

# From Our Conference Minister

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## **Gratitude and Generosity** (Mark 12:38-44)

*"Some people are always grumbling because roses have thorns; I am thankful that thorns have roses."* In Mark 12, the widow would have shared the thankful perspective. Although her gratitude was unspoken, her act of giving away all that she had spoke volumes. Most of us usually give to our local church or charitable organizations only after our needs and some wants have been satisfied.

Her generosity captured Jesus' attention and he responded saying,

*"Truly I tell you, this poor widow 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."* (v. 43-44)

Why did she give such a generous gift?

Dr. Michael McCullough is a psychologist and editor of the book, *The Psychology of Gratitude*. In an interview on public radio, McCullough said:

*"Your grandmother was right. When people are encouraged to take a few moments, every day, even as little time as two or three minutes a day, to simply appreciate a few positive things that typically somebody else did for us, you end up feeling better at the end of the day about your life in general. We see boosts in positive emotion. We see reductions in negative emotion. People are more satisfied with their lives, as a whole ... they even*

*sleep better at night! They are more prone to spiritual pursuits."*

Taking time daily to be grateful for the blessings in our lives leads to more satisfaction and sense of well-being. Based on McCullough's research, perhaps the widow went to the Temple that day filled with gratitude for blessings despite her lowly status. With her mind set on spiritual pursuits to honor God, she tossed the only shred of independence she had in the offering plate. All that remained was her complete dependence on God.

The widow's gift - both in the generosity AND in the gratitude behind it - was an investment in hope that her life, and lives of others in her community, still meant something to God.

As part of a ***Friends of Penn Central Conference*** OCWM fundraising campaign, we are inviting you to practice a similar generosity that invests in the hope of our ministry together. More details about the campaign will be available next week that outlines convenient online giving using the new "donate" button on the Conference website homepage.

Recovery efforts from hurricanes Harvey and Irma will continue to require your support for a long time and I encourage you to keep giving as you can. Additionally, giving to your local church on a regular basis is important.

Please also consider a financial gift to the ***Friends of Penn Central Conference*** OCWM fundraiser – give as generously as you can. Your gift will support our Conference's programs and resources designed to help our local churches to flourish.

Give acknowledging with gratitude that our ministry together matters to God.

*In Christ,*

*Monica*

Rev. Dr. Monica Dawkins-Smith  
Conference Minister and President