

Monthly Devotional

Elm Street Church of the Brethren

Gratitude

Yesterday I was reminded of the widow Jesus noticed who gave out of her poverty while those around her gave out of their abundance. (Mark 12) I have always wondered why she did that. Now I think I know.

While driving on the east side of town to make an afternoon visit, I spied a woman carrying a cloth bag in each hand. She walked a hundred feet or so on the left side of the street, put her two burdens down and went back after the third one. Then she repeated the process. Her load was heavier than she could carry with two hands.

The street wasn't busy, so I turned around and asked if she wanted a ride. "That would be wonderful," she said as she picked her bags up one at a time and placed them in the car.

She was heading for the nearest bus stop half-a-dozen blocks away. She lived on the west side of the city and had traveled to our side of town to pick up her monthly allotment of food from the Ohio Food Bank. I realized she had already moved her heavy bags 5 or 6 blocks.

As we neared the bus stop, she rummaged through one of her bags and said, "Now I must give you something."

"That's not necessary at all," I told her. "You will need that yourself."

"No. I want to give you something. How about some rolled oats?"

"Oh. My wife loves rolled oats," I said.

She smiled and reached in her bag again. "How about a can of mixed fruit to go with it?" she asked.

"Sure. If you insist," I said after trying to dissuade her.

We got to our destination. "Let me look in the bag in the back seat yet," she said and seemed genuinely pleased to offer me a large can. "Wouldn't you like some orange juice with your rolled oats for breakfast?"

My hesitancy to receive it was overtaken by my realization that she was so genuinely grateful for my gracious act of kindness, small though it was, that she felt compelled to share from what little she had.

It must have been that way for the widow. She had thrown herself on the mercy of God and only by giving all she had could she express her gratitude.

Questions to consider:

- Do I allow others to bless me with their generosity?
- Have I developed the habit of giving things away?
- How do I express gratitude for God's mercy?

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Upcoming Events

Sunday, **June 1**, 9:30 a.m. Teacher Appreciation Breakfast

Sunday, **June 8**, 10:30 a.m. Special Praise and Worship Program

June 9-13 VBS in cooperation with Future Church of Tomorrow and Powerhouse Church of God

June 14 All day City-wide Church Unity Picnic at Faurot Park.