

November 26, 2017
How We Give, How We Live
“Give Thanks”

First Reading ~ from 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

The point is this: if you plant sparingly, you will reap sparingly, and if you plant bountifully, you will reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves one who gives cheerfully. There are no limits to the grace of God, who will provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having an abundance of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. As it is written: “God scatters abroad and gives to the poor; God’s justice endures forever.”

The one who provides seed for the planter and bread for food will supply and enlarge your store of seed and increase your harvest of justice. You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints (God’s people), but also overflows in thanksgiving to God. Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by the way you profess and follow the Gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others. And that makes them give glory to God, and their prayers on your behalf show how they are drawn to you because of the surpassing measure of God’s grace revealed in you. Thanks be to God for such an indescribable gift!

Second Reading ~ adapted from Fred Craddock in
“The Collected Sermons of Fred Craddock”

Can you say grace over your possessions? Can you bow your head and say a word of thanks? “Thank God for this. Thank God for that.”

This is the final test, because gratitude is the central virtue of the Christian life. There is no other virtue like gratitude — none. I’ve never known a person who was grateful who was, at the same time, mean or small or bitter or hurtful. Not when you’re grateful. When our kids were small, if an angel had come into the room and said, “Now you may receive one virtue, one quality for each child; what will it be?” I am sure my wife and I would discuss it, but I already know what my request would be: Make them always grateful.