

GOD THE GIVER

Stewardship Narrative Series presented by TENS

*Proper 25
Mark 10:46-52*

It was Saturday afternoon. I was taking a solitary walk in the historic area of Philadelphia when I encountered a handicapped beggar on the street. He was sitting with his legs sprawled. His tattered clothes and unkempt appearance repelled me. I tried to ignore him, hoping not to be noticed. But that was not to be. He yelled out, "Sister, stop and talk to me!" I paused, knowing God was watching and waiting for my response.

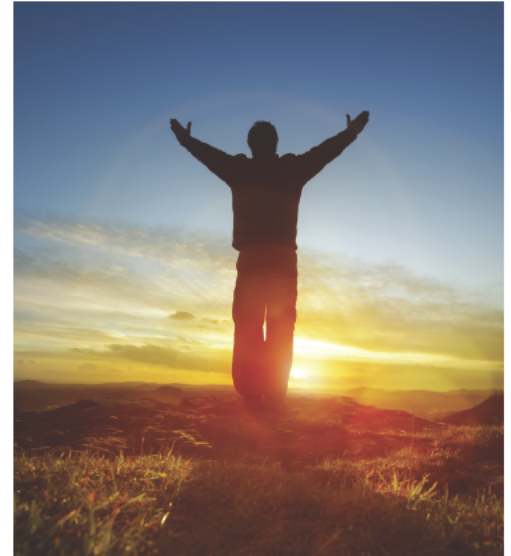
I reluctantly approached him to look squarely in his face. As I bent down he grabbed a cross hanging around my neck and asked, "Are you a Christian?" Stunned, I replied "Yes." I asked if he, too, was a Christian and he replied, "Oh yes, and let me tell you everything God has done for me." What flowed out of his soul was a litany of blessings, healings, provision and gratitude for never being without the necessities of life. He then asked my name and for my prayers. I reciprocated. My tears welled up as the encounter drew to a close. I put money into his cup and said goodbye.

But he wasn't finished with me. As I walked away he yelled out, "Mary, I love you!"

I stopped dead in my tracks. This broken, gentle man was a messenger from God! It was as if God were directly speaking to me and saying, "Mary, can't you see that I am the source, the giver of every good and necessary thing in your life? You have cried out many times asking for mercy and blessing and I have granted them to you. And above all, I love you."

This profound encounter 17 years ago changed me. No longer do I give or serve out of obligation or duty, but out of a deep gratitude for God's generosity. Giving of my life and my resources has become pure joy.

Mark 10:46-52 tells the story of Bartimaeus, a blind beggar who was not afraid to cry out to Jesus for mercy and healing. Nothing would stop him from asking for what he needed. Jesus heard his cry of faith and healed him. In return, Bartimaeus became a follower. Both Bartimaeus and the man



I encountered were deeply aware of God's mercy and provision in their lives and were so thankful.

Let us be bold and cry out to God when we are in need! For God's other name is Giver. Our new name will be Thankful.

Reflection Questions:

Recall a time you were deeply aware of God's provision in your life.

How has God the Giver been exemplified in your life story?

Do you give out of obligation or thankfulness?



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