

**A Liturgy for Our United Outreach Sunday**  
**February 8, 2015**  
**Cliff Hudson**

**Call to Worship**

Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. The Lord's understanding is inscrutable. Come, Family of Faith, and learn and hear more of God as we worship in spirit and truth!

*— based on Isaiah 40:28*

**Call to Confession**

God is always calling, always beckoning, always urging us to search our hearts and see if there's a fault or a flaw in us that needs to be corrected. Let's spend a moment together, telling God what God already knows. We need to confess our sinful condition and we need God's mercy, grace, and pardon. Let's do that right now.

**Prayer of Confession**

Lord of all that we are and all that we have, forgive us for our short-sighted thinking and our selfishness. We are tempted to hoard rather than be radically generous. We are tempted to carefully calculate our tithes and gifts and restrict the blessings you would give us. Have mercy upon us, Master, and teach us the joys of giving freely and joyfully. Remind us anew that you gave all of yourself so that we might serve you faithfully with our time, talents, and treasure. This we ask in the name of Jesus the Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

**Assurance of Pardon**

Brothers and sisters, here's some very good news: If we confess our sins, God is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. This is just one of the many wonderful promises of God that we all depend on. Rejoice and thank God that you are indeed forgiven!

*— based on 1 John 1:9 NASV*

**Prayer for Illumination**

Open us, O Lord, to receive your word. Help us to digest the truth with our entire being—mind, body, and spirit. Bless us now as we hear what you would have us hear and understand what you would have us understand. Amen.

**Scripture Possibilities for the Sermon**

- **Suggested sermon title: The Look on Her Face**

Using either Mark 12:1-44 or Luke 21:1-4, think about the look on the famous widow's face as she placed her coin, representing all she had, into the Temple treasury receptacle. She certainly got Jesus' attention, but was her look one of serene

joy or intense pain? Was she smiling as she gave up all she had, or was the look on her face a look of worried desperation? She is, without doubt, one of our greatest heroines in the Bible. Is it possible, though, that she looked angry as she tossed her coin in? Angry because of the way she had been treated by the folks who ran the treasury? Have some fun exploring the possibilities.

- **Suggested sermon title: Master of Little, Master of Much**

Using the famous Parable of the Talents, found in Matthew 25: 14-28, explore what it means to be a good and faithful steward of that which God has blessed you with. We might consider our church budgets—large, small, or in-between—and ask ourselves whether we are being faithful with what we have. Further, in order to be faithful, it might be worth a few minutes of sermon time to talk about whether or not we are masters of our treasure, or whether our treasure, or lack of it, is mastering us.

### **Prayers of the People**

God of grace and peace,

we come to you this morning wearing garments of humility and praise.

We are humbled by what we have heard and know of you.

We are compelled to bend our knees and bow our heads

when we consider all that you are and all that you have done for us.

This knowledge also causes us to praise you for the chances you give each of us to be a part of something bigger than ourselves.

Therefore, we pray for the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

We ask your blessings upon all our denominational employees, wherever they serve.

We ask your blessings for all our missionaries, wherever they are.

We ask your blessings upon our entire church—

every pastor, elder, Sunday school teacher, faithful member, and all the rest.

Gracious God, pour out your blessings on the entirety of our church, near and far, local, national, and international.

This we ask for the sake of Christ Jesus our Savior, Amen.

### **Invitation to the Offering**

Our faithful God calls us to faithfully give. Our call to give is for our own good because by giving we learn to put others first and always before ourselves. The great blessing of God-ordained giving makes us full partners in what God wants to do in us, through us, and around us. Let's bless God and others by contributing our faith-filled gifts.

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Faithful God, it is right to give you thanks for the blessings you have bestowed upon us and the never-ending opportunity to be part of the solution and not a part of the problem. Make our free-will offerings acceptable to you! We relinquish control of our gifts to you and the people and organizations responsible for them. O Lord, put our dollars to work doing your will! Amen.

### **Charge and Benediction**

We have heard God's word and sung God's praises, but we cannot remain here. The gracious gospel compels us to go, go, go... out into God's world as God's faithful stewards, proclaiming God's grace to all who need to hear and believe. Go in peace in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Amen!

