

A LIVING FAITH Lesson on **GRATITUDE** and **APPRECIATION**



Theme: **Gratitude & Appreciation** - *The greatest gift of all - the gift of God's love.*

Object: A package wrapped in plain brown paper tied up with string.

Scripture: Luke 1:41-42 (RSV or KJV)

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!"

Shnorhavor Nor Daree yev Soorp Dzuhnoont! (*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!*)

On Christmas morning, we will wake up to find a lot of packages under the tree. Packages wrapped in brightly colored paper and tied up with pretty ribbons and bows. What if there was one package under the tree wrapped in plain brown paper tied up with string -- and what if that package had your name on it? Would that be the package you would choose to open first? Would you feel as much **gratitude** and **appreciation** for this package as you would for a package wrapped in fun, pretty paper? I don't think so! After all, a gift is supposed to come in a beautiful package, isn't it?

You know, I think that is why a lot of people have missed out on the gift that God sent to them. You see, God's Gift didn't come in a beautifully wrapped package. God sent Jesus, His only Son, as His gift to us. His mother was a young virgin... his earthly father was a poor carpenter... he was born in a stable. Not a very pretty package, is it? But do you know what? It was the greatest gift the world has ever known. It was the gift of salvation and it had your name on it... and yours... and yours... and mine!

The Bible tells us that when Mary found out that she had been chosen to be the one to deliver God's gift to the world, she was filled with joy. She hurried to the home of Elizabeth to share the good news. When Elizabeth heard the news, she exclaimed in a loud voice, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! You are blessed because you believed that the Lord would do what he said."

Well, the Lord has fulfilled his promises to us too. He has sent us the gift of His love, but some people are so busy unwrapping the beautifully wrapped packages that this world offers that they forget to feel and show **gratitude** and **appreciation** for the greatest gift. Maybe it is because it came wrapped in brown paper tied up with string.

Dear Father, we are thankful that you loved us so much that you sent your only Son to be our Savior. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.