

WHY I GIVE FIRSTFRUITS

By Dr S.Y.Govender

The teaching on firstfruits has never been imposed on anyone. It is not a legislated demand for salvation or church membership. I teach giving. Firstfruit is part of giving. The response is left to the individual believer. Those who do not give firstfruits are not cursed, condemned or ex-communicated.

I want to outline why I give firstfruits.

1. PERSONAL CONVICTION

Rom 8:14

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.(NKJ)

Like many other things that I have done in my life: accepting Jesus as Lord and Saviour at the age of 10, speaking in other tongues, entering medical school, taking care of the medical needs of pastors and their families for 20 years, abandoning medicine to pursue ministry, getting married, etc., I give firstfruits because it was the conviction I received personally from the Holy Ghost. As many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God. I believe that at this stage of my life I am able to hear the voice of God with greater clarity than when I was 10 years old. I feel that in giving my firstfruits I have been obedient to the voice of the Spirit.

2. HONOUR PRINCIPLE

My firstfruit offering is given to honour the Lord.

Prov 3:9

Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; (NKJ)

The Book of Proverbs has much wisdom for today. It does not do justice to scripture, when one selects all the wise sayings of Proverbs and excludes Prov3:9 as an Old Testament practice. God is honoured today not only by praise, good works, unity, etc, but also by the giving of firstfruits as Solomon states.

There are many things we do that are not in the New Testament:

- Strict liturgy on Sundays
- Our emphasis on musical worship. This is extracted from the Davidic order of worship from the Old Testament.
- Sunday school for children
- Youth gatherings
- **Men and women's fellowship**
- **Pastor's appreciation day**

Nevertheless we do these things because they are good things and they enhance our relationship with the Lord. Firstfruit is not taught specifically in the New Testament. However we cannot ignore the Book of Proverbs in its relevance for today. The New Testament teaches giving – THE METHODS OF GIVING ARE LEFT TO THE

DISCRETION OF THE BELIEVER. Firstfruit is a good method. I have chosen this method for myself and my family.

3. PRACTICAL RIGHTEOUSNESS

Matt 5:20

"For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.(NKJ)

Pharisees and Scribes were extremely legalistic. They gave tithes and offerings. The firstfruit was part of their offerings. My righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. My righteousness is imputed righteousness. Imputed righteousness leads to practical righteousness.

1 Jn 2:29

If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.(NKJ)

If under the law the Pharisees gave Tithes, offerings and firstfruits, my giving must exceed the Pharisees and the Scribes. The giving of firstfruits is not a strain but a joy because of the grace I have received.

4. PRIORITY PRINCIPLE

Matt 6:33

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.(NKJ)

I want God to be first in my life in every area - my family, my ministry, my friends and also my money. Therefore at the beginning of the year I take the best portion of my income and give it to the Lord. This may be all my income in January or the total income of the previous year divided by 52. The amount I give is determined by the Spirit. Of course the Lord is not there to receive it- but I give it to the one He has sent to be a spiritual blessing to me.

John 13:20

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."(NKJ)

By blessing the sent one in my life – I am receiving the sent one and thus indirectly the Lord himself.

My parents used to do this as Hindus. They honoured the priest with the firstfruits of their garden. They felt by honouring the priest with the first produce of their garden they were putting God first.

5. DISCIPLINE

Matt 26:41

"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."(NKJ)

My spirit is willing to give, but my flesh is weak. My flesh does not want me to give. I realized that I needed discipline in giving. I find that as I get older I need discipline in prayer, eating, and physical activities. I used to give according to my ability – but my ability was weak. I eventually discovered that my giving per annum was less than the

tithe per annum. Just as I was undisciplined in my eating and physical activities I discovered that my giving had also deteriorated. I always wanted to give more but lived in postponement. Now I have installed structure in my giving – offering, tithes and firstfruits. With this structure I find that I am fulfilling my desire to give more to the kingdom of God.

1 Cor 9:27

But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.(NKJ)

6. ECONOMIC DOMINION

Prov 3:9-10

*9Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase;
10So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.
(NKJ)*

I want economic dominion and the blessings associated with the firstfruits to advance **God's purposes on the earth.**

I believe the Bible is God's Word. It is impossible for God to lie. Economic prosperity is connected to the firstfruit.

I find that other scriptures also confirm the connection of the firstfruit to prosperity:

FAVOUR

Prov 3:9-10

*9Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase;
10So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.*

Matt 6:33

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.(NKJ)

Deut 26:10-11

10'and now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land which you, O LORD, have given me.' Then you shall set it before the LORD your God, and worship before the LORD your God.

11 "So you shall rejoice in every good thing which the LORD your God has given to you and your house, you and the Levite and the stranger who is among you.(NKJ)

The blessing following the firstfruit:

Deut 26:17-19

17" Today you have proclaimed the LORD to be your God, and that you will walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments, and His judgments, and that you will obey His voice.

18 "Also today the LORD has proclaimed you to be His special people, just as He has promised you, that you should keep all His commandments,

19 "and that He will set you high above all nations which He has made, in praise, in name, and in honor, and that you may be a holy people to the LORD your God, just as He has spoken." (NKJ)

INSURANCE

The first fruit blesses the whole. The first blesses the rest.

Romans 11:16 (NKJV).

“For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches”

Some may argue that the context is not economy – but remember Paul is stating a principle and extracting from the principle.

RESTING OF THE BLESSING

Ezekiel 44:30

And the first of all the firstfruits shall be the priest's: ye shall also give unto the priest the first of your dough, that he may cause the blessing to rest in thine house.

I believe that the firstfruit will deliver me from a “yo-yo” economy. I want the blessing to rest in my house.

SUSTENANCE IN FAMINE

1King 17:10-16

10So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink." 11And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, "Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." 12So she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die." 13And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son. 14" For thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth.' 15So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days. 16The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke by Elijah.(NKJ)

The widow released the first portion to the man of God. As a result of her obedience to release the first portion, she was sustained in famine.

TESTIFY OF THAT WHICH IS TO COME

Firstfruits offerings signal the beginning of your harvest. It promises an abundant harvest. It establishes the law of first things first in your life. It establishes the promise of that which is to come. It positions the believer to receive the promise of God.

1King 17:10-16

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THE FIRST FRUIT HAS CREATIVE CAPACITY – it creates your harvest.

- **THE WIDOW’S FIRSTFRUIT CREATED WEALTH IN HER HOME.**
- **THE LITTLE BOY’S LUNCH WAS GIVEN AS A FIRSTFRUIT IN THE WILDERNESS – RESULT WAS CREATION OF FOOD FOR THE MULTITUDE.**

- THE MAN FROM BAAL SHALISHA.

11 Ki 4:42-44

42Then a man came from Baal Shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley bread, and newly ripened grain in his knapsack. And he said, "Give it to the people, that they may eat."

43But his servant said, "What? Shall I set this before one hundred men?" He said again, "Give it to the people, that they may eat; for thus says the LORD: 'They shall eat and have some left over.'"

44So he set it before them; and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the LORD.(NKJ)

Here again we see the creative capacity of the first fruits.

Barnabas gave the proceeds of the land sale as a firstfruit and is catapulted into the forefront of the apostolic.

Gen 1:1

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
(NKJ)*

Beginning - 7225 re'shiyth (ray-sheeth');

from the same as 7218; the first, in place, time, order or rank (specifically, a firstfruit):

KJV-- beginning, chief (-est), first (-fruits, part, time), principal thing.

Beginning means firstfruit.

In the firstfruit God created.

7. KINGDOM ADVANCEMENT

I want the kingdom to be advanced by blessing His sent one.

Not only do I want to honour the sent one. I also want to see the one sent by God financially empowered to advance the kingdom of God.

John 13:20

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."(NKJ)

I have discovered four reasons for releasing finances to kingdom labourers:

- DOCTRINAL LABOURERS ARE WORTHY OF DOUBLE HONOUR

1 Tim 5:17-18

17Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.

18For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages."(NKJ)

2 Tim 2:6

The hard-working farmer must be first to partake of the crops.(NKJ)

- APPOINTED BY THE LORD

1 Cor 9:14

Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.(NKJ)

Paul states that those who preach the gospel should live of the gospel. He does not state the method but the principle. I have chosen firstfruits as one of the methods.

- GUIDED BY THE OLD TESTAMENT

1 Cor 9:7-14

7Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?

8Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also?

9For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about?

10Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope.

11If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things?

12If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.

13Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar?

14Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.(NKJ)

Paul quotes the Law of Moses to validate the position of ministerial support. The method of support is not stated. I have chosen firstfruits as the method.

- RECIPROCATION

Gal 6:6

Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.(NKJ)

The principle of reciprocation is clearly stated. The method is left to the individual. I choose to give firstfruits.

Matt 10:9-10

9"Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts,

10"nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food.(NKJ)

Rom 15:25-28

25But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints.

26For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem.

27It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.

28Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain.(NKJ)

1 Cor 9:9-13

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10Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope.

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18For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages." (NKJ)

Phil 4:15-18

15Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only.

16For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities.

17Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account.

18Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.(NKJ)

8. I WANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT OLD TESTAMENT PRINCIPLES ARE NOT OBSOLETE.

2 Tim 3:16-17

16All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

17that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

(NKJ)

The Old Testament is scripture. All scripture is profitable for instruction in righteousness.

WHY STUDY THE OLD TESTAMENT OR TABERNACLE/LAW

PEDAGOGIC ROLE OF THE LAW

Gal 3:24

Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.(NKJ)

ALL SCRIPTURE IS PROFITABLE

2 Tim 3:16

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,(NKJ)

TESTIFY OF CHRIST

Heb 10:7

Then I said, 'Behold, I have come-- in the volume of the book it is written of Me-- to do Your will, O God.' (NKJ)

Ps 40:6-8

6Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; my ears You have opened; burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.

7Then I said, "Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me.

8I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart." (NKJ)

TRUTH IS ETERNAL

Heb 13:8

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.(NKJ)

Matt 24:35

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.(NKJ)

EXAMPLES FOR OUR ADMONITION

1 Cor 10:6

Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.(NKJ)

1 Cor 10:11

Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come.(NKJ)

RECORDED FOR OUR LEARNING

Rom 15:4

For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.(NKJ)

NATURAL PRECEDES THE SPIRITUAL

1 Cor 15:46-47

46However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.

47The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven.(NKJ)

SHADOW OF GOOD THINGS TO COME

Col 2:17

which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.(NKJ)

Jesus does not contradict the law. The moral standards of the law are upheld by His teachings. In fact the teachings of Jesus introduce a higher standard.

He is the Lawgiver. He spoke with authority.

Matt 5:21-22

21 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder,' and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.

22 "But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. (NKJ)

Matt 5:27-28

27 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.'

28 "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (NKJ)

Jesus came to fulfil the law, not cancel it.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Exod 20:3-17

3 "You shall have no other gods before Me.

4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;

5you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,

6but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

7 "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

8 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9Six days you shall labor and do all your work,

10but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.

11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

12 "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

13 "You shall not murder.

14 "You shall not commit adultery.

15 "You shall not steal.

16 "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's." (NKJ)

Matt 5:17

"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.(NKJ)

- FULFILLED IN CHRIST AND EXTENDED in the NEW TESTAMENT. THERE IS A HIGHER STANDARD FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVER.

A. YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME.

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.(NKJ)

Acts 4:12

"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (NKJ)

B. DENOUNCES IDOLATRY

1 Jn 2:15-16

15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world-- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-- is not of the Father but is of the world.(NKJ)

C. NOT USE THE NAME OF GOD IN VAIN

Matt 12:36-37

36 "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.

37 "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." (NKJ)

You will be judged not just for violating the name of God but for every idle word.

D. SABBATH OBSERVATION

In the New Testament it is not just one day but daily observation in everything.

Luke 9:23

Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.(NKJ)

E. HONOUR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.

Eph 6:1-4

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

2 "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise:

3 "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."

4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.(NKJ)

The extension is that fathers are not to provoke their children to wrath.

F. YOU SHALL NOT MURDER

Matt 5:21-22

21 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder,' and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.

22 "But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire.(NKJ)

G. YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY

Matt 5:27-30

27 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.'

28 "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

29 "If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

30 "And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.(NKJ)

H. YOU SHALL NOT STEAL

Eph 4:28

Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.(NKJ)

Labour and giving are commanded in addition to not stealing.

I. YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS... LIE

Eph 4:29

Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.(NKJ)

Matt 5:37

"But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.(NKJ)

J. YOU SHALL NOT COVET

Heb 13:5-6

5 Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

6 So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (NKJ)

1. FULFILLING THE LAW

- **BEAR ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS.**

Gal 6:2

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.(NKJ)

- **THROUGH LOVE**

Matt 22:35-40

35 Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying,

36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"

37 Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'

38 " *This is the first and great commandment.*

39 " *And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'*

40 " *On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.*" (NKJ)

Deut 6:4-6

4 " *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!*

5 " *You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.*

6 " *And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.*(NKJ)

James 2:8

If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well;(NKJ)

Rom 13:8

8 *Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.*(NKJ)

Rom 13:10

10 *Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.*(NKJ)

THE NEW COMMANDMENT FULFILLS NOT JUST THESE 2 COMMANDMENTS BUT THE ENTIRE LAW.

THUS GRACE BRINGS US TO A DEEPER POSITION. IT INTENSIFIES THE DEMANDS.

LIKEWISE IF THE LAW DEMANDED TITHES, OFFERINGS AND FIRSTFRUITS UNDER GRACE THERE IS INTENSIFICATION OF THE DEMAND. THE NEW DEMAND IS GIVE YOUR WHOLE LIFE – DIE TO YOURSELF. THIS MEANS GIVING ONE HUNDRED PERCENT. THE DEMAND OF GRACE IS GIVING YOUR LIFE – THUS GIVING FIRSTFRUITS IS EASY.

9. I WANT TO FOLLOW PRACTICAL EXAMPLES OF FAITH.

Heb 13:7

Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.(NKJ)

I thank God for exemplary leaders. I have had the privilege of being around outstanding men and women of God. I have watched their giving. I have seen them give firstfruits when they were in debt. I noticed it was an extraordinary step of faith. I have watched their conduct and have seen God come through for them many times – I want to follow their example.

10. I WANT TO HONOUR AND RECOGNIZE THOSE WHOM GOD HAS SENT TO ME.

My firstfruit is given voluntarily and cheerfully. No one manipulated me to give. I am not a victim of Nicolaitanism. No human being conquered me and ruled over me. I give my firstfruit to honour and recognize the one God has sent to me to bless me spiritually. In honouring the sent one, I am honouring the Lord himself.

John 13:20

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."(NKJ)

In giving my firstfruit I want to break the prejudice against the prosperity of the **servant of God. Many rejoice in the poverty of God's servants. God rejoices in the prosperity of His servants. I want God's servant and his family** to rejoice. I want them to know that they and their services are highly valued. I say to them BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD.

In addition I am recognizing that their function is different from all other believers. All believers are priests, but not all are sent to me. I am recognizing the unique function of the sent one – sent to bless me and my family.