

November 23, 2018

SKYLAND
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



My Friends of our Skyland Family,

He sat in the courtyard of the Temple. His head hung low. He was weary. Sad. Exhausted.

For three years, he had walked among people pouring out His Holy Love. He had done what He came to do. He knew that in the next hours all but a handful would reject or deny Him. He would hang dead on a cruel cross, pouring out the last drops of His Holy Love for all.

Throughout the public parade of giving, with the clanging noise of large offerings being watched by all in the crowded courtyard, Jesus sat heavy in the weight of His Humanity. Then, He looked up and saw her, a simple, poor woman with no family. She was of the lowest of the social classes. Jesus looked up and saw her. He saw her give out of her simplicity of worship. She had to push through the crowd and deal with the humiliation of being judged by those who watched with the leaders of the Temple, rolling their eyes at the sound of the thin clicks of her one penny gift.

But Jesus looked up and saw her. He really saw her. As He saw her, He sees you. Jesus sees your gift of worship, offering of dollars and giving of your time. It's not the size of the offering or the number of hours given that captures the gaze of our Lord. It's your unique gift of service and worship.

Jesus raises the story of the poor woman to a moment of teaching of the value of giving. He saw her in her uniqueness. He sees you, also. Jesus sees us in the midst of our real struggles, doubts, and challenges. And He blesses us as we step forward in acts of giving as worship.

Jesus uses your gift of yourself to build larger stories of His kingdom, just as He did with the poor woman. Through you:

- He will send youth to those living in Appalachian poverty in Wilkesboro and to those in Honduras this Summer.
- He will lift the learning of 12 first graders and along with this, their families will be loved and welcomed into our Fellowship as our new Bridges Reading Enrichment Program builds bridges out of inter-generational poverty.
- Jesus will reach hard-living folks in our community and Welcome them to a Table of food and fellowship on Saturday mornings.
- Our three unique worship services will thrive and grow in depth and numbers.
- We will improve our buildings to be more Welcoming and inclusive of others as a safe place to gather.
- We will embrace our Around the Son Preschool Families who are looking for help through the hardships of raising children in this troubled age.

Jesus saw her. Jesus sees you. At whatever step in giving you are at this moment, Jesus sees you and loves you for who you are, His Child. Give of yourself, returning love to the Lover of us, Jesus Christ!

- For those who have pledged your time, talent, passion and dollars - Thank You.
- For those who are still pondering their giving - Trust God and Give of Yourself.

In His Grip Forever,
Pastor Wes Sharpe