

Sermon - November 8, 2009

When it Comes to Money - Might or Mighty Mite

Psalm 27 Mark 12:38-44

This morning when we will be baptizing two children of believers at the 10:30 Service, it seemed appropriate to take a moment here at this service to help each of us remember our own Baptism, and to renew the promises we made, or that were made for us and we later confirmed.

So this morning we remember our Baptism, our cleansing of sin thru Christ's sacrifice for us, and the promise of our resurrection to eternal life through faith.

Jesus said, "You did not choose me, I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear good fruit." Friends, Jesus Christ chose you and called you and joined you to himself. He has called you into his church, his body, and strengthened you by his spirit to serve him as faithful disciples.

In renewal of your Baptism please respond to these questions.

Do you choose to follow Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?

Will you be a faithful member of Christ's Church, giving of yourself in every way to live in his love?

Baptized - whatever you do in word and deed do in the name of Jesus Christ your Lord. Amen.

The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear. I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy. I will sing and make melody to the Lord. I believe I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the Land of the living.

God whose giving knows no ending, from your rich and endless store, gifted by You, we give to you, offering up ourselves in praise.

Beware of the Scribes... they devour widow's houses. He sat down opposite the treasury and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury.

Open wide our hands in sharing, as we heed Christ's ageless call, serving you by Loving all.

Do you want to know what you can do for God, what to do for God with the time and talent and money you have by God's grace? There it is – pure and simple. Serving God by loving all.

And the value of your gift and mine will be measured – not by the might of its size, but by the size of the heart that gives it.

The measure of a gift is not the might of its size, but the size of the heart that gives it. Let us pray.

Lord, may the words of my mouth and the thoughts of these your faithful and loving people, be, in this hour, your word to us in Christ. Amen.

I don't know about you, well, maybe, in fact, I do know about you. Maybe not any one of you in particular, though I have heard some of you – in particular - on this subject. But I think I do know how you are feeling about money about now! Tired of hearing about it.

The lack of it. The stimulus package, and its waste of so much money. The corruption in Detroit, in the Schools and the City Government. The short sightedness at best in Lansing and Washington. Money short falls every where..

And – us, wishing there were more money to talk about. To go around. To help.

And – true to their now infamous form – our legislators, along with unelected business people, have made sure by their greedy decisions that the talk about money will not go away soon. Schools may end many programs soon. Bridges may collapse, soon. Our representatives and senators in the state and nation, may never accept for themselves the medical coverage they just voted to require of us.

I think I've heard enough lately about money. Even though my wife Mary says I'm only hearing about half of what's being said. Not sure if that's a husband thing or my hearing. But maybe that's the way I should leave it - half deaf to the noise and pleas and demands for money, about money From society and, yes, from the Church.

Money – we can't live with it, and can't live without it. Can't live without money. Or – maybe - maybe – we can live without money.

It simply seems to be Jesus point in the story from Mark about the widow's mite. She gave everything she had. Trusting God to provide. She lived – almost – without money.

In a strange way its kind of like the tongue in cheek description of a new proposed IRS tax form. Just two lines. Line 1 - How much money do you have? Line 2 That's how much you owe.

And – in fact – in a strange way - that is the truth about money and about our lives. All that we have or are or ever will have – it all comes from God - and – in the end – it all returns into God's good care. And nothing that we earn or have, goes with us in the end. So – in a way – we do live without money.... Money that is ever really ours.

We come into this world with nothing. We leave it with nothing. Why then do we worry so much about all the temporary things ?

Simply because, brief as our passing lifetimes on earth are, they are built upon what we know, and feel and see. Though the end of our journey will carry us beyond all worldly worries, we can't escape from all things in this time.

So – it is vital how we deal with the things in life – and one of those things is money. And - thanks be – God is Good – in God's giving. And in giving to us the guidance we need.

Time and talent and money - all God's good gifts to us. And all should lead us to give thanks... to sing loudest praises to the God we love. To give thanks. I like the word or words.... Thanks giving. It fits so well with what God expects of us. Feelings won't cut it with God. Only actions will. It's not what I feel, but what I do about what I feel that counts.

It's why Jesus sat across from the treasury building and watched. He knew what he'd see. Jesus knows our hearts through and through. But Jesus watched with his disciples so they could see, too. A parade of wealthy and well off people - and - a widow. And the widow got it, got the picture, and the well off did not.

And sadly that, that picture has not changed much at all. In our own church and our giving. Kelly Fish – our Financial Administrator, tells me - and by the way – thank you for your prayers for Kelly and her health - She is doing very well.

Kelly tells me – based on what she knows about us and our giving – that what Jesus saw in his day Jesus sees in our day, too. That few give according to what they have been given. And - that is precisely the measure of Good Giving.

Good giving is never never is about how much we give. It is always about whether our giving is truly thanks giving. Good giving is about thanksgiving. It is also about faithful giving. And it is about service giving.

Thanks for what we've been given by God. Faithful gifts that show our trust in God to provide for us in the future as God has in the past. And giving that serves in love the needs of others.

God is good. We have guidance for giving that is thank full, faithful and serving. Though we can be a bit slow to let God's spirit guide us, even in this clear way.

There is the story of a little Sunday school experiment. The teacher of 10 year olds asked them if they would give a \$1,000 to the Church. And they all shouted yes. What about \$100 to the Church. And they all shouted yes. What about then, \$1. And everyone said yes except, except Johnnie.... And the teacher asked Johnnie, why didn't you say yes about the dollar gift. And Johnnie said, well, I actually have a dollar in my pocket.

For the idea of a thousand dollars, Johnnie could shout with Joy – thank you Lord. For the sacrifice of a dollar - Johnnie's faith was tested. And ours is tested ...tested by our giving.

It's not the might of the gift that matters, but the might of the faith that can turn a gift of a mite..
m i t e - into a mighty gift.

Something like that happened this weekend. With the free spirit art show here. One of our members had no major money to share with the Refreshed! Encircled by hope campaign. But she had an idea how by using her time and talent she might be able to do some good thing. Some good thing to give thanks for the good things God had been doing in her life.

And with her mite of money, but her mighty faith, her idea became a wonderful Event - that filled our new space with art and music and new people to our Church - and pleas to do it again next year.

I do not know what anybody has, or what anybody gives to OLCC,P. But this I know, we are, all of us, a blessed people. And even in this most stressed of times if we truly give thanks to God for all that we have, if we give faithfully, showing our trust that God will provide for our future as God has for our past, and if we give seeking to show our love for God by serving others, Then – then, whatever we give will be like the widow's mighty mite. A blessed gift.

Then our gifts will strengthen the ministry and mission of this Church at this new and exciting and hopeful time in our Church's life – giving new leadership the tools needed to begin to do new things to reach new people with the great good news of God's love..

We all have a mighty mite to share...and I pray for our giving with these borrowed Words - Words to guide and bless us

Lord Jesus, I give you my hands to do your work, my feet to walk your way, my eyes to see as you see, my tongue to speak your words, my mind to think your thoughts, and my heart that your love my live in me.

What ever your gift, and mine, when ever we give, to a Church budget or a mission project, if thankfully, faithfully, in loving service, given, it will be a mighty mite of a gift.

Amen.

David W. Robertson, Pastor