

Every Sunday we gather here in Church we do a number of things – what are they?

We sing hymns,
we hear the Bible read
we pray
what else?

Do you know what we use it for?

Running the parish – my salary, upkeep of Church building, payment of Youth Work, giving to charity

Much more than just paying our bills – part of our worship, part of saying thank you to God for all the blessings we enjoy – in Old Testament times there was the idea of the tithe – people would have given a tenth of all they earned to God.

It is not just a matter of what we give, what is important to God is the spirit in which we give it.

I just want to tell you a true story about a man who came to see me the first Christmas I was in Finglas – we'll call him Bert.

Christmas appeal

Bert could not hear very well so he didn't come to Church
Not very well off – so I started to think 'How much do I give?'
Sometimes bet on the horses – most of the time did not go well
started to think – this fund is not for making up
gambling debts

Before I could say anything Bert handed me an envelope
his wife and he had decided to give their Christmas
disability bonus – I would know someone who needed it
more.

There were lots of donations to the fund that year – that envelope was
not the biggest – but it was the biggest.

Our two lessons have spoken of people who brought gifts, each
apparently small and insignificant – yet seen as great in the eyes of
God. The faithfulness of the widow in feeding Elijah, the simple
sincerity of the widow giving her small coin – they each gave
willingly what they could.

I want us to think of other gifts we can offer that can make a
difference.

gifts of time

gifts of listening

gifts of compassion

Of themselves these can seem unimportant, of little value – but God can work in and through all of these.

Back in Finglas, all those years ago, Bert brought an envelop to me – Bert brought far more than £30 – he brought a love and concern for people – I think God worked through that in ways that Bert and I never imagined.

May God take our gifts, our money, our time, our compassion and work in and through them to bring something of his love into the lives of others.