

On Giving

When the subject of giving is discussed in a church setting, my mind goes back to the touching account of personal sacrifice recorded in Mark 12:41-44. Jesus was observing people putting money in the Temple treasury. Some were giving large amounts but He noticed a poor widow who gave a minute offering.

The subject of giving “hits close to home,” as we sometimes say, with a lot of people. A possible reason for our sensitivity to sermons on giving can be found in II Corinthians 8:2-5. The brethren at Macedonia first gave themselves to the Lord and then freely gave their money, i.e., the giving came last. It follows that our sensitivity to the subject of giving is because we are still wrestling with completely giving ourselves to the Lord.

Our culture may also have some effect on our giving. Most people today would likely have said to this poor widow, “You should not be asked to contribute to the treasury, let the rich people pay enough for all or us.” But Jesus, in effect, commended this poor widow to His disciples for giving all she had, thus making her as an enduring example. Why did Jesus say what He said?

The Lord requires the same for all people (Micah 6:8, Deut. 10:12-13). There is not one standard for the poor and another for the rich. God is like the man in the parable of the talents given in Matthew 25:14-30. To one servant he gave five talents, two talents to another, and one talent to one other, each according to their ability. The man in this parable required the same proportion of return from all his servants, even though they were given different amounts. Likewise, we are to be faithful stewards of those resources we have been given.

The beginning point is thankfulness to God for all the blessings He gives us, both big and small. God’s gift of forgiveness of our sins and the peace of mind He offers are overwhelmingly greater compared to material things we may receive, regardless of the quantity. These alone are reasons enough for us to be thankful and willing to give of our abilities and money. Undoubtedly, thankfulness was the poor widow’s mindset.

What is the application to us at Karns? Simply stated, every family or giving unit at Karns should give according to the amount the family unit has prospered. If we are blessed with income during the week or month, we should give as we have been prospered. Jesus did not give the widow a pass because she was poor and He will not give us a free pass either.

All of us must be thankful for God’s blessings and be faithful stewards of His blessings.

For the elders (Don Denton)