

THANKS GIVING



Messages by REB

THANKSGIVING



Two men are walking identical roads. The same blessings and the same problems meet them along the way.

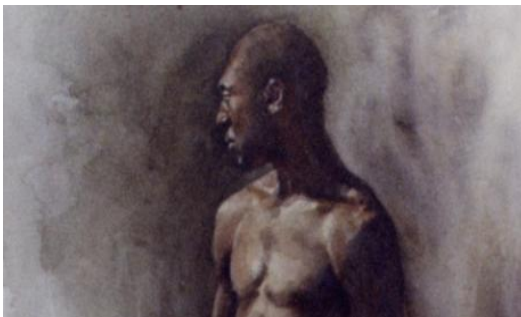
One man is forever giving thanks.

The other is forever complaining.

**The man with the thankful heart....
turns his circumstances into joy.**

He is given eyes to see beyond the visible to the invisible
God who is renewing all things through the death and
resurrection of his Son.

**The man with the complaining heart
sees only trouble wherever he turns.**



His life is desolate and he brings the chill of despair to everything he touches.

The complaining heart will always have much to complain about.

The thankful heart will increasingly have things to give thanks for.



Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever! Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble....

Some wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to a city to dwell in; hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. He led them by a straight way till they reached a city to dwell in. Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man! For he satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul he fills with good things.

Psalm 107: 1-2, 4-9

Prayer: Father, Lord, help us to be like the man with the thankful heart. Giving thanks in all that lies before us. Help us to see joy in our troubles because we trust in your steadfast love. Because you satisfy our longing and hungry souls with good things, with your very presence and goodness. Amen.

Message: Richard E. Bieber 2014

Featured Artist: Suzy Schultz at suzyschultz.net

START GIVING THANKS



Even if you're not sure where all those mercies come from...

...start giving thanks.

Once it dawns on you that it's more than "coincidence" that you're still alive and sane....

.... start giving thanks,

Even if you're unclear about the source.

Because....

....A thankful heart sees beyond the visible.

....A thankful heart has its "receivers" open to heaven.

....A thankful heart connects with God.

And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." When he saw them he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising

God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then said Jesus, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" And he said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."

Luke 17:12-19



Ten lepers were cleansed---without strings.

But only the Samaritan with a thankful heart became truly whole.

Thankfulness is not a mood, it's an act of the will.

If you're having trouble being thankful, start with this:

***Let all that I am praise the Lord;
with my whole heart, I will praise his holy name.***

***Let all that I am praise the Lord;
may I never forget the good things he does for me.***

***He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases.
He redeems me from death
and crowns me with love and tender mercies.***

***He fills my life with good things.
My youth is renewed like the eagle's!***

Psalms 103



Prayer: Lord, again and again throughout our lives we have cried out to you, “Lord, master have mercy on us”. And you always answer our cries. You rescue us again and again. You are so good to us and we just take our healing and go on our way. Instead, Lord, may we fall on our knees at your mercy to us. May we deeply comprehend all that you have done for us...and may the wonder of it bring a song of thankfulness to our hearts. May such thankfulness well up within us, that we connect with you like we never have before. We lift our voices to your goodness, to your tender mercy, to your forgiveness, to your steadfast love. We thank you for your miraculous redemptive power in our lives, for bringing us out of darkness, for calling us out of our own bitterness and despair. We thank you for not counting our sins against us. We thank you for every healing, for every answered prayer, for your divine protection, for bringing us to life, for renewing us. May every cell in our bodies say thank you, thank you for all you have done. Bless you Lord. Bless you in every way. Amen.

2007

Featured Artist: Francisco Borboa Valenzuela “Pancho”

PREPARING THE HEART



When we wish to commune with God, we often find that our heart is not “up to it.”

God seems distant.

We feel like we’re “acting a part.”

Our faith is shaky.

So how can I commune with the living God when my heart feels empty?

Start giving thanks.



Regardless of your circumstances....

Regardless of how you feel, just start thanking God....

For your life.

For a body and mind that can function.

For food and water.

For air to breathe.

For Jesus, crucified and risen.

For the promise of the Holy Spirit.

For God himself.

Thanksgiving opens the heart to the Spirit of God.

Thanksgiving brings you into the Presence.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise.

Give thanks to him and praise his name. (Psalm 100)

Just keep thanking God until you find yourself in his presence.

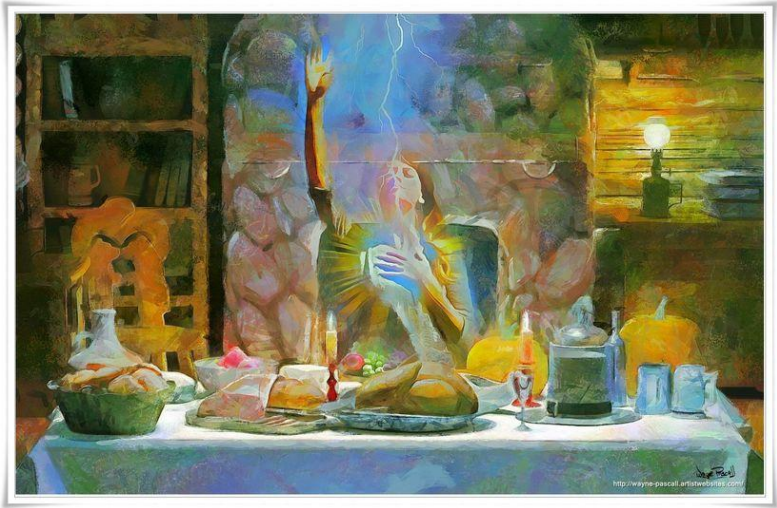


Prayer: Lord, we admit that we are stumbling through this troubled life. Our hearts are troubled, disappointed, afraid, and we can't sense your presence with us. Bring to our hearts and minds your perfect goodness, your omnipotence, and all the reasons you are worthy of our praise and adoration. We think of all you have done for us. We think of life itself. We think of creation. We think of all you offer us, and especially that you, Father, are with us even now. What gifts, what goodness. How amazing you are. We are filled with awe and gratefulness that you love us and desire us. May our hearts open to your Spirit and bring us into your Holy presence. Amen.

2005

Featured Artist: Courtesy of Signe Flink at Deviant Art

CONTINUOUS THANKSGIVING



On Thanksgiving we come together across the country with our family and friends to give thanks.

- Thanks for the abundance that surrounds our lives.
- Thanks for the peace that covers this land.

And to express our thanks to God, not only with words ...but by doing something, offering something to demonstrate how grateful we are for how good we have it.

There are a thousand different ways we can demonstrate our thanks to God.

We can open up our hearts and share our abundance with those who have less.

We can reach out to somebody who needs a friend.

We can pick up the phone and touch base with that lonely cousin.

The idea of setting aside a special day to give thanks to God is certainly worthy.

Why shouldn't we observe a certain day when we all do this together?

But there are people for whom celebrating thanksgiving is the easiest thing in the world.

They do it all the time.

They get up in the morning,

“Thank you, Father, for the new day.”

They sit down to breakfast,

“Thank you, Father, for this food.”

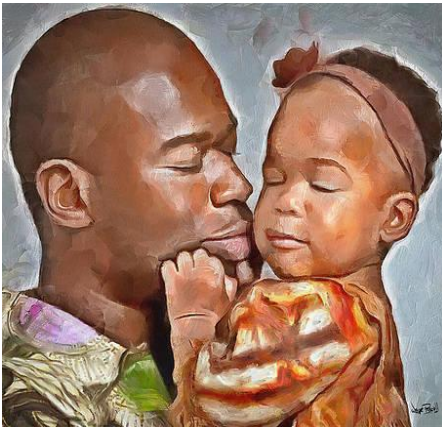
They drive to work singing.

They seem to appreciate everything that anybody does for them.

They appreciate the waitress who serves them lunch and they give her a good tip.

They appreciate the mailman, the cashier at the store, the cleaning staff at work.

Above all, they appreciate their wife, their husband, their child, their friend.



And behind all this appreciation, and the generosity that always comes with it,

...is a heart that's just grateful to God.

We see this in the man, Jesus. As a man...as a human being, the Son of God never stopped giving thanks.

Before he fed the multitude, Jesus lifted up the bread and gave thanks. lifted up the fish and gave thanks.

When the disciples returned with joy reporting, *“Lord, even demons are subject to us in your name!”* He said,

“Thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and have revealed them to babes.”

Even on the night when he knew he was going to be betrayed, he was still giving thanks...

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.” Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

Matthew 26:26-28



But how do you get like that? How do you get to the place where you're able to give thanks all the time?

.... able to trust that God is there even when things look bad...still giving thanks?

Who can deny that living like that is far better than to be walking around under a cloud of gloom with our souls weighed down with a thousand complaints?

Most of us are so pressed and burdened in our daily lives that even when we do thank God for our food, our mind is busy racing somewhere else... *“Where am I going to get the money?” “How am I going to fix that leak?” “What if I lose my job?”*

Listen to the advice of a man who knew tough times. He'd been beaten by angry mobs, stoned, imprisoned, shipwrecked, half starved, despised and threatened everywhere he went.

Yet, he can say,

“And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

Colossians 3:15,17

Almost every letter Paul wrote begins with thanksgiving.

You can't help but pick up a spirit of gratefulness to God ruling this man's life even in the face of suffering.

We can be like that. Every one of us can be like that.

Here's the recipe given to us by Paul himself,

“Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”.

Philippians 4:6-7

Two steps:

- 1) Turn every anxiety into prayer.**
- 2) Turn every prayer into thanksgiving.**

You're worried about something. How can you be thankful when you're worried about something?

Step #1: Turn that anxiety into prayer.

Instead of stewing about your health, your child, your finances, social discord... **start praying**, *"Lord, I need help."* *"Lord, I'm looking for you 'cause I need you."*

And if the worry comes back every 3 minutes... turn it into prayer every 3 minutes.

"Lord, I'm worried about what the doctor told me."

"Lord, I'm worried about my kid."

"I'm worried about the future."



"In everything by prayer and supplication..."

In everything, keep praying, keep asking.

Every time it hits you, you turn it into prayer.

Step #2: Keep turning that prayer into thanksgiving.

So, it's not just, *"Give me this."* *"Give me that."* *"Help me with this."* *"Help me with that."*

But with every request, it's also,

“Thank you, Father, for who you are.”

“Thank you, Father, for hearing me.”

“Thank you, Father, for the help you always give me.”

“Thank you, Father, for bringing me this far.”

“May your name be praised!”

***“In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving
let your requests be made known to God.”***

Turn every anxiety into prayer and every prayer into thanksgiving.
Do this until it becomes a habit, until it’s your second nature.

And you’ll find yourself appreciating God the Father like you
never have before. Jesus will become real to you.

You’ll begin to appreciate these brothers and sisters here in the
Body.

You’ll appreciate people you never noticed before.

The whole tone of your life will change.

Your outlook will be positive even when things look gloomy.



*You’ll be the person who gets up in the morning and says,
“Thank you, Father, for this new day.”*

*You’ll sit down to breakfast,
“Thank you, Father, for this food.”*

You’ll drive to work singing.

You'll appreciate everything that anybody does for you... the waitress, the cashier, the mailman, the cleaning staff, and above all the person you share your life with.

And behind all this appreciation and the generosity that always comes with it

....will be a heart that's just grateful to God.

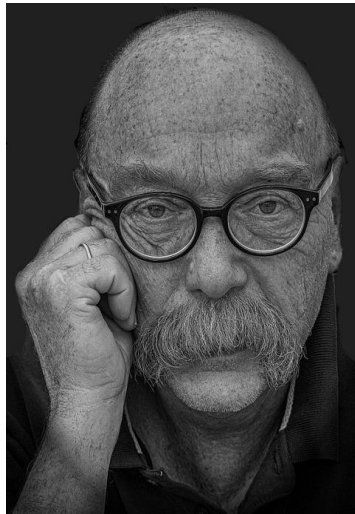


Prayer- Lord you are worthy, so worthy, of continuous thanksgiving from us. Help us to live lives full of appreciation for who you are, what we have, and for all those around us. May we thank you at all times, even when things aren't going our way. May we choose to let your peace rule in our hearts because we trust you. Lord, we take every anxiety, every concern, every fear, every hurt.... and lay them before you and thank you for your divine wisdom, guidance, strength, and mercy. As we do so, may we find the peace that passes all understanding and may we truly live lives of continuous thanksgiving. Amen.

Message: REB 2004 (Canadian Thanksgiving)

Featured Art: Courtesy and kindness of Wayne Pascall at wayne-pascall.pixels.com

DON'T THEY APPRECIATE ME?



The U.S. and in Canada each have their special day of Thanksgiving, where people gather to reflect and give thanks. The message which is usually heard in one form or another is, "Every day is a day of thanksgiving....We need to be giving thanks all the time."

And it's true, thanksgiving and thankfulness ought to be the dominating spirit of our lives. People who have developed the mindset of continually giving thanks have found the way to true blessedness.

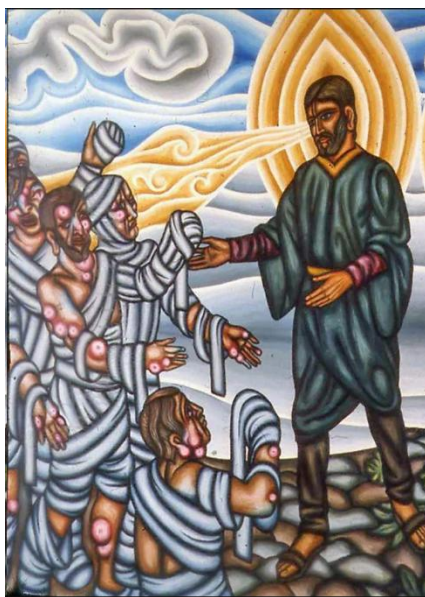
But most of us are more like those nine lepers who took their healing from Jesus and never looked back. When something really good happens to us, we're elated. We may even say, "Thanks a lot, God." But the idea of offering my life back to God in thanksgiving — of doing something costly to show my gratitude --- strikes us as fanatical. It's okay to be thankful, but let's not get carried away!

One of the reasons that this kind of radical thankfulness does not grip our souls --- why we're rarely the Samaritan praising God with a loud voice, throwing ourselves at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks -- - is because we're all wrapped up in our own disappointments.

We may not say it in so many words, but here's the question that lingers like a cloud in the back of our minds:

"Why don't they appreciate me? I go out of my way to help folks, and they don't even notice. I do the grungy jobs, nobody says, Thanks. I give them the shirt off my back, and they say, 'How 'bout your shoes, while your at it?'"

We know all about what Jesus went through that day, when those nine lepers hurried on, without a word of thanks. It happens to us all the time. After a while, you get cynical. You feel like sitting back and saying, "I paid my dues. Let somebody else be the sucker for a change."



And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. "And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

Luke 17:12-13

Imagine if Jesus had said, "Okay you guys. I'll heal you on one condition: that, after you're healed, you show a little appreciation. I'm sick and tired of healing people and being ignored. If you guys walk away with your healing and don't know how to say Thank You, you're going to end up sicker than you were before."

Praise God, that's not how Jesus operated.

He healed these men with no strings. No conditions.

When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests."

And as they went they were cleansed.

All ten of them. Their leprosy was gone forever. This healing was a sign of God's kingdom. They could follow the sign right into God's world, or they could ignore the sign and go on living as they always lived.

Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then said Jesus, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" And he said to him,

"Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."

Luke 17:14-19

We see two wonderful things in this episode:

We see a man with a thankful heart.

We see the Son of Man with a generous heart.

A thankful heart.

A generous heart.

When you and I arrive at the place where we have such hearts, we

will never again complain , "Why don't people appreciate me?"

Because it won't matter.

We will be too full of gratitude to God to worry about whether people appreciate us.

We will be too full of God's mercy to be upset when people take us for granted.

I can hear someone saying, "What planet are you living on? It's all very well to talk about having a thankful heart when we're sitting in church, or reading these words in private. But take that thankful, generous heart out into the real world and they'll walk all over you and leave you flat as a pancake at the bottom of a ditch."

It's true, this world is no rose garden. There are some slick operators out there who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravaging wolves. The Lord Jesus himself warns us to watch out for those guys, to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Don't be a fool!

But keep in mind that the biggest fools on this earth are not the suckers and the patsies and the gullible idiots. The biggest fools in this world are the cynics and the misers, who only say "Thank you," when it pays off for them and only open their hands and give, when they expect to get something back.

Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then said Jesus, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" And he said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."



"Your faith has made you well."

Jesus did not say that to the other nine, only to this man. For this man received something the other nine did not get. This man entered into God's World simply by giving thanks.

Let this be his way of life from now on, and, no matter what happens to him in the days ahead...

This man is under the protection of God.

This man is surrounded by a wall of holy fire.

This man's grateful heart is flooded with God's peace.

And here's what happens to people who travel the world with thankful hearts: they become anointed with an even greater blessing.

It's called generosity.

The Samaritan who's been healed goes home to his family in Samaria. They can't believe it's him! No more leprosy. His body

is whole and clean. His eyes are shining. His children can hug him again. His wife can kiss him again. While they're rejoicing there's a knock at the door. It's his neighbor. Could they spare a little bread? His neighbor and his family haven't eaten in two days. "Here," says the leper who is no longer a leper, "Take these loaves. And here," as he pours some gold coins from his purse, "Go and buy whatever you need. And may the God of the Messiah Jesus open the windows of heaven upon you." After the neighbor leaves, the Samaritan's wife says, "Isn't that a little risky? Giving all that away at one time?" "My dear wife, you managed so well while I was an outcast leper. You held our family together during difficult days. And I thank you. I honor you. But look at what God has done for us! Surely we can share his mercy with our neighbor." And as the days passed, heaven not only opened its windows on his neighbor. It kept pouring out blessings on this thankful man with a generous heart.

"I'm sorry, but I'm not that Samaritan leper. I'm me. And I have to tell you, I do grow weary sometimes, doing for people, and never getting even a whisper of thanks. No appreciation. It dries up the soul. It would be nice to get a word of encouragement once-in-a-while."

Who of us has not felt that way? Who of us has not been "weary in well-doing?"

**It's a dangerous place to be.
It's right on the edge of a pit called Cynicism.**



You become a cynic, and pretty soon you can't see anything in the world to be thankful for.

Your heart turns cold.

When we find ourselves getting depressed because nobody appreciates us, the best thing we can do is get over ourselves and look up. Instead of focusing on all the people who let us down, we focus on the One who never lets us down --- not even when we think he's letting us down.

He never does. He never will.

We may not be that Samaritan leper. But if we open our eyes, we too can see the kindness of the One who not only laid down his life for each of us, as if each were the only one, but who also is even now showering us with a thousand mercies.

Instead of bemoaning our sorry lot, we lift up our hearts and start giving thanks like that Samaritan.

***Let all that I am praise the LORD;
with my whole heart, I will praise his holy name.
Let all that I am praise the LORD;
may I never forget the good things he does for me.
He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases.
He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and
tender mercies. He fills my life with good things.
My youth is renewed like the eagle's!***

Psalm 103: 1-5 (NLT)

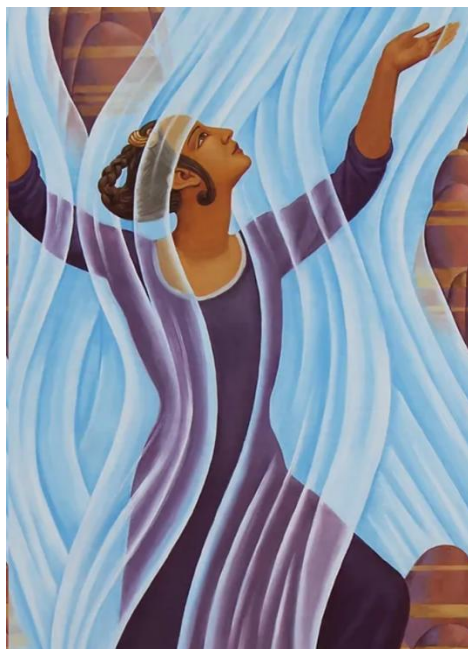
Even if you don't feel like it, make yourself do it. Just start praising the Lord God, until your soul catches fire with thankfulness.

**Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me,
bless his holy name.**

Pretty soon you will forget all about those nine lepers who never said "Thanks" to you.

You'll be on your face with the Samaritan, at Jesus' feet, with a thankful, generous heart.

And when you get up, you'll begin a new life.



Prayer: Lord, save us from the trap of feeling unappreciated, bitter, and cynical, and allowing ourselves to become cold hearted. Help us to never stop looking back and being grateful, thankful and overjoyed by all the blessings you have poured into our lives. And yes, fill our hearts so full of gratitude for your mercy that we have no room to feel unappreciated, taken advantage of, or let down. Instead in honor of you may we willingly continue to be merciful and kind even to the ungrateful. As we keep our eyes on you and all you have done for us...all the good things, all the healing, all the forgiveness, and for the sweet redemption and life you have poured into every aspect of our lives. We fall before you because we are awed by your tender mercy to us. We bless you, thank you, and praise your Holy name. Amen.

Message: 2011

Featured Art: Art courtesy of Peter Koenig. Photos via Pixabay.

THE GIFT OF A GRATEFUL MIND



***Enter into his gates with thanksgiving
And into his courts with praise!
Be thankful unto him And bless his name!***

None of us was born with a grateful heart.

We're too preoccupied with ourselves to see the goodness of God.

But there comes a moment...

...when we hear a word of truth.

...we're struck with a flash of insight.

Our eyes open, and we give thanks for undeserved mercy.

We are being offered the gift of a grateful mind.

Will we receive it?

Or will we let the moment pass?

Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice, and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet giving him thanks. Then said Jesus, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine?Rise, go your way, your faith has made you well."

Luke 17

A grateful mind is a precious gift.
God help us to nurture it.
For true faith can be found nowhere else.



Prayer- Yes Lord, we turn to you with gratefulness, with amazement at the tender mercies you have bestowed on our lives. In gratefulness is our joy, in gratefulness is our healing. In gratefulness is new life. Thank you for this precious gift of having a grateful mind. Help us to see it as a gift that we want to open, cherish and nourish. Amen.

Message: 2011

Art: Courtesy of Gwen Meharg

Maranatha Mirror Messages

mmirror.net



THE LAMB
WHO WAS SLAIN
HAS BEGUN HIS REIGN