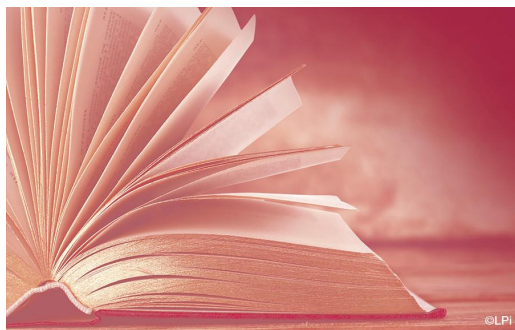


# WORSHIP & MEDITATION



## FIRST READING

Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting;  
the woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.  
Give her a reward for her labors,  
and let her works praise her at the city gates.  
(Prv 31:30-31)



## PSALM

Blessed are those who fear the Lord. (Ps 128)



## SECOND READING

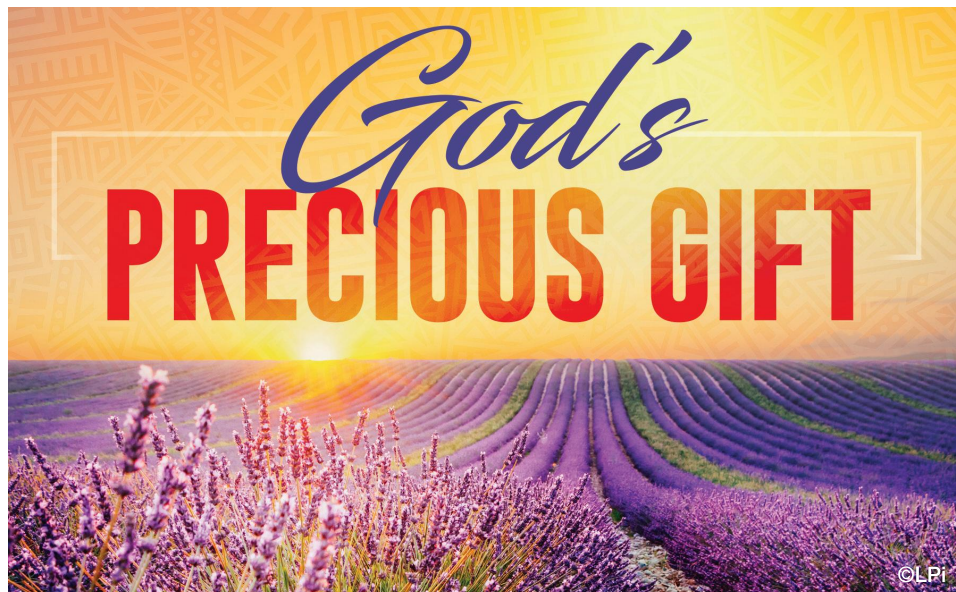
For all of you are children of the light  
and children of the day.  
We are not of the night or of darkness.  
Therefore, let us not sleep as the rest do,  
but let us stay alert and sober. (1 Thes 5:5-6)



## GOSPEL

"His master said to him, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy.'" (Mt 25:21)

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## GOSPEL MEDITATION

### Encourage Deeper Understanding of Scripture

God gives us the gift of His very self and asks us to invest it. Investing God's greatest gift of Himself wisely, allows God's kingdom to grow and flourish. God trusts us with this pearl of great price in hopes that it will produce abundant fruit. While God's gift of self is realized in the gifts of faith, hope, and love, they are not meant to be solely for personal benefit. They are intended to be shared and are at the heart of Jesus' blueprint for happiness, the Beatitudes.

When we properly invest God's greatest gift, His most treasured possession, we invest in the wellbeing of all of our brothers and sisters and the world in which we live. We take up most seriously our call to be stewards and properly manage, not only our own affairs, but the affairs of those around and before us. God has put tremendous confidence in us. Do we have that same confidence in God?

We often go the extra mile and put in the additional effort when it comes to those concerns closest to us: our families, friends, careers, home and securities. But when it comes to things that are not as close to us, we can become lax and less conscientious. Tending to God's treasure requires a great deal of focus and persistent hard work. It demands that I see the bigger picture, God's picture, in which self-sacrifice is a given as we labor for the establishment of God's kingdom, God's vision. Fear and a lack of trust can loom large, however. We are afraid of letting go of what is "mine" and apprehensive of jeopardizing what we have in order to venture into something bigger and more promising.

Fear and a lack of trust serve no purpose in God's kingdom. They benefit neither the person nor God. What is required is a courageous resolve that produces the fortitude necessary to stay the course and do what God is asking. Doing all in our power to cultivate the seeds of faith, hope, and love in our world, working diligently to put all of our relationships in proper order, becoming attentive to systems and ideologies that hurt and oppress people, being mindful of injustice, and laboring on behalf of the poor and the needy are at the core of what each of us is asked to do. It is how we invest God's most precious gift wisely. If persistent, alert and attentive, then life will gradually improve around us, there will be greater peace and we will experience joy.