



the Source

Let anyone who is thirsty come to me...

My Grandmama passed away two weeks ago. She had leukemia and it went fast.

I don't have a lot of memories of her - most of when I got to see her was when I was very young. However, one memory sticks out in my mind. My dad took my brother, sister, and me to visit her in Kentucky a long time ago. I think I was in junior high or high school at the time. I asked if I could have something, probably a bit of food or a drink. She told me, "Of course, you can have anything you want in this house." Being the snot-nosed brat I was at the time, I asked, "Even the TV?" She responded, "Yes, even the TV."

Now, I'm sure that there's no way my Dad would have let me take home their TV with us. But there was something in how she said it...I truly believe she would have let me have that TV if I wanted. Grandmama was not a rich woman by any stretch of the imagination. She was far closer to the widow in this week's scripture. Yet her willingness to part with what she had to make another happy left a mark on me.

If you have ever seen the movie, *Inside Out*, you know that Riley has moments in her life that help shape who she is...those *core memories*? That moment with Grandmama is a *core memory* for me. It profoundly affected how I see my possessions, and how much more they can mean when I can share them with someone else. It helped me learn not to be so attached to *stuff*, and grow to be more attached to people. I've tried to be a lot more giving, and while sometimes I have varying degrees of success at it, I feel on the whole that it's one of my better qualities, and I have Grandmama to thank for it. It may be the only thing I have of hers, but it's the best thing I could have.

— Robin Levins, First Church member

Consider the Source Luke 21:1-4

A Family Affair

Do you like to put money in the offering plate? Would you rather give \$2 or \$200? Why? Discuss as a family. Then read this week's brief, but meaningful scripture: Luke 21:1-4. What do you think the writer is trying to emphasize about giving?

In these verses, Jesus comments on two different kinds of giving. Some people were giving very large amounts and one widow put in two mites, which was a very small amount. At first glance, one might think it was better to give a larger amount. However, Jesus points out those who put in large sums were giving out of their abundance. In other words, they had already paid for their needs, and possibly their wants. They were giving money that was leftover. The widow put in a small amount of money, but she was putting others' needs in front of her own. God doesn't need our money and size of our gift is not important. He wants us to give from our hearts to honor him, not to honor ourselves.

As a family, talk about how it feels to give to others. Maybe you have had the opportunity to donate money, or canned goods, to our church-wide Thanksgiving bag mission that has also been the mission for Children's Sunday School. Maybe your family is planning to give of their time to deliver those Thanksgiving bags to needy families.

Dear God, thank you for the lessons we learn from studying your Word. Help us to remember that giving from our hearts is more important than the size of our gifts.

— Jennifer Hall, Director of Children's Ministry

Monday: Luke 21:1-4

I often find myself trying to temper my expectations of what I'm capable of giving. I claim to withhold from giving "too much" because of what I "need", when in truth I need quite a bit less than I admit to myself.

- Luke mentions "rich people" in this passage. How could Luke tell which ones were the rich people? Consequently, what do you think it is that qualifies them as being "rich"? Is it how much they make, or what they own for themselves?
- Good news to the poor is a central theme of Luke's gospel. How does this passage reflect that focus?

Tuesday: Luke 13:18-19

There is a saying, "No snowflake thinks it is responsible for the avalanche." I have always seen this saying in its negative light - an indictment against avoiding blame. However, I've also come to appreciate the positive message behind it - a large positive collective action is dependent on many working together.

- Can you think of a time when something amazing happened that could not have happened by the efforts of many people?
- In Game 5 of the World Series, the Astros outscored the Dodgers 13-12. Astros player Brian McCann had only one hit - a solo home run, without which the Astros could not have won the game. Does it matter that McCann didn't score the other 12 Astros runs?

Wednesday: Luke 17:5-10

In the church of my youth, there was a missionary named Jaime. He was tireless in his work to promote the gospel and to do mission work and physical labor for those in need. I remember profusely thanking him one day for his work on behalf of God, and his response was the last half of Luke 17:10. His humility left a mark on me.

- Do you know someone who toils thanklessly for the greater good? Take time to thank them for what they do.
- How often do you refrain from doing good because you might not get the honor you think you're due?

Thursday: 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

I am very good at starting projects, and less good completing them. I take a bit of comfort in knowing this is not a new struggle for any of us, as Paul here encourages the Corinthians to finish the work that they had started, "according to what one has - not according to what one does not have". It is easy to get swept up in a moment of charitable feeling, particularly when a need presents itself. This is a good thing, too, and we shouldn't stamp that out!

- Why is it also important for long-term giving and mission to be a priority?
- How is this particularly applicable in the aftermath of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria?

Friday: Luke 12:13-21

Jesus tells a parable of a rich fool, who hoards possessions and thinks this will provide him with a good life, whatever that may be. There is no critique of how the rich man gained his wealth, only in what he does with it.

- What is it to be rich towards God?
- What is the alternative to living like the rich fool?