

GOD THE GIVER

Stewardship Narrative Series presented by TENS

Proper 27
Mark 12:38-44

Stewardship was not a word that I grew up with, but globalization is making it a more popular word. I came into the Episcopal Church through the Haitian community, and in my community we used the phrase “obligation missionnaire” (missionary obligation), not stewardship, to talk about our support of the Church. My perspective on the story is a little different from many sermons that I have heard.

Step back from reading this passage from a dominant point of view where the Pharisees, scribes, and persons with economic status hold all the power. From the widow’s perspective, we see the simplicity of the act. She put in her coins because it was part of her ritual, the way she relates to her God. She fulfilled her obligation but not to have a relationship with God or to fulfill the law as the Pharisees might do. In the early Church, in the new covenant under Christ, we are called to share of what we have for the betterment of the community and to grow the church of Jesus Christ. Under the new covenant we share what we have in order to have a relationship with the entire community.



The widow did not give of her surplus. She did not give for tax credit or recognition. The widow shared what she had. Our “obligation missionnaire” is about sharing, whether it is two pennies or several billions. By sharing we stay engaged with each other and our community. As members of the Christian community it is our “missionary obligation” to share, not give. God did not give to a small group the fruits of creation for us to amass and distribute. God gave all of creation to all of us as stewards.

God shared with us His being. We are created in the image of God. God shared His Son Jesus with us. God remains engaged in our lives. Do not give but share with pride whatever you have. That is the power of the widow.

The widow was proud of her two pennies, and her commitment and engagement with her entire community. Maybe this is the self-giving act that Jesus wanted his disciples to see.



The Rev. Judith Alexis most recently served L'Eglise de l'Epiphanie in Stamford, the Haitian Ministry of the Diocese of Connecticut, and as the Haitian missionary for the diocese until 2014. Currently, she enjoys her new ministry as a court interpreter for the judicial system and a supply priest for congregation in her area.

Reflection Questions:

How do you understand your “obligation missionnaire”?

Do you think of your offering of financial support as “giving” or “sharing”?
What is the difference?

Does sharing your financial gifts strengthen your commitment to the community?



The Episcopal Network for Stewardship