

## **Giving Thanks**

**Today we worship here freely without fear of retribution or recourse.** Are you aware that for many Christians today in places like Iraq they gathered in fear for their lives? Sadly we are not hearing much in our news media about this. You no doubt have heard of ISIS which stands for the Islamic State of Iraq. They have overtaken much of Iraq. In places like Mosul where Christians have lived for almost 2,000 years they now have been totally eradicated. Christians in areas now dominated by ISIS are being told that unless they convert to Islam or pay protection money they will be endangered of “nothing but the sword.” Hearing stories like this should make us first pray for our fellow Christians but it also helps make us thankful!

You might be wondering what this has to do with the offering? One little known fact is that we are admonished by God to give thank offerings. The people of God would bring an offering of thanks to God for all the blessings He had brought to them. Psalms 107: 22 says, “Let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving and announce His works with shouts of joy.”

So as we do every time we meet we are going to take up an offering today. As we always say your gifts allow us to make a difference in the world. Today as I pray for our offering I want us to all pause and remember in prayer our fellow brothers and sister in Iraq that God would see them through this difficult time. Then I want us to give praise to God that we live in this great land where we worship freely. After the prayer I want you to view this offering differently. I want you to view it as a chance to say thank you to God. Let’s make our offering today one of giving thanks for all He has done for us!