



Stewardship Footprints

THE WIDOW'S MITE
Mark 12:42-44 (TMSG)

Have you ever given someone a gift without putting much thought into it? Perhaps you purchased an appliance for your spouse when he/she really wanted a more personal token of your love. Maybe you bought a toy for a child thinking the child would love it, only to discover that it wasn't really what he/she wanted, and the child lacked the social graces to pretend it was.

One day, Jesus was sitting in the temple watching people bring their gifts. While many placed large sums of money into the treasury, enjoying the attention they received, Jesus took special notice of a widow whose gift was two copper coins. Jesus told his disciples she gave more than all the others because she gave all she had. Jesus makes it clear that the widow's gift was one that pleased God because it came from the heart. The widow's gift demonstrated her love for her Heavenly Father and her trust in God.

September and October are often months when congregations focus on stewardship. We are encouraged to consider the offerings we are bringing to God. While we would all like to think our gifts are like that of the widow, the truth is, most of us are more like those in Jesus' account who only gave out of their abundance. Our gifts are lacking because they fail to demonstrate our love for God and our total reliance upon God.

One poor widow came up and put in two small coins—a measly two cents. Jesus called his disciples over and said, "The truth is that this poor widow gave more to the collection than all the others put together. All the others gave what they'll never miss; she gave extravagantly what she couldn't afford—she gave her all."

*Mark 12:42-44
(TMSG)*

A United Mission
publication produced by
Mission Resource Development
American Baptist Churches USA
PO Box 851
Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851
www.abc-usa.org

It is not enough to simply consider the amount we bring but, more importantly, we need to examine why we give. Only when our gifts match what we feel in our hearts will they be acceptable to God. It is when our offerings are symbols of our lives given to the Lord and symbolic of our gratitude that they become exactly what the Lord desires.

As we reflect on stewardship in the coming weeks, it is important to remember that all we are and all we have belong to God. Hopefully each of us will take time to examine our tithes and offerings and consider how we can bring an offering worthy of our Heavenly Father that supports our Lord's ministry.

STEWARDSHIP IN ACTION

First Chinese Baptist Church in Fresno, CA has sent three medical mission teams to Asia. As only the second Christian medical team ever allowed into Vientiane, Laos PDR, the group felt a special responsibility to not only help the people they encountered, but also to represent the living and loving God to the over 2,085 patients they saw. Made up entirely of members of First Chinese Baptist and funded entirely by the church, this team is a great example of using their gifts for the glory of God.

"God has richly blessed our church with a large medical population so I decided we needed to go where God was leading," reports Rev. Danny Jack, pastor. "We try to empty the mission budget, but God continues to fill it back up. I would encourage every church to get up out of the pew and serve in their community and also to go global!"

Church Mice

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