

The Widow's Coins

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- [0 : 0 0] How many of y'all been watching a lot of football lately? How many of you saw the Eagles play last week against the Rams?! Did anybody see that game?
- If you did, you probably didn't forget it. If you didn't, you missed out on something. How many of you are Eagles fans and dare to raise your hand as an Eagles fan down here?
- Listen, I am by no means an Eagles fan and they were going to lose. The Rams were going to beat them and I was happy about it. Unfortunately, the game goes until there are zeros on the clock.
- And let me tell you, you know what I left. This little group down here is laughing. Thank you, Larry.
- Because I always leave this thing down there. Let me tell you, the game goes until the very final play. And you know what happened on the final play?
- [1 : 0 0] The Rams were kicking a field goal to win the game. It wasn't even that long of a field goal. They were going to win the game. If you don't know what a field goal is, just tune this part out for a minute.
- We'll get to the good stuff in just a second. But this is Texas and probably most of you know what a field goal is. Listen, it's an easy kick, all right? Especially from where they were lined up.
- Not all field goals are easy. But this one was going to work. The Rams were going to win. And the Eagles blocked it.
- This team like did a deal with the devil or something. I don't know how they keep winning. Makes me mad. Anyway, more likely the Cowboys probably did a deal with the devil and now they're paying for it.
- I don't know. Look, the truth is sometimes, and coaches will tell you, the last play of the game matters even more than the first play.
- [1 : 5 8] You got to keep playing all the way through the whistle. Anybody know what that means? Play through the whistle? You got to keep going until it's over.
- Sometimes what happens at the very end is just as or more important than anything that happened before. So, we've been talking about generosity.
- And several weeks back, we started working on this together. Let's kick off our Sunday sermon again with this call and response.
- Ready? I say the black. You say the red. God gives. We give back. How do we give back? When it's open, I've still. That's right. And these are principles that we draw from Jesus' teaching on generosity.
- Today, we're going to look at an example called the widow's coins. The widow's coins. Would you take your Bible and turn to Mark chapter 12, verse 41? As you're turning there, we're thinking about the last play, the end, what happens right before it's all over.
- [3 : 0 8] So, let's look at what Jesus did as his final play, so to speak, before he started his passion week, in which he was crucified, willingly laid down his life for all of you and for me.

What was the last thing he did in his public ministry, as abbreviated, as short as that was on this earth? About 33 and a half years, it seems.

What was the last thing he did? We're going to look at it. Mark chapter 12. You'd think that this would be some big headliner miracle, that they'd all be writing about it in the papers the next day.

Jesus fed 5,000. This time, he's feeding 10,000. Jesus raised five guys from the dead. He could do anything. What did he choose to do as his final moment of public ministry on this earth?

For his last play of the game, so to speak, he points us to a poor widow dropping in two tiny coins.

[4 : 20] And he teaches us that that's what greatness looks like. Let's look at Mark chapter 12, verse 41.

Mark 12, 41. I'm reading out of the Christian Standard Bible. It should be very similar to what you're reading. Sitting across from the temple, the temple treasury, Jesus watched how the crowd dropped money into the treasury.

Many rich people were putting in large sums. Then a poor widow comes along and drops in two tiny coins worth very little.

Summoning his disciples, Jesus said to them, Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others.

For they all gave out of their surplus. But she, out of her poverty, has put in everything she had.

[5 : 27] All she had to live on. And that's it. That's the end of Jesus' public ministry on this earth.

These others contributed out of their abundance. Their surplus. But this woman, highlighted by Jesus, probably not noticed by anybody else, gave out of her nothing.

Her very little. Her poverty. Her poverty. And she gave in all she had to live on. What's happening here? Well, they're probably in the court of women.

So if you think of Jerusalem, you think of the big temple, and everybody's coming in to contribute, to support the work that they thought God was doing through the temple.

Women were only allowed into the court of women. That's why it was called the court of women. Just wanted to clear that up. Where men and women could come to give offerings.

[6 : 36] There were many other courts around the temple. The women were not allowed into them. This was often common in that time of the world.

Women were very oppressed. Very different than it is today. The fact of a woman being allowed to work a job like women can work today, or vote like women can work today, is very, very rare, very uncommon back then.

And so in this time of female oppression, Jesus highlights a woman and her sacrificial gift.

What were the offerings? Offering boxes that she's putting things into. It was something that looked a little bit like this. There were these 13 trumpet-shaped offering boxes lining this court of women.

And people would come and drop their offering into it. Oftentimes they would make a big show out of it. They would pray some rich flowery prayer, highlighting this great gift that they were giving, and that was normally the rich, influential, powerful people doing that.

[7 : 45] And so this woman doesn't do anything like that. She has down to her last two coins, and she said in her mind seemingly, God can use these far greater than I can.

So I'm going to go and offer this up to God. And I've got a sneaking suspicion that as Jesus witnesses this, and he highlights it, and he uses her as a teaching opportunity for his followers, he probably took care of her after.

God probably intervened and blessed her for her sacrifice. Here in Mark, he even highlights the value.

He says these were worth very little. Mark is writing probably to a Roman audience. When we look at this gospel of Mark, one of Jesus' followers, he's probably writing seemingly to the church in Rome to hear about what Jesus did, and what he taught, and what he said.

And so he's explaining to them, these coins were tiny in size, almost worthless in value, but they were massive in meaning.

[9 : 07] And Jesus teaches us this is the kind of generosity that heaven notices. If you want God to take notice of how much you're giving back to him, then give this way.

That's why we've been highlighting from the very beginning of this series on generosity, man, I imagine when I got up on the first Sunday and said, we're going to be starting a series on generosity, everybody's thinking, great, he's just going to be begging for money for the next however many weeks.

Because oftentimes that's what churches do, right? And that is not right. It's not what Jesus did. What we're doing is trying to form or conform our lives to who Jesus was, how he lived, and he was as generous as he could possibly be.

You and I should mimic the same kind of generosity. He held nothing back from us. And that was the attitude that this widow had.

She held nothing back. So number one, if you're keeping notes in your outline in the bulletin, if not, don't worry about it. Just listen up here. Number one, true generosity is measured by sacrifice, not surplus.

[10 : 25] True generosity is measured by sacrifice, not surplus. Surplus. If you understand what surplus is, you have all you need, and then you have a little more. And usually, wealth is determined by how much surplus you have.

How wealthy or rich you are in the eyes of others depends on how much you have beyond what you actually need, what you actually have to have. We look at net worth and all these different things.

Nobody puts my net worth on the internet because nobody would care. Or yours, more than likely. And often, we're not looking at a surplus, we're looking at a deficit.

Right? That's the opposite. It means you don't quite have enough of what you need. And sometimes we find ourselves there. But true generosity is not measured, is measured by sacrifice, not by surplus.

God's not looking at how much you have extra. He's looking at how much are you willing to give to Him and let Him take over.

[11 : 32] What does that exactly mean? Well, we're going to look at this. We're going to try to understand what He's teaching us from Mark chapter 12. The teachers of the law, in this story in Mark 12 that really happened, were taking advantage of people, especially widows, especially widows with surplus, wealthier widows, who'd had rich husbands, and they died, and they left this money to their wives, and so they have these widows coming, and the teachers of the law were taking advantage of these people.

Now, that's totally unbelievable, right? You would never think that a Bible teacher would take advantage of anybody. If you think that, you haven't been paying attention to the news.

Because unfortunately, people who lift themselves up as experts on the Word of God, and oftentimes it seems like the more well-known they get, the more successful they get, maybe the more vulnerable or prone they get to abusing this power that they collect around themselves.

So this is not a new thing, and it's not hard for us to understand that these religious leaders were taking advantage of vulnerable people because they still do it today.

And that's why those of us who God has called to a leadership position and allowed to be in a leadership position in His church, we have to be extra careful, extra intentional to walk with Him daily and keep running back to Jesus because when we start to stray, we can abuse our power and affect people in ways that others can't.

[13 : 21] So it's a serious thing. And Jesus is stepping into this moment when teachers of His law, His Old Testament law, were taking advantage of people.

2 Corinthians chapter 8. We're going to be there for just a little bit, so if you want to flip over to 2 Corinthians chapter 8, we're going to be there right here on this point, and then we're going to go there on the next point as well.

Go back to it. 2 Corinthians 8. You can keep a finger in Mark 12 if you'd like to. Paul is teaching us something that's very relevant to what we're talking about here. That true generosity is measured by sacrifice, not surplus.

Jesus wasn't after the wealthy widow's surplus. That was the teachers of the law. That was the Pharisees, the rabbis, many of whom were corrupt, and most of whom were trying to get more money.

See, these guys weren't paid a salary. And so that system that was set up by this new Jewish way lended itself or provided for these guys to go out and abuse the system and go guilt trip people into giving them their money.

[14 : 40] And whoever was the most effective at that was the wealthiest widows. They had these things called patrons. And without spending a lot of time on that kind of culture, these were wealthy people who would get followings of people who were dependent on them for money and often their livelihood.

So the more money you got, the more groupies or posse you had because people would be hanging on to you for the gravy train so they could get your money.

You were their patron. So these rabbis needed to go out and find wealthy patrons and man, it would be hard to get some savvy, rich, wealthy man but some of these widows who had never been in the marketplace and never learned these ways of doing business and what was fair and what was not, maybe they were easier marks, easier prey.

So this is what was happening. And Jesus ignores all of that and he focuses in on the woman who was worth nothing. She couldn't be a patron to anybody.

nobody could depend on her wealth. 2 Corinthians chapter 8, Paul teaches us, I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia.

[15 : 58] We talked about this a few weeks ago but I want to come back to it because it's very relevant to what we're talking about today. These churches in Macedonia, now remember, he's not writing to these churches in Macedonia, he's writing to the churches in Corinth.

Be like if somebody came here to Henrietta and said, listen, I want to talk to you about the churches in Burke Burnett for a minute, okay? Let me tell you about them. So we're getting it in context and he says, these guys in Macedonia are being tested by many troubles.

Let me lead out of the gate with that. They don't have it easy. They're having a hard time. Now, they are very poor. Now, he emphasizes that because the people in Corinth that he's writing to were not poor.

Maybe there were some but most of them had some money. Probably upper middle class is about what they were. So he said, these people in Macedonia are poor but they are also filled with abundant joy which has overflowed in rich generosity.

Do you see the difference there? He said, they're poor but they're rich. They're poor in earthly means but they're rich in generosity.

[17 : 20] And that's what God wants to do for you. He wants to make you rich, make you wealthy. Wade, don't just take a little video of that and then splice it right there and say, God wants to make you rich.

I heard Sam say it. I know Wade's going to do that to me tomorrow. I'm kidding with you. God wants to make you rich in what matters. Say, yeah, that sounds about right.

Money never matters, does it? Of course it does. But God wants to make you wealthy in the things that matter most. These Macedonians figured that out.

And they were rich in being generous. You know what? God supplied their need. How do I know God supplied their need?

Well, we could read about them but also because he promised to. My God will supply all your needs according to his riches in mercy by Christ Jesus.

[18 : 26] That's a promise. from God. He doesn't say he'll supply all your surplus. He doesn't say he'll supply all the extra that you want.

He does say, he does teach that when God gives to you in what truly matters, he will give abundantly. He'll give pressed down, shaken together, running over will be God's mercy, his love, his grace, his protection, and even his provision.

He will provide for your need. And so the Macedonians figured this out. They figured out this generosity code. They cracked the code. They said, it doesn't matter so much how much we have, it matters who we are.

Remember we've been saying this for several months now, God's not as interested in what you do as how and why you do it. because the how and why will determine the what.

So if you're going out and living like the devil, you're not doing that for God. You're not doing that for others. You're doing that because you think it'll bring you pleasure.

[19 : 40] Because it'll bring you what you want. But that's the opposite. Jesus says, if you want to be like me, if you want to follow me, if you want to call yourself a Christian and be my disciple, be my follower, then you've got to understand generosity.

We talked about that in week one. He literally teaches if you're not generous, you can't follow me. That's a hard truth. See, I'm just not a generous person.

Let God make you one. By nature, I'm not generous either. My wife is. Some of you are gifted with this gift of hospitality and wanting to serve and wanting to go out and be a blessing to people.

It's just how you tick. Some of us are not. We really just care about number one. And as long as we're okay, then everything else is okay. So God has to teach us to not be like that.

He's got to teach us to change and be generous if we're going to follow him. So there's a principle here. He said they are poor, but they're overflowing in rich generosity.

[20 : 47] And this fills them with abundant joy. For I can testify, Paul tells this church in Corinth, that these people in Macedonia, they gave not only what they could afford, but far more.

And they did it of their own free will. Do you think it's a good idea if we open up the word of God? You can come down here and look at this big one.

That's in there too. Same thing I just read. If we open up the big word of God and we see a positive example given, Paul, whose job was to teach churches how to behave, do you think we should follow that example?

Y'all talk back to me. Do you think it's important to follow a good, positive, biblical example that was given to us? Yeah. Yeah. Okay. So here's the biblical example given. They gave not only what they could afford, but far more.

And they did it of their own free will. That's generosity. That's sacrifice. So the principle we can take away from this is joyful sacrifice equals true generosity.

[22 : 01] Not reluctant sacrifice. Not somebody just getting it out of you or giving a good pitch and you fall under their spell and it's like, okay, I guess I should do this.

Joyfully sacrificing. Saying, God sacrificed so much for me, it's all I can do to just offer it back up to him. How do we give back?

Hands open. Eyes up. God, I'm offering it back to you. You want my bank account? It's yours. You want my life? It's yours. You want my kids?

They're yours. You want my health? It's yours. Why? That's crazy. What are you doing offering up those things that matter most to God? Because God can handle them way better than we can.

God, I'm offering it back to you. What does that look like? I'm going to prioritize what you prioritize. I'm going to do my best to follow your teaching and you're going to train me on how to live this way.

[23 : 06] If I offer my kids up to you and I train them and teach them how to follow Jesus, I trust that their life is going to go way better than if I try to crack this parenting code on my own.

Because I don't know about y'all, maybe you've got it easier than I do, but parenting's not easy. It's hard. And I got good kids. I really do. They're not even listening. They are.

Megan gave them those things to draw on. They're all taking sermon notes. That's what they're doing. Parenting's hard. Whether your kids are rascals or not, and they're probably all rascals at some point because we all were at some point.

But God can crack this parenting code for you. So offer up your children to him and say, God, teach me how to raise my kids. Teach me how to keep them safe.

Teach me what to prioritize in their lives and in how I parent them. That's one example. But this idea of hands open, offering it all back to God, that is joyful sacrifice.

[24 : 14] God, it's a reward for me to get to give this back to you. You're worthy of so much more. You're worthy of so much better than I can offer you, but you just say that you want what I have, so I'm going to give it back to you.

I'm going to offer it back to you. That is generosity. The Macedonian churches are a mirror of this widow that Jesus saw in the court of women dropping in her two coins.

they gave everything they had, not from abundance, not from surplus, not from all the extra, not what they could afford. They gave it from their little.

All they had. And they offered it back to God. That's generosity. So when we give, it's not about what's left over, it's about what's laid down. Did you catch that?

When we give, it's not about what's left over to give. It's about what we lay down. Jesus said, I lay down my life. You lay down yours.

[25 : 20] I just want to jump back to this for just a moment before we move on. We've been talking about it every Sunday in this series, and it fits right in here today. This bounded set versus centered set.

If this is your first Sunday here, then you haven't seen this before, and I'll explain it to you real quick. There's two types of ways of doing religion. There's two types of ways of following Jesus. On the left side here, this bounded set, that circle represents the boundaries that you have.

That circle represents the boundaries that a church might have. This is what we believe. This is how we live. This is what we do. This is how, this is what's important to us.

And if you look like us, think like us, act like us, then you can be inside our circle. If you don't, then you're on the outs. And unfortunately, that is how churches and religion has operated for most of its history.

But it's not how Jesus operated. And it's not how he taught us, his followers, to operate. Instead, he is supposed to be the center. And we don't judge each other based on whether we look like we fit inside the lines or not.

[26 : 31] Instead, we judge each other whether it seems like we're moving toward Jesus or away from Jesus. There might be somebody who looks totally different than you, believes totally different than you, but you can see that this person is starting to move toward Jesus.

You let them in. You go invite them in. By contrast, there might be somebody who fits right inside those lines. And they dress right.

And they mostly talk right. And they seemingly act right. But if you've been around them for any length of time, it's pretty clear they're not moving toward Jesus. They're moving away from him in their heart.

That's the kind of person we need to say, hey, this isn't what we do. You've got to turn around. You've got to move back toward Jesus. It's a different way of thinking about church, about religion, about what it means to be a follower of God.

So let's apply this to giving. Most of us give what fits our budget, not how God's Spirit is leading us to give.

[27 : 51] Most of us don't even go to God and say, God, what should I give this month? It's just easier to say, this is what I'm going to do. This is what I can afford.

This is what makes sense for me. Good night, man. How much more does the church want? I give regularly. That's not what it's about. That's not joyful sacrifice.

Instead, should we, and I'm asking questions, I'm not yelling at you, but should we go to God and say, God, what do you want for me this month? Specifically, with my money, with my time, with my emotions, with my energy, what do you want from me this month, this week, today, this weekend, Sunday's coming, I'm going to go worship with my brothers and sisters in Christ.

I'm going to sing your name. I'm going to hear it preached. Maybe see somebody get baptized. We're going to see exciting things happen with your people. How do you want me to support that this month, this week, this paycheck?

That's centered set, not bounded set. That's listening to what God is teaching you right now, right here, not saying, well, I've given 10% my whole life, so that's what I'm going to stick with.

[29 : 06] Because that fits inside the circle. It's not about the circle. It's about Jesus. All right, let's move on. here's the question.

Are we giving comfortably or courageously? Are we giving comfortably or courageously? Y'all, I promise you, I have to ask myself that question.

Because it's way easier for me to just say, here's 10% of my paycheck, going back to the church. What if God wants me to give more that month? What if there's somebody out there with a need and I have the opportunity to meet it?

But instead, I pat myself on the back and say, you don't have to do that. You've already given to the church, man, you're good. That's not courageous giving. That's not joyful sacrifice.

How do we live generously? Joyful sacrifice is true generosity. That's courageous giving.

[30 : 11] So Jesus, in his final moment of public service, highlights this widow laying down all that she had, giving it away. Do you know what that was pointing to?

Do you know what her joyful sacrifice was pointing to? Jesus on the cross. When Jesus laid down his own life. So Jesus, in his last moments here, before he starts his Passion Week and we see all the events that led up to his death and ultimately his resurrection unfold, before we jump into all that, we see Jesus highlight this moment of true sacrifice that he was then going to show to all of us and carry out for all of us.

So our offerings point to Jesus' cross. This is why it's so important to give because we're being like Jesus when we give.

Jesus held nothing back. He sacrificed. He laid down everything. We have the chance to do the same. Yeah, whatever, preacher. You just want money. No, I want you to be like Jesus and I want to be like Jesus.

And if we do this together, then God can take our sacrifice such as it is. It might be two coins. It might be two dollars. It might be the equivalent of that in today's money.

[31 : 35] But God can take that sacrifice and do something so much more than it could ever buy you in a store. So our offerings actually reflect and point to the cross of Jesus Christ.

I told you we'd go back to 2 Corinthians 8 and verse 9. You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor so that you by his, what does that say?

Poverty might become rich. Rich. This is what Jesus is offering to you. Richness through his grace, through his forgiveness, but not just a one-time forgiveness of sins.

The fullness of God. We now have access to have our lives filled up with God. That's rich. That's wealthy.

That's not poor. You get access to all of God in your life? Y'all, that's better than anybody with seven or eight figure bank accounts.

[32 : 53] Though he was rich, he laid it down as a sacrifice. He became poor like that widow, like that church in Macedonia, so that there was an end goal to it so that you and I could become rich.

There's a truth here. The widow's offering pointed forward to his offering and our offerings point backward to his offering.

Do you understand that? She was giving. She gave all that she had. She didn't even know it then, but her sacrificial gift was pointing forward to what Jesus was just about to do.

2,000 years later, you and I, when we drop something on the offering plate, or if you want to be like me and you go on the little church app and you hit giving and then you give through the app.

Super convenient and it works just as well. When you and I choose to give to what God is doing on this earth, we are then pointing back to his gift to us.

[34 : 13] His offering. That's where we get the inspiration to give our offerings today. So, what's the application of this?

the widow gave her last two coins. Jesus gave his final breath. What can we give? What can you and I give? In the same manner, in the same way, with the same level of sacrifice, what can you and I offer up to our Jesus who we say we love and we say we want to follow?

Here's the application. Generosity is not meant to be a movement, a moment. Sorry about that. It is meant to be a movement. Generosity is not meant to be a moment.

It's meant to be a movement away from myself and toward my Savior. Away from myself and toward my Savior. Hands open.

Eyes up. Generosity is a life change. It's a lifestyle. It's an attitude. It's a way of thinking. It's not a moment when I decided to be generous.

[35 : 21] It is God changing me into a generous person. Moving me away from myself and toward salvation. Saying yes to Jesus.

Seeing the gift that he offered up for me and then saying God you take over my life. Such as I have I give it to you. Forgive me for my sin. I receive this gift and then I offer myself back to you as the gift that you want even though it pales in comparison to the gift you offered to us.

And that's what we do at salvation. We turn it all back over to God. But then somewhere along the way we start taking it back. And that's where sanctification comes in.

That's a big word. What does it mean? It means to be made holy. To be set apart. To be separated. God wants to make you different. not just how you do your hair or the language that you refuse to say or maybe you don't go to bars on Friday nights.

I don't know. Whatever you think holy looks like that's not even what I'm talking about. I'm talking about what's happening on the inside. God wants to change you on the inside.

[36 : 30] So generosity is moving away from myself and towards salvation. Towards sanctification and then toward sacrifice. just like the church in Macedonia. Just like the widow dropping in her last two coins.

Just like Jesus laying down his life on the cross. And we have many more examples in the scriptures and in our real world of what sacrifice looks like. That's generosity moving away from myself and toward sacrifice.

And you know what the great thing is? Ultimately generosity is moving away from myself and toward satisfaction. Because I can promise you walking in the path that you want to walk in will not bring satisfaction.

There is a way that seems right to a man Proverbs teaches us. But the end of that way is death. I was up at Straight Street last night in Wichita Falls.

Anybody know about Straight Street? It's a wonderful ministry. Danita Long from our church invited me there and she works there every weekend just about and got to preach to I don't know 100 plus kids who have it rough man.

[37 : 38] A lot of those kids if they weren't there at this spot where they do State Street and they have football field and basketball court and a place for these kids to get off the street get out of trouble and just spend their Friday and Saturday nights there.

So I got to go up there and preach to them last night and I preached that exact verse to them. I said listen there is a way that you want to walk there is a way that others want you to walk but the only end to that path is death but the way that Jesus lays out for you that is the one that will end in life.

Two teenagers a boy and a girl brother and sister came back talked to me and gave their lives to Jesus last night at State Street. Yeah that is something to get excited about. That is satisfaction.

Trust me I was so satisfied after that. Man I felt amazing after that like this was the coolest night I've had a long time. Those kids experience the satisfaction of Jesus.

When you move away from yourself and towards salvation towards sanctification towards sacrifice toward the Savior you find satisfaction.

[38 : 46] Generosity gives us satisfaction. I'm going to close with this song. Matthew West is a Christian singer who's well known in that genre. He has this song called Broken Things and I put it up on the screen for you.

If it's true that you God use broken things then here I am Lord. I'm a broken thing. I'm all yours. That's the widow.

That's the Macedonian church. That's offering ourselves up. Say here I am God. I'm all yours. I might be cracked. I might be broken. Karen Schaffner was telling us on Wednesday night at our Bible study group our life group on Wednesday night that meets in the fellowship hall.

We're talking about broken things and offering it up to God and she said you know light shines through the cracks. That's how God's light shines through the cracks in us.

I thought that was a really cool example. So if we just give what we have it might be those two coins. It might be a cracked vessel offering it up to God. He'll take it and he'll do something great with it.

[39 : 56] Jesus seemed like he lost when he offered up himself to those who didn't know what was going to happen. Seemed like his loss.

His team lost. Should have picked a different final play. Should have done something that would have turned the crowd with him instead of against him. He didn't handle the end of the game well.

And then they killed him and they buried him and it was over. But it wasn't over was it? He didn't lose. Seemed like he lost. But he turned the ultimate sacrifice into victory.

He turned it into satisfaction for you and me. He turned it into something special that we could never replicate. So how do we give?

Generously. Generously. Join Jesus in the generosity movement. commitment. God wants to change you.

[40 : 59] If it's true God that you use broken things, here I am. I'm all yours. Where's God calling you to be generous? Where's God calling you to trust him more deeply by giving yourself away?

Is it your finances? Is it your time? Is it service? Talked about picking up your towel last week. What kind of sacrifice is God asking you to make today?

Let's say it one more time. God gives. How do we give back? Hands open. God, that's how we want to give to you. Today, right now, we want to open our hands.

We want to turn our eyes toward heaven. Say, God, use me to make Henrietta look more like heaven. Use me to make Clay County look more like you.

God, how do we do this? How do we take on this level of sacrifice? It's hard. It's not easy. But when we discover this secret, it will become easy.

[42 : 01] It will become the only thing that seems reasonable and will give joyfully like that church in Macedonia gave. Not out of our abundance, not out of our surplus, but laying down everything sacrificially like you did.

Teach us how to do this. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Church, would you keep your seats just for a moment? Linda, would you come and play something for us? It's June. Sorry. I always pick the wrong person, man.

June's going to play some music. Let's keep our seats just for a moment. And for the next two, three minutes, let's go to God in prayer. Let's ask him how he wants us to respond.

So try to keep this a quiet time. Maybe not put everything in the purse just yet and slip out just yet. If you can, just keep your seats and do a little business with God right now.

As you're praying, I'll ask just a couple questions. First off, is there anybody who says, I need to take that first step away from self and towards salvation? Today's the day I need to give my life to Jesus for the first time.

[43 : 13] I need him to forgive my sin to make me his child. I put all my faith in Jesus. And I want to talk about that before I leave here today. If that's you, would you slip your hand up right now?

I'd love to have that conversation with you. Thank you. What about this? Somebody who says, God's working on me about something.

Could be sacrifice. Could be something else, but God's working on my heart about something right now and I need some prayer. Would you slip your hand up and I'll be happy to pray for you as well.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. God, you see the hands and there's probably some I missed, but listen, right now, would you just shut out all the distractions?

The devil doesn't like us to be open to your voice and your leading. He's going to try to get any number of other thoughts in here to just take our minds off of that and put them on something else. Let us hear your voice right now.

[44 : 16] Make it clear. Show us what we need to lay down. Show us where we need to open our hands, not hold on so tightly. Show us the sacrifice we can make like you sacrificed for us.

It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.