

Offerings of the Heart

Rev. Mark A. Medina

November 8 2015

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This morning's Gospel lesson from Mark illustrates how Jesus recognized the plight of the poor as well as how they were unjustly treated by the religious scribes. This teaching moment gave the followers an opportunity to see the heart of giving.

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My dear brothers and sisters, God is calling each of us to give out of our hearts with a life of gratitude and sacrifice. Yes, it is a challenge to give from the comforts of our abundance. If we can move into the giving of our time, talent and money then the Christian endeavor of discipleship can flourish and remain viable in the world and in this congregation.

So let us remember the words of the Apostle Paul to the Christians at Corinth in the Second letter of Corinthians chapter 9 verse 7. **Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.**

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Mark 12:38-44 (NRSV)

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Rev. Mark A. Medina

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Offerings of the Heart

Rev. Mark A. Medina

November 8 2015

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So let us remember the words of the Apostle Paul to the Christians at Corinth in the Second letter of Corinthians chapter 9 verse 7. **Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.**

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Rev. Mark A. Medina

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A minister, Daniel Akin, wrote in his sermon, *“The Widow's Mite: The Poor Woman Who Gave All She Had”* about what Jesus sees in giving from the heart. He wrote, “Jesus saw what he came to see. With piercing divine insight he saw both the gift and the heart. He saw both the act and the motive behind the act. He knew those who gave only because others were watching and he knew those who would have given if no one was watching. And, with the judgment he is about to render, he once again turns the value system of the world on its head. Once again we see a grand reversal of what really counts in the eyes of God.”

My friends, God sees into our hearts, minds and souls what drives the desires within us. I believe God wants us to give of ourselves whole heartedly to the love of

God and the rearranging of our lives to give in a sacrificial manner. We can give of our time, talent and money to the causes of Christ in the world to transform individuals into disciples. God is asking us to look deep into our hearts and to offer up what lies within.

God made the greatest sacrifice of all by sending his son Jesus to us in love. Jesus knew he had to make a sacrifice by giving up his life and dying on a cross for our sins. The New Testament lesson from Hebrews chapter 10 verses 12 thru 14 established the sacrifice of Christ for us once and for all. **“¹²But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, ‘he sat down at the right hand of God’, ¹³and since then has been waiting ‘until his enemies would be made a footstool for his feet.’ ¹⁴For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.”**

My dear brothers and sisters, God is calling each of us to give out of our hearts with a life of gratitude and sacrifice. Yes, it is a challenge to give from the comforts of our abundance. If we can move into the giving of our time, talent and money then the Christian endeavor of discipleship can flourish and remain viable in the world and in this congregation.

So let us remember the words of the Apostle Paul to the Christians at Corinth in the Second letter of Corinthians chapter 9 verse 7. **Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.**

May it be so for us all.

Let us pray: Dear God, we are so grateful for everything that you have given us. Thank you so much for the loved ones in our lives, for the many ways in which we are cared for and supported. Thank you for the many ways we can serve and give to others. Thank you for the rich tapestry of colors in creation, for the beauty which is all around us, for the skies and the ever changing cloud formations, for the breathtaking sunsets and early morning mists. Our hearts are so grateful and brimming with thanks. We could write a thousand books about your great goodness, and still have many stories to tell. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We thank you with everything we are. Our hearts and souls cry thank you lord! In Jesus name we pray. Amen. (Adapted prayer from www.lords-prayer-words.com)

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Scriptural Support:

Mark 12:38-44 (NRSV)

³⁸As he taught, he said, **“Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, ³⁹and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets! ⁴⁰They devour widows’ houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.”**

⁴¹He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. ⁴²A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. ⁴³Then he called his disciples and said to them, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. ⁴⁴For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

Hebrews 10:11-14;

11 And every priest stands day after day at his service, offering again and again the same sacrifices that can never take away sins. ¹²But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, ‘he sat down at the right hand of God’, ¹³and since then has been waiting ‘until his enemies would be made a footstool for his feet.’ ¹⁴For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.