

undoubtedly knew the meaning of Psalm 146:3: "Put not your trust in princes." The bank trust accounts and elaborate robes and best seats are of no account when the "breath departs" (Ps. 146:4). Rather, "the Lord . . . upholds the widow" (Ps. 146:9). She was there, not to parade herself, but to praise God. She had a different trust account to tell about: the riches of trusting in God even in the times of the poverty of the heart. God had been with her, as God has been with us, through the valleys and the shadows and times of death and feeling poorly. Come to the Temple. Praise the Lord! Sing praises to God as long as we have being. This widow was a walking trust account.

Her whole living had been so enriched by God in her poverty of heart that when she saw the alms box as a way to give an account of her trust in and thanksgiving to God, she rubbed her two coins together, her only two coins, and "out of her poverty [she] put in everything she had, her whole living" (Mark 12:44).

*You did what?* She exercised radical trust that in her poverty God would provide. This was not the act of a deranged woman who did not know the critical value of her two coins, but rather an account of trust by a woman whose priorities in life had been rearranged because she knew the critical value of God's presence and promises in her life.

She understood the poverty and trust of the widow at Zarephath, who had "only a handful of meal in a jar, and a little oil [and] . . . a couple of sticks" (I Kings 17:12) for herself and her son. Yet, that widow heeded the call of God. According to the trust account in I Kings, she risked giving her bread, maybe her only bread, to Elijah first. "You did what?" you can imagine her hungry son asking her. Yet, as God promised, in that radical act of trust and giving "she, and he, and her household ate for many days. The jar of meal was not spent, neither did the cure of oil fail" (I Kings 17:15-16).

What about our trust? What account can we give? If we give out of our abundance as these widows did out of their poverty? Do we trust God in the events that impoverish our spirits, when "all is lost?" Do we trust enough to come to worship with a genuine "Praise the Lord" as the offering of our heart? Does that spirit of praise and offering extend to our coins and checks in such a complete way that someone sitting across from the treasury might in astonishment blurt out, "You did what? You doubled





your stewardship commitment of time, talents, and finances for God's work next year? Are you trusting God enough to tithe 10 percent of your income, including your jar of meal and cruse of oil? You did what—put everything in, your whole living?"

Betty had been homeless, sleeping on the streets of Pittsburgh, when she was welcomed into Smithfield Church and the Bethlehem Haven shelter for homeless women. She came to worship and then Sunday school. In Christian hospitality, she was welcomed by others in the congregation to eat with them after worship. Sometimes she would dig down into her bag and bring out tattered black and white photos of happier days with her family and the dog she dearly loved.

Now she was poor and lonely. Maybe she was a widow. She had no Social Security checks, fancy long robes, or places of honor in this world. But out of her poverty she came often to the "temple." Homeless and alone, she gave her accounts of trust in the loving God who was her "best Friend." One day she reached deep into her bag for something that she pressed quietly into the pastor's hand. "Use this," she whispered, "to share the love of Jesus, which I have experienced here." Opening his hand, the pastor discovered a carefully folded ten dollar bill, enough for Betty to buy coffee for a week or five meals at a fast-food restaurant or a warmer coat at Goodwill or a ticket for a good seat on a bus to a warmer climate. It was probably everything she had. But then, in her poverty she knew better than many of us that God is everything. Hers was the best trust account of all. Betty, you did what?

What kind of trust account is yours? A widow's trust? Have you ever been so moved to praise and trust God that you wanted to give God your all? But then someone might say, it might even be Jesus, You did what?

*I thank God that in our church there are many who will have that widow's trust. You give generously of your time, talent and finances for the support of this church. Yet there are still many who say "you did what?" When it comes to giving time, that is already in the church, church it comes to sharing your talent in the church, church school - Sunday school when it comes to our finances. We feel that to which expenses never rise.*