



Donation or Sacrifice?

A personal matter

by Pastor Robert W. Reid

A turkey and a chicken were talking about the upcoming holidays of Thanksgiving and Christmas. The chicken was cackling about how much she enjoyed the holidays and was especially pleased her eggs would make a significant contribution to the festivities of the holiday season. She recounted how her eggs were used for the pies, eggnog, and other festive delicacies of the season. She was especially pleased that her contribution would bring joy to the little children's faces as her eggs would be a key ingredient in making the famous Christmas cookies they so loved.

The turkey was less enthusiastic, even a bit somber it seemed. "I really don't like these holidays," the turkey replied as he scratched the dirt looking for some fallen cracked corn. "In fact," he continued, "November and December are the most depressing months of the year for me."

"You holiday Scrooge!" the chicken replied. "You need an attitude adjustment! Think about the joy you bring to others. Think of the praise you will hear from the humans as they overindulge in their holiday meals. The appreciation they express for the food that God has supplied should warm your soul. You should be ashamed that you have such a negative view of the holidays."

"Well," replied the turkey, "I guess it's all about perspective. Mine is very different from yours."

"In what way?" cackled the chicken.

"Think about it. Your contribution for the meal is just a donation, a few dozen eggs," noted the turkey. "But my contribution to the success of the meal requires a total sacrifice. I have to give my life for the meal."

The proud chicken lowered her beak, turned, waddled away, and roosted in her nest to make her donation.

The point of the parable is pretty clear: some people are proud to make donations rather than sacrifices. Jesus on one occasion looked upon people entering the temple and saw a poor woman approach the collection box in the temple. She put in a rather meager amount as the world would measure it, especially when compared to the donations of

the rich. Yet Christ saw the amount differently. He realized that the rich had been making donations, not sacrifices. Jesus' evaluation of her giving was, "This poor widow has put in more than all; for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God; but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had" (Luke 21:3-4). She offered a sacrifice, not a donation.

She gave like Jesus. Paul reminds us about the Incarnation, "that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through his poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9). He deepens our understanding of that poverty when he writes that Christ "made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a slave, and coming in the likeness of me. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:7-8). Jesus Christ did not come to make a donation. He came to make a sacrifice.

Jesus calls us to that, too. Paul challenges believers this way: "I beseech you, brothers, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). Paul did not ask for a donation. He called for a full sacrifice. He calls it reasonable in view of the sacrifice of Christ for us. Is this how you are living your Christian life? Are you making sacrifices or donations? How can you tell? Look at the things that reflect how you are using your life: bank statements, calendars, etc. Perhaps in doing so you will discover your contribution for the cause of Christ is more like a chicken's than a turkey's!

