

Reasons to Celebrate

Mark 10: 17-22

Ypsilanti First United Methodist Church

September 28, 2008

Who would have guessed back in June, how much we would need today's Kingdom Assignment celebration? God truly works in mysterious ways.

In the past two weeks, there has been much talk about our nation's financial crisis. We have watched major financial companies go under or be bought out. We have listened to the media and political pundits talk and predict ad nauseum. We have watched stocks plummet and rise and plummet again. For many of us it is a time of great uncertainty and worry.

What must I do to inherit eternal life? The Rich Young Ruler asked Jesus. *"one thing you are lacking, says Jesus, "go and sell all that you have and give it to the poor. Then come and follow me".*

The rich young ruler had a lot of stuff that he was hanging onto. Stuff that made him feel secure and now Jesus was there asking him to let go of it. To give it up and to share it with those in need. That's what Jesus was asking him to do.

It was then, and still is now, a question of trust. Can we trust God enough, to let go of what we are hanging onto, in order to take hold of something more important and more valuable.? Something only God can give us? New life that God offers to us? Can we trust enough to let go? That is the question Jesus is asking of us and of the Rich Young Ruler.

How appropriate that inscribed on our nation's money are the words "In God we trust" In God we trust

When our children were toddlers, they often walked around with a toy tightly clutched in each hand. They were happy for a while, with the toys they had... But then they saw something else they wanted to hold. Only they didn't want to let go of what they had, so they would try valiantly to grab the new toy, while still holding tightly to the toys already in their hands. It was frustrating not being able to grab the new thing, and they would usually cry out in exasperation.

In time they discovered that in order to grab onto the new toy they really wanted, they had to let the toy they were clinging to go. Letting go was the only way, to grab onto something else. Letting go was the key to their happiness. Letting go was the end to their frustration. But yet it was so hard to let go.

When I was growing up, I sang in our church's children's choir. My mom was the director and she taught us many songs. One that I remember from my children's choir days is about letting things go and giving them away.

The lyrics are

Love is something if you give it away

Give it away, give it away

O Love is something if you give it away, you end up having more.

It's just like a magic penny, hold it tight and you won't have any, lend it, spend it, you'll have so many they'll roll all over the floor,

For, love is something if you give it away, give it away, give it away, o Love is something if you give it away.

You'll end up having more.

(Roll out the white board with the \$20,538 check on it.) This check represents the money we raised with Kingdom assignment 2.

In this assignment we have learned what happens when we let go of our stuff and trust in God. Who would have ever guessed that some of us selling our stuff, would mean more than \$20,000 for people in need? We had hoped for \$10,000—that was the original amount we asked for, and instead, God doubled it! It is a reason to celebrate.

And when you add, this \$20,000 to the original kingdom assignment we did a few years ago, we are talking about \$360,000! And to think it all started when someone decided to share \$5,000 with our church! It reminds us, yet again that with God, much more is possible than we can even think or imagine.

The truth is that when we share our offerings, our selves, our treasures, our lives with God, God increases them, and blesses others and us in amazing ways. This is something to celebrate and a major lesson for us from the kingdom assignment.

I would like to ask now that those persons holding the names of organizations we have assisted in Kingdom Assignment 2 come forward now and place the remaining names on our presentation board.

I would also like to remind you of the two women we also assisted with Kingdom Assignment 2 funds. Camille and Julie's stories are in the special kingdom assignment 2 booklet that you received in your bulletins today. The money we raised and shared has been such a blessing to so many people in our community, our nation in our world. It is truly amazing and far reaching the impact of what the sale of some of our stuff has done.

In these days of uncertainty, God reminds us who we can really trust with our lives and with our future. And God continues to call us

to share what we have, offering it to God, trusting that God will bless it, and multiply it and change many lives including ours with it.

May we continue to trust in the one who gives us life. In the one who blesses us beyond anything we can think of or imagine and the one who loves us always. Amen.