

**WHAT MY SCOTTISH GRANNIE PREACHED**  
**Consecration Sunday –November 11, 2012 –Luke 19: 11-27**  
**The Church of the Covenant**

Scotsman are notoriously frugal, tight and thrifty where money is concerned. Once a Scottish farmer, Jock, was working in his field and a barnstormer landed his bi-plane there. "I'll give you a ride for L5", the pilot offered. Och, I cannae afford it, said Jock. So the pilot said, I'll give you and your wife a free ride if you promise not to yell. Otherwise, you owe me L10. So they went up and the pilot executed loops and barrel rolls and flew upside down in the open biplane. Purposely stalled the engine several times –but no crying out from the back seat. The pilot finally stopped trying to get the L10, turned around and said: you are truly Scotland the Brave. "Aye", said Jock, "But ye nearly had me when the wife fell oot!" I think sometimes we are all Scottish. We hear that salvation is a free gift in Jesus Christ and we really do believe there is such a thing as a free ride. We like the idea that Jesus died for us and did for us at Calvary something we cannot do for ourselves. We like the "blue light special" at K-mart where religion is concerned. *But Jesus is not our Savior if He is also not our Lord.* If you do not follow Him and His life and teachings and commandments in this life, why do you think He gives you eternal life for free in the next life? See, actually, it is *costly* to follow Jesus as Lord. Because, beloved, it costs you your entire life and everything within it.

My dear sweet Scottish Grannie, my Great Grandmother on my Mother's side, had a whole host of sayings, most of which I think she inherited from her family which were originally from Scotland. When you repeat things enough people remember what you say. And one of her favorite sayings was –"*Use what you have and you'll never be without.*" She was fond of making quilts out of scraps of materials or making a special dress for my Mother out of a previous dress. She was the original re-user and recycler. USE WHAT YOU HAVE AND YOU'LL NEVER BE WITHOUT, is almost a paraphrase of our scripture for today from the Gospel of Luke –"*Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a little...*" (Luke 19: 17) Because you have been faithful in a little, I will give you more, says the Lord. This is such the opposite of the way we operate in today's world. No, we grasp after more and more things. We "make it happen" and desire more and more money, more and more things. This translates over into church world as "The budget always has to go up; the church down the road has a program that we don't have so we have to acquire it"; we spend and we acquire and we get more and bigger and better and best, just like the world does. We forget that this is not how God operates in the Kingdom of God. God says: "Be faithful in what I have given you, especially if it is just a little." Work hard. Be faithful. Be hardworking, honest and thrifty. Save. Don't spend. Keep. Don't throw away. Instead of striving after more, strive to be faithful with what I have given you. And then, I the Lord God Almighty will give you more. I will provide the increase. I will give. *I will bless*, promises the Lord.

The session as it has promulgated its Sustainability Policy has chosen to heed this scripture about being faithful in a little and about using what we have, so we will never be without, as a congregation. We are in effect adopting what my Scottish Grannie Preached. As Presbyterians, we come by this honestly through our Scottish heritage. So when we close down part of the church in midwinter to save on utility bills, or when we reuse things multiple times, or go to using more internet and less paper, or when we repair the vacuum cleaners that we first purchased in the 1950's, or you see Ralph up on the tower repairing a leaky roof with duck tape and bailing wire, you understand how careful we are with the resources you entrust into our care.

Second Scottish joke –a Scotsman took a lovely lass for a ride in a taxi. He said, "She was so beautiful he could hardly keep his eye on the meter."

But somewhere along the line that Scottish frugality and tightness has come to be applied to giving to the church. We have gotten it backward in a way. We have become spendthrifts and spend every nickel we have on ourselves and what we want. But have become cheap and thrifty and tight in our giving toward the church. No, no, Scottish Calvinism was the reverse of that. We were to be careful and prudent in our expenditures on ourselves, so we could be rich and generous in our giving to God. We were to be savers and not spenders so we could give glory to God with what the Lord had blessed us with. Today we tend to give out of the leftover crumbs from our table, not from the abundance with which the Lord has blessed us. According to God, we are careful and faithful with what we have received in order that we might be generous in the ways we help others, give to our community, support the church and reach out to a world in need.

Third Scottish joke—How many Scotsmen does it take to change a light bulb? “Och! Its no that dark in here!”

Ernie Watson is a wonderful member of this congregation who just recently went on to be with his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He almost embodied being a crusty Scotsman. Always asked tons of questions about how the church was using the money entrusted to it. He had served as a long time Trustee here, first as a Trustee at one of the predecessor churches, Third Presbyterian, and then when it merged, as a Trustee of The Church of the Covenant. Was tough and exacting where high standards, careful reporting, being transparent where how the church spent its money was concerned. He always wanted us to be careful with what we had, full well knowing, that then the Lord would bless us with more. But there was a secret about Ernie and the secret I think can now be shared with the congregation he loved. **Ernie was a tither.** Ernie gave 10% of what God gave him back to God. When he'd be asked to give to something else, say the Light the Fire Campaign, Ernie would say, “Well, Stu, as I've told you I tithed. So do you want me to cut my pledge in order to give to this other campaign?” (Ernie was pretty cagy when you think about it!) And I'd always say, “No, Ernie, you keep being faithful to the Lord.” Living Faithfully, living within our means, being faithful in what we have received in smaller things means that we will be blessed by the Lord in the larger things in life. Use what you have—faithfully, biblically, proportionally, as the giving of the first fruits of your life—and you'll never be without. Don't give dollars—think, what is the faithful *percentage* to give to God? Make what you spend on God the first priority of your life, not the last, and the Lord promises to bless you, always. Be faithful in a little and the Lord will give you an opportunity to be faithful in much. That's following Jesus. That's having Jesus not just as Savior but as Lord. **Who here will take Ernie's place today?**

There is a day coming when we shall all stand before the Lord. I am very certain that when Ernie stood before Jesus this past month that he heard his Lord and Savior say to him—“*Well done, Good Servant!*” “*You have been faithful...*” Heaven is that place where the Lord will show us all the things that happened because we gave of ourselves, because we took the Lordship of Jesus Christ seriously in our life, because we harkened to the Word and were obedient to God, because we sought to be faithful in what the Lord had blessed us with in order to become a blessing to others through His church. Because when you use what you have, for the GLORY and HONOR of God, you'll never be without. That's what Ernie taught us and that's what my Scottish Grannie Preached. And Amen.

*By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, PA  
IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!*