



Charity Gives But Justice Changes

NOTES

Responsive Readings · True Worship Is Sharing With those in Need

Call to Worship

Pastor: We worship God by giving ourselves in devotion to him.

People: We have many forms of worship; but it is too easy to sit through these forms without giving ourselves to God.

Pastor: That is why God asks for true worship to be expressed in the form of sharing this world's goods with the needy.

People: May the worship we profess in the sanctuary find expression in genuine concern for the poor and hungry.

Collect

Almighty God, who requires worship to reach beyond ritual into the area of benevolent service: Inspire in us honest devotion which will motivate genuine love for those less fortunate, that we may enjoy the blessing of your guiding presence in our lives. We pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of Confession

We have expressed our worship in too small a place, Father, and the real sanctuary of our world is desecrated by our unwillingness to share with our brothers and sisters. Forgive us for the empty expressions we have offered as worship, while failing to express our love by reaching out to others in need. Lead us by your Spirit in true worship, that we may feel our brothers' need, and minister to that need. In our Savior's name we pray. Amen.

Hymns

"O Brother Man, Fold to Thy Heart"

"The Voice of God Is Calling"

"We Thank Thee, Lord"

"Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life"

Lined area for taking notes.



Children's Sermon · The Big Meaning of a Small Gift

by Brett Blair

Exegetical Aim: The most expensive gift given is not a determinant of the one who has made the greatest sacrifice. The words in **bold** are meant to instruct the leader through this children's sermon..

Prop: 35 one-dollar bills, two pennies, and an offering plate. Keep the offering plate behind you. You might ask one of the ushers to participate by bringing out the offering plate and taking up the offering. Be prepared yourself to give this thirty five dollars to the church because the kids will be placing it in the offering plate and you very well cannot take it out once you have put it in.

Lesson: Good morning! (*response*) I have some money to give you this morning. **Hold out all the ones. Make a production of it. Don't show the pennies. Count out each dollar as you hand them out. Indiscriminately give 20, 10, 5, and the two pennies to four individuals. First person:** Ok, hold out your hand. You're a person that has a good amount of money. You have one, two ten. You have ten dollars; you're pretty rich. What are you going to do with your money? (*response*) **Second:** Hold out your hand. You have one, two five dollars. You are not as rich as he is but you have some money. What are going to do with your money? (*response*) **Third:** Hold out your hand. You have one, two twenty. Can you believe that? Twenty dollars. You are very rich! What are going to do with all your riches? (*response*) **Fourth:** Now, hold out your hand. You're the last one. You have one two. Two pennies. That's not a lot of money. Sorry but you're very poor. What are going to do with your two cents? (*response*)

Now, you know what happens don't you? **Bring out the offering plate and hold it up high.** What is this? (*response*) **Humor:** Every time you get some money the preachers reach for the offering plate don't they? but for good reason. We always give first to God. **Pass the plate to each child. To the first:** You decided to give four dollars to God. Count them out. (*response*) Thank you. **Second:** You decided you needed to give two dollars. (*response*) Thank you. **Third:** You were the very rich girl and want to give ten dollars don't you? (*no*) Well, that's what you decided to do anyway! (*response*) Thank you. Now you were the **poor** girl, weren't you? All you have in the world is two little pennies. Guess what you decided? (*response*) You decided to give both your pennies. (*response*) Thanks.

Application: Now, I have a question for you. Which one of these gave the most? (*the one who gave ten*) Why is that? (*response*) Well let me surprise you. She is the one

underwent many ritual cleansings; I studied the Zohar the mystical commentary on the Torah day and night.”

“Wait,” said the Angel, “until we have completed our investigation to learn whether you motives were pure.”

Then a tavern-keeper drew near. “I kept an open door and fed without charge every poor man who came into my inn,” he said.

The Heavenly Portals were opened to him. [3]

Amen.

NOTES

1. For a full reading of each of the eight points go to:
<http://www.panix.com/~jjbaker/rmbmzdkh.html> or http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/45907/jewish/Eight-Levels-of-Charity.htm

2. Wendell Berry, “The Wild Birds” in *The Wild Birds: Six Stories of the Port William Membership* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1986,), 136-37.]

3. No investigation was required. (Rabbi Aaron Leib of Primishlan, as quoted in Abraham Karp, *The Jewish Way of Life and Thought*, New York: KTAV Publishing Inc., 1981, p.177

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Sermon Illustrations · Quotes and Stories

Albert Nolan begins his wonderful book with this paragraph:

“On the whole we don’t take Jesus seriously----whether we call ourselves Christians or not. There are some remarkable exceptions, but by and large we don’t love our enemies, we don’t turn the other cheek, we don’t forgive seventy times seven times,



Four Questions for Church Membership

A seminary professor named Stanley Hauerwas has a novel idea about how churches should receive new members. A teacher of Christian ethics at Duke University, he has written about the church’s need for honesty and has called us to tell the truth as a “community of character.”

To this end, he has a modest proposal. Whenever people join the church, Hauerwas thinks they should stand and answer four questions: * Who is your Lord and Savior? The response: “Jesus Christ.” * Do you trust in him and seek to be his disciple? “I do.” * Will you be a faithful member of this congregation? The answer: “I will.” * Finally, one last question: What is your annual income?

You heard me correctly. When people join the church, Dr. Hauerwas thinks they ought to name their Lord and Savior and tell fellow church members how much money they make. It is obvious Hauerwas does not serve as a pastor of a congregation. His idea just wouldn’t work, especially in the American church. Most church members believe salary figures are more sacred than prayer, and would quickly tell an inquisitive minister to snoop around somewhere else. What’s more, parish experience tempers the questions a minister asks of church members. Most pastors quickly learn how to dance around the issue of money without ever naming it.

William G. Carter, No Box Seats In The Kingdom, CSS Publishing, Lima, Ohio, 1996.

Are We Rich?

The curse of any kind of valuable possession is its capacity to steal our hearts and souls. The heavier the purse, the tighter the strings. Is it fair to call most of us rich? According to our Methodist founder John Wesley, it is. He said that the word “rich” in the Bible means to have the necessities of life (food, shelter, and clothing) and then something left over. But here is part of the problem of us rich folks. We have increased the number of things we regard as necessities. We want three cars, two VCRs, four computers, a house at the lake, country club membership, and private school education. There are hundreds of things that we call necessities that our parents referred to as luxuries. The Bible says that shelter, food, and clothing are necessities. To have these and something left over, as almost all of us do, is to be rich.

Dr. Bill Bouknight, Collected Sermons, ChristianGlobe Networks, Inc., 2002.

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Lined area for taking notes, consisting of horizontal lines.

