

GRATITUDE

-Ryan Parsons-

I don't think I ever knew genuine thankfulness until everything I owned was suddenly gone. It is a surreal experience to watch fire consume your home. It is disappointing to see heat, smoke, and water destroy things of great value. However, it is altogether amazing to stand homeless, shivering in the cold, and have one of God's people put clothes on your back and shoes on your feet. It is humbling beyond belief to be handed a gift no one has to give you, but because of a higher love in them, they give it freely.

I pray no one has to ever experience the loss we have experienced. However, in our broken world, I know some will. Truth be told, we will all experience a loss greater than our physical possessions. Sin is a fire that takes away our relationship with God (Isa. 59:2). But that isn't the end of the story. Paul tells us in Romans that "while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Ro. 5:8)." In the next chapter, he reminds the Christians that "the wages of sin is death, but the **free gift** of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Ro. 6:23)."

2 Corinthians 9:15

Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

Thank you for your love. Thank you for your gifts. But more importantly, thank you for teaching us again the beauty of the Gospel. May we share that redeeming power with our community and world!

Philippians 1:3

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,

Thank you,
Ryan