

**PENTECOST 12**

**STEWARDSHIP STORY #1 – THE TWO QUARTERS**

**GENESIS 14:20, LUKE 10:27**

**AUGUST 23, 2020**

During the course of a 52 year ordained ministry career, I often gave sermons, talks, pep talks, theological studies and Biblical perspectives on the topic of Money and Possessions. My main reason for doing so was that Jesus and the Bible did it more frequently than I did. I'm just trying to keep up. My next few devotions will give you thoughts, memories and stories of my stewardship experiences.

I begin with a story about the value of giving money to the church or not.

A father and his young son are going to church. The father gives the son two quarters, one for the church and the other for a piece of candy after church. The son drops one of the quarters and it rolls down into the gutter and down the drain. The son is momentarily stunned but quickly gets back his wits and says "Thank heavens, that was the quarter I was going to give to the church."

You are now invited to think of your morals of the story. I will offer a few morals of the story of my own:

1. All through our lives we are searching for that quarter rolling in front of us to give to the church.
2. There are always other things, other people, other causes to receive our quarters. How often is the church your last choice or no choice at all?
3. If you were the father, how would you have answered your son? Would you have given him another quarter? God seems to keep giving us quarters. Would the father spoil the son? Does God spoil us with new quarters of grace?
4. If you were the son, would you have given some of the "candy quarter" to the church? Often we too have downturns in our available number of quarters. Quarters do go down the drain. When we cut back, what happens to the church's quarter?
5. What would be the attitude of the son if he had to give the remaining quarter to the church? Would he be resentful? Are you sometimes resentful with the quarter you give? Remember II Corinthians 9:7, God loves a cheerful giver.
6. The Old Testament tells us the value of the church's quarter. It's a tithe: Genesis 14:20, Numbers 18:24, Deuteronomy 12:6. A tithe in the Old Testament often meant 10% of your produce, farm products, livestock. It also came to a more general meaning of a gift of substance.
7. In the New Testament Jesus goes beyond the tithe and demands that we love one another: Luke 10:27. Love is harder than a tithe. The tithe is a default, a guide, a standard. Love, however, becomes the ultimate standard. What might the conversation have been between father and son after church? What might be the conversation between God and you about your giving?

Prayer: Dear God, help us to be good givers to the church. Put love in our hearts prior to the gift. Help us always to search for and find the quarter for the church. Amen.