

Pursuing Sacrificial Giving—March 2018

"I am convinced that the devil has caused the subject of giving to stir up resistance and resentment among God's people because he knows there are few ways of spiritual enrichment like the exercise of faithful stewardship." — Stephen Olford, preacher and author

During the 1980's, Lee Iacocca, former CEO of Chrysler Corporation, chaired a fundraising effort to refurbish the Statue of Liberty. In a magazine interview, he shared stories about some of the unusual gifts and givers. One of the most touching gifts came from 78 homeless Vietnamese refugees, living in a camp in Thailand. Collectively they donated \$114.19 to the fundraising campaign. These refugees had lost everything EXCEPT hope, but they gave all they had for what they believed embodied hope—the Statue of Liberty. Their gift was remarkable because it was similar to that of the parable of the widow (Luke 21:1-4), whom Jesus commended and singled out for her sacrificial giving.

The most generous financial gift mentioned in Scripture had very little monetary value. Referred to as "the widow's mite," this meager gift continues to inspire people to give more freely. We also see in this parable that God doesn't just look at the *amount given*; He values the *motive*, *attitude*, and *financial condition* of the giver.

Sacrificial giving in terms of finances means giving *in proportion* to your income. Some people believe that their pittance won't make a difference, and they justify this by saying 'when their ship comes in, they will give more.' You've often heard me say that if you don't give in your 'canoe,' you won't give in your ship!

Today, we live in a society that too often focuses on comfort, convenience and accumulating symbols of wealth. We look to, and even compete with others to amass the biggest, best and brightest—cars, homes, vacations or designer wear. At the same time, we profess to love Christ, but are reluctant to sacrifice for the sake of His Kingdom. And, not just monetarily, but we are selfish hoarders of our time and talent as well.

This month I challenge you to be honest with yourself: are you willing to **pursue sacrificial giving**—of your time, talent or treasure? Are you willing to *pursue sacrificial giving* by volunteering to work in the church, commit to tithing, or serving in a ministry? Do you have a gift or talent that Grove can use, but you've been reluctant to share it because you're too tired, uncomfortable or have other priorities? Sometimes sacrifice IS uncomfortable. Sometimes sacrifice IS inconvenient, but sacrifice also requires that we trust God to equip us with or provide the resources, energy or support needed to accomplish His will for our lives and His Kingdom.

Peace and power,

Pastor Marriner

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