

FAITHFUL SERVANT

"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' Matthew 25:21



Second Edition, 2010



Let Her Walk Preacher

The visiting preacher was really getting the congregation moving.

Near the end of his sermon he said this church has really got to walk to which someone in the back yelled, "let her walk preacher"

The preacher then said if this church is going to go it's got to get up and run to which someone again yelled with gusto, "let her run preacher."

Feeling the surge of the church, the preacher then said with even louder gusto, "if this church is going to go it's got to really fly" and once again with ever greater gusto, someone yelled, "let her fly preacher, let her fly."

The preacher then seized the moment and stated with even greater gusto, "if this church is really going to fly it's going to need money" to which someone in the back yelled, "let her walk preacher, let her walk."

<http://www.luthersem.edu/stewardship/database.aspx?filter=Humor>



A Life of Generosity

In Mark chapter 14 there is a story about a widow who went to church one day. We don't know much about the woman; in fact, she's actually only talked about in a mere three verses. People of her day would barely have even noticed her. She was a widow and she was poor and as soon as people would have discovered those two things about her, their attention would have moved elsewhere. Yet, this nameless widow has become a symbol of generosity throughout the Christian church down through the centuries.

Many people know the story. One day Jesus was in the temple and he was sitting near the temple treasury—that was the place in the temple where people gave their offering. I don't think Jesus normally watched what people gave in their offering, but there was something that caught his attention that day. The impression we get is that there was a fair bit of commotion around the treasury. Unlike the small wooden bowl that we have at the back of our church, the Temple treasury was made of metal and had a cone-like shape. Coins that were placed into the treasury slid down the sides of the cone and made quite a noise on the metal sides. It wasn't easy to put your offering into the treasury, quietly. The coins made a noise and really as far as the people who gave were concerned, the more noise, the better. It was quite the sight and quite the sound when a rich person came to give their offering. The coins would be dropped from a height and would make quite a racket as they made their way down the cone to the collection box below. And with that sound, heads would turn. There might have even been some oohs and some ahhs—after all, people were giving some impressive offerings.



As Mark continues on in the story, we hear of the widow coming onto the scene. She too wants to make an offering so she heads toward the Temple treasury. She reaches into her pocket and pulls out everything she has—a meagre two coins and she places them in the offering. There is barely a sound. Heads don't turn, mouths don't open. There isn't an ooh or an ah coming from anyone. Of those who do see what she does, there was likely a smirk. Somebody might have tried to hold back their laugh. She gave so little—two coins--what difference would that make to the life of the Temple? And yet I wouldn't be surprised if Jesus could barely hold back his emotions. I can just picture a tear sliding down his cheek and his lip starting to quiver. After a moment of quiet, he was able to speakcont'd on Pg. 2

A Life of Generosity cont'd...

and so he turned to his disciples and told them that the woman had in fact given more than all the others. They had given out of their excess. They had given out of that which was left over—the spare change that they no longer needed. The woman gave all. While the others gave more money, they weren't doing so generously. They looked to their own needs first and only after those needs had been met did they think about offering to God. It was completely opposite for the poor widow. She had a generous heart and she gave generously. She made an offering first to God and only after that would she consider what she needed for herself.



I've often heard people say "If only I had more money, just think of the things I could do for others." Some talk about wanting to win the lottery so that they can help others. The thing for us to realize though is that

a generous heart is where it all begins. If people aren't generous with what they have now, there is no reason to think that generosity will come with a little more money. Yes, actual dollars might rise but is that what's important to Jesus? Our God is a generous God. He pours out his blessings on us without limitation and yet so often we want to keep things to ourselves. We want to meet our needs and then we say we will think of others. God calls us to lives of generosity. He calls us to generous living each and every day. We don't need lottery winnings to enable us to be generous. Generosity starts in the heart, not in the bank account or due to a budget presentation. One of our problems is that we think that what we have is ours. That's not what Jesus taught. He taught that what we have belongs to God and that we are only stewards, faithful servants looking after that which is not our own. The question is: will we be those faithful servants? We will live lives of generosity, giving of ourselves to the one who gave himself to us—responding to the grace God has lavished on us? Will we take action today or choose to wait for the lottery tomorrow. Think about the odds of winning the lottery; can generosity and a faith-filled response to God wait that long?

By Stephen Hambidge

Generosity can be the norm

Editor's note: This article is the product of an interview with a Holy Trinity family, but their names have been changed, to help this publication to celebrate giving, not givers.

Brad and Angelina Eastwood make giving look easy – because for them, it is.

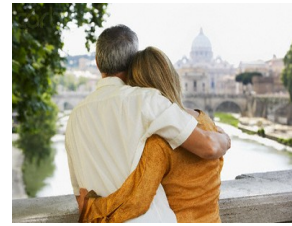
Not because they have so much wealth that they won't miss the cash they toss to church and charity – they don't even own their home – but because giving has always been the norm for them.

"I had role modelling that valued tithing. My parents tithed, so I was used to the concept of giving away a portion of income," Brad recalls. "Even as a child, if I got some money as a gift or I earned it, I was in the habit of giving 10% back to God."

Angelina's childhood experience was similar, so it was natural for the Eastwoods to carry that philosophy into their marriage.

"There wasn't a time when we ever wanted to not give. We have seen the blessing of giving – we saw the joy that we had ourselves in helping other people meet their needs."

The Eastwoods have never been wealthy by earthly standards, but they don't let that stop them from being generous with what they have.



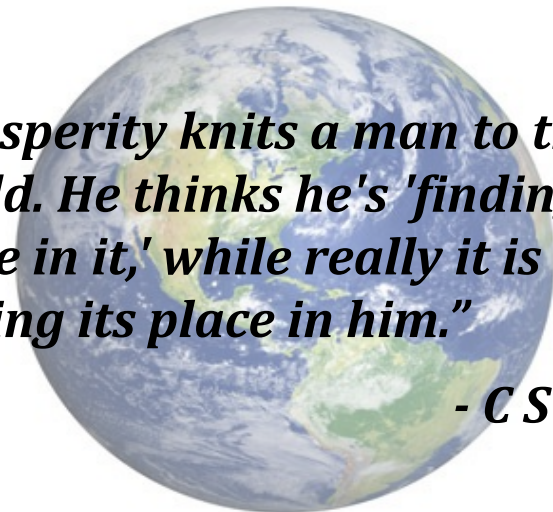
"We had a principle. We never had a budget, which may surprise you. We operated on the principle of not buying what we don't need, that has served us quite well," Angelina says.

They also learned early on to trust God to provide what they need, and not to be shy about asking for it. Brad recalls his post-secondary education days, when the money he earned during the summer covered his room and board during the school year, but nothing else. Even so, he never had to go without toiletries and decent clothes.

"I got in the habit, back then, of asking God for*Cont'd on Pg. 3*

"Prosperity knits a man to the world. He thinks he's 'finding his place in it,' while really it is finding its place in him."

- C S Lewis



Generosity can be the norm continued...

the things I needed and I saw Him supply. That reinforced that sense that Scripture teaches – that my God will supply all your needs,” Brad explains.

“He’s not an ATM machine that when I pull his chain, he coughs up \$200. But at the same time, there’s a sense that He’s a heavenly father who cares for me. I have a genuine need, I can talk with Him about it and He often provides for me.”

Not that the Eastwoods are believers in the Prosperity Gospel, which teaches that what you give to God will be returned to you 10 times over.

“I think that’s unscriptural, and it’s not our motivation for giving; never has been. It really does a disservice to the church,” Brad says. When it comes to the tithing, the Eastwoods give a set amount, rather than a percentage. They also give specific amounts to several favourite charities, and leave room in their finances for spontaneous giving.

“There are always a few opportunities to give to worthwhile causes that aren’t necessarily Christian, like MS Foundation or Diabetes or Cancer. Sometimes it’s a response to a family member or friend doing a run or something for a particular charity. We want to support the individual as much as the charity itself,” Angelina says. “We love to respond – we absolutely love giving.”

Brad agrees.

“I don’t think there’s ever a letter that comes into my email basket from any charity or individual that I don’t feel like I’d like to respond to,” he says. “I don’t respond to them all – after I’ve prayed about some of them, I don’t – you just can’t. But at least there’s always a heart tug that ‘Ooh, I should at least consider this.’”

When you add up all of the Eastwoods’ giving at Tax Time, around 10 to 15% of their income goes to charity and church.

“We always felt it was important to take the tithe off the top, not wait until we see if the bills were paid,” Brad says. “And somehow, God has honoured that.”



Interview & Article by Rob Petkau

YES, BUT HOW?

Have you decided to start the journey toward tithing to the church? Are you wondering how you can donate? There are several ways:

1. Place an anonymous **cash** donation in the offering bowl at the back of the church (it sits on a small table to the left of the open glass doors inside the sanctuary)
2. Sign up for **offering envelopes** at the round table in the foyer. This will allow the envelope secretary to record your donations throughout the year and to issue a tax receipt to you.
3. Place either cash or **cheque** (made out to Holy Trinity Anglican Church) in your envelope (or a visitor envelope also found on the round table in the foyer) in the offering bowl at the back of the sanctuary.
4. Sign up for monthly **automatic withdrawals** from your account. This method prevents forgetfulness and also allows for donations during vacations or absences. Forms are also on the round table in the foyer, or can be sent to you electronically (please email office@holyltrinitycalgary.org to request one) Don't forget to place your completed form in the offering bowl.

If you have any further questions, feel free to contact Corporation: corporation@holyltrinitycalgary.org



Young Man Promises God to Tithe

W. A. Criswell tells of an ambitious young man who told his pastor he’d promised God a tithe of his income. They prayed for God to bless his career. At that time he was making \$40.00 per week and tithing \$4.00. In a few years his income increased and he was tithing \$500.00 per week. He called on the pastor to see if he could be released from his tithing promise. It was too costly now. The pastor replied, “I don’t see how you can be released from your promise, but we can ask God to reduce your income to \$40.00 a week, then you’d have no problem tithing \$4.00.”

(W. A. Criswell, A Guidebook for Pastors, p. 156).

