

Acts Series Part 51

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Date: 27 February 2011

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[0 : 00] It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Jesus said that. Curiously, and it is only a curiosity, we don't have those words recorded or found in the Gospels.

Rather, we have Luke's testimony in the passage that we've read there in Acts chapter 20 of how Paul makes reference to Jesus having spoken those words.

It is more blessed to give than to receive. We are, of course, entirely confident that that was an accurate rendering of something that Jesus said, even though in the Gospels themselves we don't find those words.

It certainly does sound like the kind of thing Jesus would say. It's more blessed to give than to receive. It's in the same league as loving your enemies and turning the other cheek.

[1 : 06] It's got that Jesus feel to it, doesn't it? It's more blessed to give than to receive. But what does it mean? And what does it look like?

What is being said here? What Paul quotes Jesus as having said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

I had a light bulb moment. That is a light bulb turning on moment. Oh, it was over 20 years ago as regards this saying of Jesus.

Now, that is not a very common occurrence, and so it's more memorable, and I remember it well. I'd always just assumed. I hadn't really given very much thought to the matter at all, but I'd always just assumed that the idea of what Jesus was saying in these words, it's more blessed to give than to receive.

The idea was that it's better to give than to receive. It's morally more commendable to give than to receive. It's the right thing to do, whether you like it or not.

[2 : 17] And our response is, well, yes, I suppose that's the way it is. Jesus says so, and so I'll have to make a big effort to give rather than to receive.

It's not really what I prefer doing, but that's what's required of me. It's better to do that. The light bulb moment was discovering that while indeed it may be the case that it is better, more morally commendable to give than to receive, that may be the case, but that is not what Jesus says.

What He says is, it is more blessed to give than to receive. And that means something quite different. What Jesus is saying is that it is a source of more joy and happiness to give than to receive.

It is more satisfying and enriching to give than to receive. It is more fun to give than to receive.

But deeper still, and all these thoughts are connected, the words of Jesus carry the sense that God is the one who blesses the giver.

[3 : 31] If Jesus says it is more blessed to give, He's not simply saying that the act of giving in and of itself is a blessing, though that, well, may be true, but that God Himself blesses the one who gives rather than receives.

God is pleased when He witnesses this attitude, this lifestyle in His own, and He is pleased, and He blesses the giver.

Now, as we do think about this a little, it ought not to surprise us, because God is, of course, the archetypal giver. He is the one who gives in a manner that is beyond really all understanding, all that would be reasonable to expect.

He gave His only Son that He might die on Calvary's tree for us. That great act of giving by God of His Son.

And the Son that was given, in turn, gave Himself over to death, motivated, yes, by loyalty to His Father, but also by love for the likes of you and me.

[4 : 48] So God knows all about giving, and He is thrilled, He is pleased when He sees His own, following in a small way in His footsteps, as we would give rather than receive.

Indeed, for God, to see us delighting in giving rather than receiving is evidence that the ultimate purpose of God in our lives is being fulfilled.

We have been called by God to be part of His family that we might be molded into the image of His Son, Jesus Christ. And when God sees us delighting in giving rather than receiving, then He is able to conclude that His work is ongoing, that it is producing the desired result, that we are indeed becoming, little by little, more like Jesus.

It is more blessed to give than to receive. Okay, but what does that look like? It's got to be more surely than just writing a check or a money thing.

And of course it is. It is much more than just a money thing, this matter of it being more blessed to give than to receive. It is about giving our lives to God and to others.

[6 : 22] Okay, but what does that look like in the flesh, if we can put it that way? Now this morning what I want to do is to see what this looks like as we meet a couple whose lives were lived as a gift to God and to His people.

We are, as I've already commented, continuing in our study through the book of Acts, and we've reached chapter 18, where Paul arrives in Corinth, following what we were considering last week, his sermon to the Areopagus there in Athens.

Now as I was considering how I would tackle this chapter, or at any rate part of the chapter, I was in a little bit of a quandary. The reason for that is that before we began this series on the book of Acts, I had here in Bonacord preached on this chapter, and particularly on verse 9, where Paul has a vision of the Lord at night, and the Lord speaks to him with these words, Do not be afraid, keep on speaking, do not be silent.

So the question was, what do I do? Do I follow the order and preach on this, and perhaps preach the same sermon and see if anybody notices? I was tempted to do that, but I resisted that temptation, and decided rather to tackle the chapter from a very different perspective, and to tackle it by considering, in a very focused way, this couple, Aquila and Priscilla.

So there is much in the chapter that will be left untouched on, because our focus is, as I say, very specific, on seeing what can be learned from this Christian couple, Aquila and Priscilla, a couple who had learned, and who experienced in their own lives, that it was indeed more blessed to give than to receive.

[8 : 21] Now, as we do consider them, just very briefly, I pose the question, what would be our purpose in so doing? Now, at one level, I leave it to the Spirit of God, in each of our lives, to do as He sees fit, as we are confronted and meet this couple.

But I do, or can imagine, three possible purposes that may be combined together for us as we are confronted by Aquila and Priscilla.

At one level, it could serve as a rebuke, as we would compare our own lives with their lives, and it may be that that would serve to rebuke us at how little our lives are governed by this principle, if you wish, that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

At another level, it could serve as instruction, that we would be instructed as to what it is to live a life in this manner, what it looks like to live a life governed by this principle that Jesus has laid out for us.

But at another level, in terms of the purpose of meeting this couple and considering them, and maybe the purpose that I would hope would be most met, is that it would serve as a challenge and an exciting invitation to live this kind of life.

[9 : 50] That it would be an invitation that we see as a welcome invitation. That we would, at the close of having met with this couple, we would say, well, that's the kind of life I want to live.

That's the kind of home I want to have. That's the kind of service I want to give to my Lord. And I pray that it would indeed prove to be an exciting invitation that is set out for us this morning.

Well, what I want to do is follow the steps of Aquila and Priscilla as we are introduced to them in chapter 18. And there is also passing reference to them in other parts of the New Testament, particularly in Paul's epistles.

And we will note those other references too. And as we do, identify in what way they gave of themselves to God and the gospel cause, and in what way they were blessed in so doing.

Because remember, what we are thinking about is these words of Jesus. It is more blessed to give than to receive. So it's not simply enough to see, well, how did they give of themselves?

[10 : 58] But also to notice how they were blessed in giving of themselves to God and to the gospel. Just to locate ourselves, I guess, or to locate Aquila and Priscilla, we can notice how they ended up in Corinth.

It's clear from the information we have in Acts chapter 18, which we haven't read yet, but we'll be reading in bits and pieces in the course of this morning. It's clear that their being in Corinth was far from a fortuitous thing, but rather it was the product of God's gracious and sovereign hand guiding them and ordering their steps.

Notice what we read there at the beginning of chapter 18. After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome.

So there we have an explanation of how it is that this couple find themselves in Corinth. It would seem that the reference here that Luke makes is to an edict of the emperor Claudius that those who have investigated these things consider dates to the year 49 AD.

And this edict, as the verse indicates, involved ordering the removal of the Jews from Rome. Now, the Jewish population in Rome was a very large one, and it's hard to believe that all of them were forced to leave, but certainly a significant number found themselves obliged to leave Rome because of this edict.

[12 : 43] A reference is made to this edict by a Roman historian, Suetonius, and he identifies what he believed to be the cause of this edict.

And I quote, the Jews were indulging in constant riots at the instigation of Christus. And it's generally understood that when Suetonius speaks of Christus, he is speaking about Christus, or Christ.

And so it would seem what had happened is that there was a growing Christian community in Rome, and as we've already discovered, they, like Paul, would have been making known their newfound faith in the context of the synagogues.

And as we've also seen in the book of Acts, that would have created opposition and conflict and hostility on the part of the Jewish population, especially. And that difficulty, that opposition that the Christians were facing in the synagogues, it would seem, leads the emperor to simply decree that all the Jews should leave Rome.

Maybe he was looking for an excuse anyway. We don't know. But let's leave to the side that for the moment, and just imagine how Aquila and Priscilla must have felt at this turn of events.

[14 : 05] Everything would suggest, we can't state this categorically, but everything would suggest that they were already Christians in Rome. They had already become Christians, and when they arrive in Corinth, they were already believers.

How that came about, we don't know. We do know, because we're told in this same book of Acts, that on the day of Pentecost, there were visitors from Rome, and among them, no doubt, those who believed the message that Peter preached were baptized and presumably returned to Rome.

And there in Rome began the work of the gospel there at the very heart of the empire. And maybe it was through the witness of these visitors returning from Jerusalem that Aquila and Priscilla were confronted with the gospel and responded to it.

And it seems reasonable to presume that they were then part of a nascent Christian congregation there in Rome.

But now, as a result of this edict, they had to leave everything behind. Seems reasonable to presume that they had a home in Rome, that they had a business, just as they then set up in business in Corinth, and all of that they had to leave behind, possibly in a very sudden way and losing a great deal as a result, I would imagine.

[15 : 37] I presume that as these events were unfolding, they would have cried out to God, why, Lord? Why is this happening to us?

We who have put our trust in your Son, Jesus, we who are serving you here in Rome, we who are being used of yourself to build up your church here at the very heart of the empire?

Why? Why are we being sent to Corinth? Why are we having to leave everything behind? Well, if indeed that was a question that they posed to God, well, they very soon received an answer.

Which brings us to the first thing we want to say about their lifestyle of giving themselves to God and to the cause of the gospel. And the first thing we can notice is that they gave themselves in the service of Paul very particularly.

Soon after they settle in in Corinth, it would probably be a matter of a few months at most if we work out that the dates when this edict was announced, if that was indeed in 49 AD, then it's generally understood that Paul arrived in Corinth maybe in 50 AD.

[16 : 48] So we're talking about at most a few months that they had been settled in Corinth. And there they are, there's a knock on their door. And as they open the door, who is standing before them but none other than the Apostle Paul.

But the Apostle Paul in a particular state of mind, he's not the Paul that we've grown used to meeting, full of confidence and full of energy and full of courage to proclaim the gospel.

No, we find him rather, or they found him rather, there standing in front of them at their door, a frightened man. Now, we're not told that in Acts chapter 18, but Paul himself gives testimony to that in the letter that he writes to the Corinthians as he recalls this first occasion when he appeared in Corinth.

Notice what Paul himself says concerning his state of mind. as he arrived in Corinth. And we can notice that in 1 Corinthians chapter 2 and verse 3.

There we read, and Paul here is writing to the church in Corinth, and he is recalling this occasion when he arrived in Corinth and met Aquila and Priscilla.

[18 : 05] And there we read, I came to you in weakness and fear and with much trembling. I came to you in weakness and fear and with much trembling.

Without dedicating too much time because we don't have the time available to exploring why that was, certainly it's clear that he was in this state of fear at the prospect of announcing again the gospel in this particular city.

And what did he need as he arrives alone in Corinth in this new city daunted by what is before him and the mission that he has been given?

What did Paul need more than anything else? Well, I think we can say that perhaps what he needed more than anything else was Christian friendship and support. And this is just what Paul got in generous measure from Aquila and Priscilla.

They encouraged him, I'm sure, on that very first visit when he appears at their home. We're told there that Paul went to see them there at the end of verse 2. And because he was a tent maker as they were, he stayed and worked with them.

[19 : 17] So they received him, they encouraged him. Did they know him? It's unlikely they knew him. Had they heard about him? Possibly. Possibly that nascent Christian community and Rome would have heard from travelers who were making their way between Jerusalem and Rome or between Antioch and Rome.

They would have heard something of Paul, would have known something perhaps of his testimony. We don't know. But certainly they soon discovered who he was and offered their unconditional support to him.

As I say, they encouraged him, they provided for him, they provided him a physical home where he could stay. We're not told if this is the case, but it seems reasonable to conclude that for the year and a half that he was in Corinth, as we're told in the passage, there in verse 11, Paul stayed for a year and a half teaching them the Word of God.

It seems reasonable to presume that it was in the home of Aquila and Priscilla that he found hospitality. They helped him in his ministry.

Paul was the preacher. Paul was the teacher. He was the one who was visible. He was the one who would go to the synagogue and teach and preach. The focus was all on Paul, as it were.

[20 : 33] But there behind him, supporting him, helping him, were Aquila and Priscilla. As folk were brought to an interest in the gospel, as some were brought to saving faith, there would be Aquila and Priscilla to help them and encourage them and give them further instruction as they would receive them also in their home.

They gave themselves in the service of Paul. And what blessing did they receive? If we're saying that it's more blessed to give than to receive, what blessing did they receive?

Well, among other things, they were able to develop and enjoy a lifelong friendship with Paul. Fifteen years later, roughly, we find Paul from a Roman prison sending greetings to Aquila and Priscilla.

In a moment, we're going to notice one or two of these passages where he does that. What else did they receive? In what other ways were they blessed by giving themselves in the service of Paul?

Well, one thing that they received, and I'm sure were thrilled to receive, was instruction of the highest caliber in the faith. They had the best seats in the house.

[21 : 48] It was their house. As they were taken on a voyage of discovery into the wonders of the gospel by the teaching and the example of Paul. And I imagine there were many late nights in their home in Corinth where they would discuss the gospel, where they would quiz Paul on what he had preached in the synagogue that day, where they would ask questions, where they would give their opinions, and it would have been a very rich time for Aquila and Priscilla as together with Paul they learn and discover more of the goodness of God and the wonders of the gospel.

Was it a chore for them to have Paul in their home? I'm sure they would have said, no, it was for us more blessed to give than to receive. Well, eighteen months go by, and then the inevitable, Paul informs them that he is to move on.

What happens now? He spent a year and a half in Corinth and he is persuaded that he must move on. In fact, he wants to go back to Jerusalem for a visit. But on his way to Jerusalem he wants to pass by Ephesus.

And what does he do? Does he bid Aquila and Priscilla farewell? No, he says to them, you're coming with me. And so we find in this next chapter as it were how they gave over their future for the cause of the gospel.

We've already seen how they gave themselves in the service of Paul, but now we see how they gave over their future in the cause of the gospel. Notice in verses 18 and 19, Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time, then he left the brothers and sailed for Syria accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila.

[23 : 27] Before he sailed, he had his hair cut off at Sancreia because of a vow he had taken. They arrived at Ephesus where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila.

He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews, presumably just on that fleeting visit. He took the opportunity to go to the synagogue, but he was just passing through Ephesus. But what does he do?

He takes Aquila and Priscilla with them and he leaves them in Ephesus. Paul would not take no for an answer if indeed it was even offered as an answer when he invited them or proposed to them that they come with him.

Aquila and Priscilla had a job to do in Ephesus. They had been trained over the previous 18 months and now they had to serve God in Ephesus, planting a new church without Paul by their side to help them.

And we just think for a moment what they were doing. Here are this couple who had been run out of Rome and yet, by great effort, no doubt, they had managed to settle and establish a good-going business and life in Corinth.

[24 : 40] In doing so, they remained unstinting in their support of the nascent church in Corinth and now they are again to leave everything and to go to Ephesus and start again.

This is what is being asked of them by God through the Apostle Paul. But they, evidently, were willing to gladly give over their future to the cause of the gospel.

They, as others before them, were willing to say to God, here am I, Lord, send me. We've come to Corinth and you have blessed us. If you want us to go to Ephesus, then that's fine.

We'll go to Ephesus and serve you there. What blessing did they receive in giving over their futures to the cause of the gospel?

Well, no doubt, many blessings, but certainly among them the thrill and satisfaction of seeing God at work in their own lives, seeing God at work through their lives there in Ephesus, and seeing God at work in the lives of others that they were able to reach with the good news.

[25 : 49] And in all of these things, they were, I am sure, greatly blessed. They gave their futures to the cause of the gospel. What about me and what about you?

What about your future as you look to what is ahead in your life? As you think of your life and the direction that it is going in, if you think of the plans that you have, your ambitions, your work, or your career, would you be willing to do what Priscilla and Aquila did, to leave everything for the cause of the gospel?

As you would be called by God to go perhaps somewhere you had never intended to go, maybe to do something you had never intended to do, but called to do so. Is that something that we would be willing to do?

Would we appreciate that in so doing we would discover, as I am sure Aquila and Priscilla did, that it is more blessed to give than to receive?

While Aquila and Priscilla settle in Ephesus, it would seem they were there on this occasion, this first time, for a number of years, because we discover from what follows that Paul then returns to Ephesus, in fact, in chapter 19, we already find Paul returning to Ephesus, and it's clear that Aquila and Priscilla were still there and accompanied Paul for a number of years, difficult to know for sure just how many.

[27 : 19] But in Ephesus, they continue to give. They're getting very good at this business of giving, and they give in another particular way that I want to just notice. They gave of their time and love to a disciple, or to disciple, rather, a young Christian named Apollos.

And we can read about that again in chapter 18 of Acts and from verse 24. Aquila and Priscilla are now settled in Ephesus, and what do we discover happens?

Well, there in verse 24, meanwhile, a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John.

He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately. So there we have presented to us this new character appearing on the scene, this man named Apollos, and he is described in very generous terms.

He had many attributes, many things to commend him. He was learned. He had a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He was a man of great fervor. He taught about Jesus accurately.

[28 : 43] It really is a very ringing endorsement of him. But there is one thing that is also said about him, that he knew only the baptism of John. So though his knowledge was accurate, it was limited.

So what do Aquila and Priscilla do? Well, we're told what they do. They invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately or more accurately.

This is what they do. They open up their home to this man named Apollos. They provide, perhaps, a home where he would stay.

We're not told if that was the case. Certainly he was invited to their home for this instruction that he needed to be given. It's clear also, just by the by, that in this, Priscilla and Aquila are working together.

One of the curiosities about this couple that we're not going to even spend any time considering the significance of, but it is a curiosity that they're described sometimes as Priscilla and Aquila, where Priscilla is the wife and name first, and sometimes as Aquila and Priscilla, where the man is named first.

[29 : 55] There's maybe no significance in that, though many have sought to draw out great significance. But regardless of that, it's certainly true, and it's certainly clear from what we're told here, is that they work together in this task of instructing Apollos.

Apollos was a learned man, and yet both of them, husband and wife, were both able to instruct him more accurately in the way of God. They had had these 18 months with Paul in their home.

How much they had learned, they had learned was a huge amount concerning the gospel. Their own understanding of the gospel had deepened greatly in this time with Paul, and so they were well able to take under their wings this young man, Apollos, and both Priscilla and Aquila to instruct him, to teach him in the way of God more adequately or more accurately.

And that is what they do. They instruct him in the way, and I'm sure this instruction in the way was not simply head knowledge concerning doctrines, but as the very word suggests, the way of God.

There would have indeed been instruction in the truths of the gospel, but there would also have been, I'm sure, in the example of Priscilla and Aquila, instruction as to the gospel gospel life, how Apollos should conduct himself, the manner he should relate to other people.

[31 : 16] All of these lifestyle gospel issues would also have been given as instruction to Apollos. And then, together with the other believers in Ephesus, they send him on his way.

I wonder if he had become almost like a son to them. We don't know. Another curious silence, I suppose, concerning Priscilla and Aquila is that there's no reference, even in the greetings that they are sent in the epistles, no reference to any other family members, no reference to sons or daughters.

Now, they may have had sons or daughters, but the silence is at least intriguing. And I wonder if it was the case that they had not been blessed with family. And so, somebody like Apollos would have become almost like a son to them, I wonder.

But at any rate, they are willing to send him on to continue working elsewhere in Achaia. What blessing did they receive in giving of their time and their love to this young Christian?

Well, they were blessed as they could witness God at work in the life of Apollos. And over the coming years, I'm sure it was a source of constant satisfaction as they would hear of Apollos, as they would hear of how he continued in the faith, how he continued to be used and blessed in his ministry.

[32 : 43] And as they would hear news of Apollos, they would be thrilled, they would be satisfied, they would be blessed, blessed in having given of themselves in the formation of this young and very promising believer.

What about ourselves? What about you? Who could you take under your wing to explain the way of God more accurately, to help grow in their faith and move on and be greatly used of God?

And as that is so, so you could enjoy in that satisfaction of seeing that happening. But as we move on, was Apollos alone in enjoying the self-giving ministry and hospitality of Aquila and Priscilla?

Well, by no means, by no means. There is another manner in which they gave of themselves. They gave their home and their financial resources for the work of the gospel.

I've suggested that there are other references to Aquila and Priscilla in the epistles, and indeed there are. And they are revealing. We're going to just notice them now very briefly.

[33 : 52] There's no need really to do more than simply read the references. They're usually just one-verse references that do give us a greater information about how they gave of themselves.

The first reference I want you to notice is in 1 Corinthians 16 and verse 19. And this letter to the Corinthians was sent from Ephesus in the year 53, 54 AD is what is generally thought to be the case.

And there we read, the churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord. And so does the church that meets at their house.

So this is Paul writing from Ephesus. It's clear that Aquila and Priscilla are also there because he is sending to Corinth the greetings of Aquila and Priscilla.

and there is this reference to the church that meets at their house there in Ephesus. But then if we look in Romans chapter 16 and verse 3 and this letter was written, it is estimated, about 57 AD.

[35 : 05] What do we read there in Romans 16 verse 3? So this is Paul writing to the church in Rome. And there he writes, greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus.

They risked their lives for me. Not only I, but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. Greet also the church that meets at their house. Now this is Paul writing to Rome and he's asking that Priscilla and Aquila be greeted.

And there the suggestion would seem to be that they've moved on. They're now in Rome and at their home, as had been the case in Ephesus, there is a church that meets. And then there's one final reference in 2 Timothy chapter 4 and verse 19.

Now this letter was one of Paul's final letters. He's in prison in Rome, probably in the mid-60s AD. And there we read in 2 Timothy chapter 4 and verse 19, one final reference to Priscilla and Aquila.

And this is written from Rome to Ephesus. Timothy is in Ephesus. And there we read, greet Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Onesimus and so on.

[36 : 14] And there it would seem that Priscilla and Aquila having returned to Rome have now returned again to Ephesus. So there was quite an itinerant ministry that they were engaged in. But the interesting thing was that in two of the three references, there is specific reference to the church that met in their home.

It wasn't just that they gave hospitality to the likes of Paul or the likes of Apollos, but their home itself was given over as the location for the churches that met there in their home.

They gave over their home and no doubt that implied with it significant financial support for the cause of the kingdom.

Their home handed over for the work of the gospel. The blessing they received, well, there's reference there in Paul's letter there that he writes to the Corinthians of how all the churches of the Gentiles were grateful to Aquila and Priscilla.

The gratitude, the love, the esteem of God's people was, I am sure, a source of great blessing to Aquila and Priscilla. And just to draw things to a close, again, the references that we've read there in the epistles show us how they repeatedly gave up their comfort and security to obey God's call.

[37 : 38] They began in Rome. They were forced to move to Corinth. They left everything in Corinth and headed to Ephesus. Then it would appear at some point they return to Rome and they have a home in Rome and there's a church that meets in their home.

And then, at some subsequent date, they return once again to Ephesus. And that's what we know about. Perhaps there were other movements that we are not told about. What blessing could there be in such an unstable, itinerant life?

Well, they were, on each and every occasion, they were where God wanted them to be. And there can be no greater blessing than being where God wants us to be. What about us?

Are we settled and comfortable? Would we be of those who wouldn't even consider even the possibility that God might say, well, maybe it's time to move on. Maybe there is service that I would have you give somewhere else, maybe somewhere less comfortable.

Maybe leaving what you're settled in and enjoying and prospering in and going and doing something else. It's not for me to tell you what that might be, but are we willing to listen to the voice of God, how He might say, enough, here, it's time to move on.

[38 : 53] And I have work for you to do elsewhere. And if all this were not enough, we have also read what Paul says of Aquila and Priscilla there in his greetings in Romans chapter 16, that they risked their lives for me.

Even their lives they were willing to risk for the cause of the gospel. So Aquila and Priscilla, lives given over to God and the gospel.

Was it worth it? Just imagine for a moment as we close. An aged Aquila and Priscilla ending their days maybe there in Ephesus. And a young Christian comes to their home as it would seem many did over the years and decades.

And this young Christian is speaking to them. They're aged in their 70s or 80s, I don't know. And they're asked, this life that you've lived, going from one place to another, leaving behind much that you'd achieved to then start again elsewhere.

Was it really worth it? All the sacrifices, all the missed opportunities, was it really worth it? What do you think Aquila and Priscilla would have responded? Well, if they'd ever heard of Edith Piaf, I'm sure they would have said together, je ne regrette rien.

[40 : 11] I have no regrets. We have no regrets. It proved for us much more blessed to give than to receive. Maybe one final question for us.

Why was that so? Why was it true for them that such a life was far from being a burdensome sacrifice, was a blessed life, a life lived to the full?

Why was it that they had discovered the secret of giving as being more blessed than receiving? What was their motivation? Well, they gave generously because they received generously.

They had received from God generously. They had received from God forgiveness of sins, a new life, a new start, a new family, a new direction.

They had received and continued to receive throughout their lives generously from the hands of God. And in response to that generosity of God, they gave of themselves.

[41 : 10] It is impossible for any of us to even consider such a life if first we have not received from God, if first we have not experienced His grace and His love in our lives.

It is only then that we can even begin to consider a life such as the one that has been presented to us this morning. Maybe for some of us that is a question. Have you yet received of the grace of God as you have put your trust in Jesus as your Lord and Savior?

That you with Aquila and Priscilla might be a fellow worker of Jesus Christ and so begin to live a life to the full, a life that is blessed, a life where you know and discover that it is indeed more blessed to give than to receive.

Let us pray. together or let us pray could be fire into more things on the way without coming through or to fame.

We knew you ■■■■ there is even though we are not able to get out of your life ■■■■ when to kick in a Ontario liverieuw tangible and hopefully we are dying to the food that is