

EXPERIENCING the POWER of “ONE ACCORD”

“...they lifted up their voice to God with one accord...And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.” Acts 4:24, 31-33 (KJV)



This Week’s Thought – December 18, 2016

“He looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury; he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. He said, ‘Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them; for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on.’” Luke 21:1-4 (NIV)

During this time of year, in the midst of shopping, parties, and decorations, we are often asked to consider our charitable giving. You’ve likely received letters in the mail, appeals over the phone, etc., for some sort of monetary gift or donation to some charity, cause or need. While this often may feel like yet another item to fit into an already overcrowded schedule, Jesus’ words in Luke 21 remind us of the great joy that can be found in a life of **radical generosity**.

The radical nature of this story is found in the way Jesus celebrates a gift of almost complete insignificance. If funds are needed to achieve a certain goal, whether to fund a budget, build a building, launch a new program, etc.; the assumption is that the target amount is the ultimate goal. As such, the larger the amount, the more significant the gift, or at least that’s how the logic traditionally goes.

Jesus, by contrast, is infinitely more concerned with the state of your heart and the control money has over it than he is with the amount you give. He sees rich people giving huge sums of money, yet knows it is a gift of convenience. It is a gift that they never think twice about and in no way affects their comfort or lifestyle. By contrast, the poor widow has nothing to give, already living off the charity of friends and her community; and yet, not only does she give a portion of the little that she has, she *“put in all she had to live on.”*

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The widow is for us a picture of complete and total dependence upon God. She is someone who knows the goodness, faithfulness, and care of the Lord so fully that she gives knowing she will not be forgotten or ignored. She knows that, for all the promises of protection, purpose, and power, money will always let her down and fail to deliver.

When we give not just from our abundance but especially from our place of need, we make a radical statement: our hope for provision is in God alone. In some ways, it is quite ironic isn't it? That every piece of American money reminds us of this truth. “*In God We Trust*” is printed and molded onto pieces of paper and metal that each day tempt us to misplace our trust and our hope. Yet this phrase can also be a helpful exhortation: you who are tempted to trust in wealth and resources, “Trust in God!”

Whether you have great wealth or live with significant need, give until it hurts this season, for as you do you boldly proclaim that God alone is your protector and provider!

Words from the Master during your time of reflection this week: “Learn to live above your circumstances. This requires focused time with Me, *the One who overcame the world*. Trouble and distress are woven into the very fabric of this perishing world. Only My Life in you can empower you to face this endless flow of problems with *good cheer*. As you sit quietly in My Presence, I shine Peace into your troubled mind and heart. Little by little, you are freed from earthly shackles and lifted up above your circumstances. Rest in My Presence, *receiving Joy that no one can take away from you.*” (John 16:33; Psalm 42:5; John 16:22)

“And then God answered: “Write this. Write what you see. Write it out in big block letters so that it can be read on the run. This vision-message is a witness pointing to what's coming. It aches for the coming—it can hardly wait! And it doesn't lie. If it seems slow in coming, wait. It's on its way. It will come right on time.” Habakkuk 2:2-3 (MSG)

Yours in Christ, Pastor King