

This Thanksgiving, Reflect the Lord's Bountiful Love

I opened the front door and came face to face with a rather large gift basket wrapped in clear cellophane with a gigantic velvet orange and brown bow. It was so big that it blocked the face of the deliveryman.

The sight of such a gift was too wonderful for words! As a young married couple, Terry and I were going through hard times, with little money for extras, much less the basics! The arrival of this surprise basket of goodies was not only timely, but a miracle!

Just who was behind this?

Terry and I carefully grabbed the gift basket from the deliveryman and raced to the dining room table to dig in. We tore away the cellophane and bright velvet ribbon to discover, to our amazement, treasures galore!

We uncovered each piece—first there was a canned ham, then a fancy tin of imported sardines (with mustard accompanying it, both of them tied together in a festive plaid ribbon). Out came two giant links of brown sausage, followed by chunks of rich yellow cheddar and two imported cheeses, and fresh apples, pears, oranges, three boxes of crackers, two tins of cookies, Belgium chocolates, hot cocoa mix in an exotic tin, even a red bag of ground coffee, tea bags and hard candies! In special boxes were two coffee mugs trimmed in blue, two soft cream-colored cloth napkins and a small teapot that matched the mugs. What a feast!

To our surprise, the card read: "May the good Lord bless you abundantly this Thanksgiving. Love, Pearl and William."

Pearl and William? Love? Pearl was an older lady who worked in

the gifts department of the large bookstore where Terry worked. Terry, in fact, hardly saw Pearl except when her retired husband, William, stopped by every other week to take her to lunch. The only thing Terry knew about them, in fact, was that they were Christians.

My eye went to the phrase "May the good Lord bless you abundantly this Thanksgiving." It was in that moment when it became obvious to me that the Lord *truly* loved us—loved us enough to have two nearly strangers give something so precious to us in our time of great need.

Isn't that just like the Lord to love us so much and to use others to show His love? God's Word reveals this powerful truth in 1 John 4:7-8: "God is love," and in James 1:17, where it states: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above." His Word also shows *how* He gives to us: "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us" (Eph. 3:20).

It further reveals to us that we are "ambassadors for Christ" (2 Cor. 5:20). As ambassadors for Christ, shouldn't you and I be called, especially in this Thanksgiving season, to show His love through our generous giving to others? As your sister in the Lord, I invite you to join me in doing it Jesus' way—exceedingly abundantly.

This Thanksgiving perhaps you can give a warmer smile of encouragement from your heart, more of your time to a friend or family member, or give your time as a volunteer at a local soup kitchen, or give your time as a volunteer through your church to a hospital, prison or women's shelter. Be open to giving a bountiful gift basket to someone, reflecting the Lord's bountiful love for her! Invite someone who has nowhere to go to your home this Thanksgiving. Who knows how much they might need that.

The seeds given to others in this Thanksgiving season can reap a powerful harvest, not only in our own lives, but also in the lives of others as they come face to face with the loving Lord of the harvest.

PRAYER POWER FOR THE WEEK OF 11/25/2013

This week thank the Lord for His bountiful love and ask Him to show you how to best reflect it during this season. Ask Him to use you to share His love by reaching out to others in need. Pray that the body of Christ would unite in purpose to preach the gospel and extend His kingdom around the world. Get together with others to bless those who have suffered losses through crime, natural disasters, loss of income and loved ones. Pray that revival would spread in churches and communities across the nation. Lift up our president and those in leadership with him. Continue to pray for Israel and the persecuted church, as well as for our military and their families during this Thanksgiving season. I John 4:7; Matt. 25:34-40.