

How has God blessed us? If we stop to reflect on this question, several things immediately come to mind. God has blessed us with our health, our family, our friends. He has blessed us with our homes, a good job, our community. Of course, this is just a short list. I know that if we spent more time thinking about this, we could recognize God's blessings in all aspects of our lives.

As we find ourselves less than two weeks away from Thanksgiving, our thoughts certainly start to turn to all these blessings we have received in our life. One of the best ways to thank God is in prayer, especially during this Jubilee Year of the Holy Spirit. Another way to thank God for what we have received is to practice Stewardship in our life.

We hear some examples of Stewardship in today's readings. First, we hear about a widow and her son. Elijah finds this woman gathering up what was left so that she could make a last meal for her son and herself before they died. They had literally nothing left. But Elijah begs this woman to share what she had, asking her to make a meal for herself and her son and for Elijah. Because of her generosity and willingness to share what little she had, Elijah promises her that the Lord will not allow her flour jar to go empty or her oil jar to run dry.

A second example of stewardship can be found in the Gospel. Once again, we hear about a widow. Jesus had sat down opposite the treasury in the temple to watch what donations people made. Jesus notices what the widow puts into the treasury: two small coins worth a few cents. But Jesus is very impressed with what the widow has done. He calls over His disciples and tells them: "Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury. For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all that she had, her whole livelihood."

Each time I listen to these readings, I think of the expectations of the Jewish society that had been placed on these widows. In the time of Jesus, the widows were some of the poorest people around because they had no one to support them or look after them. The surprise in each of these readings is that these widows go beyond what was expected. Through their years of hardship and sacrifice, these widows had learned how to trust in the Lord and in His goodness. They trusted the Lord so much that they were not even sure where their next meal was coming from. These readings from Scripture challenge us to think of how we can be good stewards of what we have been given, the blessings we have received.

How then can we become good stewards and practice stewardship in our lives? I think good stewardship begins with prayer. Prayer then turns into Trust. I can't imagine either of these widows trusting God in the way they did without prayer. Prayer directs us on the path we should follow to be thankful, to be good stewards and share with others our time, our talent and our treasure.

The challenge of being a good steward of our resources that we have received is something that we all face. But when we trust in God and become more aware of what we have been given, it is amazing what we can accomplish in life.