanna be sure you understand that we're putting all of the energies and all of the focus next week into that Tuesday night rally. Our pastor will be here with us as well. We're gonna have a great, great night of prayer and of joy for our nation and the Lord knows that we need missions in American.

Let me also ask before we go tonight that you pray for our pastor. Very early in the hours, just a few hours from now he'll be boarding a plane and flying to Washington DC and tomorrow is going to have the privilege of doing the White House Bible Study for the White House staff and so I just want us to pray that God will use him and bless him and let him be a blessing in that place from the White House to the huts of Asia and Africa and the most remote part of the world we're takin the message, Jesus Saves!