

Thursday, November 24

Happy Thanksgiving! Take some time to give God thanks today for all you have and the opportunity to give to others. The widow in Mark's gospel gave "nothing" and yet "everything." All too often we look at what we have to offer and it seems like nothing. But if we trust in God's good grace and power, our "nothing" can become "everything" to another person. We may not think that a word of encouragement to another is anything but our words have power – and can make a world of difference to another person – perhaps even save his or her life!

What gifts do you have that, blessed by God can be everything to another? This is not a time for modesty but rather a time to extol God's blessing that can come through your life? Pray for God to reveal that which you can offer to other – blessed by God they can become everything! Write your reflections here.

Friday, November 25

The widow's mite became the might of love. Today's devotion is one of action. Pray that you might make a difference in someone's life TODAY. Make a phone call, offer some kindness to another or pray for someone for whom your heart aches. (Yes, prayer is an action.) Seek God's guidance and then seek to make a difference in another person's life.

## Message Notes – November 20, 2022

### *Who Builds the Kingdom?\**

- I. Unless the \_\_\_\_\_ builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the \_\_\_\_\_ guards the city, the guard keeps watch in vain. It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives sleep to his beloved." (Psalm 127:1-2)
  - A. This Psalm 127 provides a wonderful backdrop to the story we've read from \_\_\_\_\_ gospel.
  - B. Jesus is teaching in the temple to the delight of those gathered around listening, that is, the delight of everyone except the \_\_\_\_\_ and Pharisees.
  - C. There's no confrontation because Jesus apparently drops that line of thought to sit down and do a little \_\_\_\_\_ watching.
    1. He and his disciples watch the crowd pass by putting their \_\_\_\_\_ in the treasury.
    2. Now the way the offering was collected in Jesus' day was by having people drop their coins into brass trumpets – sort of like large ornate \_\_\_\_\_ sitting on the floor.
    3. You can imagine the noise of the coins hitting the \_\_\_\_\_.
- II. Jesus said, "this poor \_\_\_\_\_ has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For 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."
  - A. It's not the amount of giving but the \_\_\_\_\_ behind the giving that matters.

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\* Mark 12:28-34, 38-44 and Psalm 127

B. When we drop the world's sense of measurement and priorities, we can see a \_\_\_\_\_ woman not afraid to give all she has to God.

C. The widow's \_\_\_\_\_ is the \_\_\_\_\_ of love.

III. When it comes to the Kingdom of God on this earth – in answer to the question that is the title of this message Who builds the kingdom? \_\_\_\_\_ builds the kingdom.

A. Yet we do our \_\_\_\_\_ in whatever way – in whatever mite – we can offer.

B. Because with God blessing our offering of ourselves – mite is turned into might and it's the might of \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Study Guide*

This study guide is designed for you to daily, throughout this next week, consider the lessons of today's message and delve further into scripture that will enhance your growth as a Christian.

### Monday, November 21

Read Psalm 127. This is a great Psalm that expressed the blessing of God upon our labors. Unless the Lord builds the house or the Lord watches over the city, our efforts are in vain. It's an issue of discovering what God is doing in our world and joining God's efforts as opposed to simply asking God to bless our efforts - whatever they may be.

As you look around our cities in which we live and work and participate in community, what is God doing? What is God doing in your neighborhood? In your home? How can you "get on board" with God and do that which God is already doing – so that our efforts are not in vain? Pray for God's insights and write your thoughts here.

### Tuesday and Wednesday, November 22 and 23

Read Mark 12:28-44. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." answered Jesus when asked what is the greatest commandment. What does it mean to you to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength?

Often we look at this "greatest" commandment as an impossible burden – one that would diminish any other efforts in our lives. We think, "If I am that devoted to God, then I could accomplish no other thing in this life!"

God doesn't want us on our knees 24-7 but rather live lives that reflect the depth of our love and devotion to God. Take each component of that love - heart, soul, mind and strength – and describe what it would mean to love God through that part of your living. For example, loving God with all your mind means devoting time to scripture study and meditation, however, it also means training your mind to see all of creation and life through the mind of God. Take two days for this task and write your thoughts below.

What does it mean to love God...

With all your heart?

With all your soul?

With all your mind?

With all your strength?