

HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 8/25/2023

Dear Friends in CHRIST,

There is a story about a gift that led to the construction of Temple University and Samaritan Hospital in Philadelphia. The story is recounted [Acres of Diamonds](#). The story continues to be told in different variations and is considered a legend, though based on true events. Still, it is a wonderful story of the power of GOD to take our small gifts and multiply them to accomplish great things. The story goes like this:

Many years ago now, a sobbing little girl stood near a small church from which she had been turned away because it was too crowded. When the pastor of Temple Baptist Church in Philadelphia, Russell H. Conwell, asked her why she was crying, she replied that they could not let her into the Sunday School because there was no more room. He said that he would take her in, and he did so, telling her that one day they should have a room big enough for all who would come.

Unbeknownst to Dr. Conwell, the little girl, Hattie May Wiatt, went home and told her parents that she wanted to save money to build a bigger church, and they indulged her by letting her run errands for pennies that she saved in a little bank. Dr. Conwell continues with the story:

“She was a lovable thing — but in only a few weeks after that she was taken suddenly ill and died; and at the funeral her father told me, quietly, of how his little girl had been saving money for a building fund. And there, at the funeral, he handed me what she had saved — just 57 cents in pennies.”

What happened next is nothing short of amazing. At a meeting of the church trustees, Dr. Conwell told them of Hattie’s gift of 57 cents, the first gift toward the proposed building fund that had barely been spoken of, as a new building had been simply a possibility for the future. The trustees were impressed to buy a lot on Broad Street, and the owner of the lot was approached regarding its sale.

In the meanwhile, apparently, the 57 pennies were “sold” to members of the church, and the result was the raising of \$250. Fifty-four of those 57 pennies were returned and put on display in the church. Checks came in from far and wide, including one check for \$10,000, a huge sum of money for that time (near the turn of the century). Reportedly, within five years the little girl’s gift had increased to \$250,000!

In a sermon on December 1, 1912, which honored Hattie May Wiatt, Dr. Conwell, founder of what is now known as Temple University, reminded his congregation of the impact of that 57 cents.

“Think of this large church,” he said. “Think of the membership added to it – over 5,600 – since that time. Think of the institutions this church founded. Think of the Samaritan Hospital and the thousands of sick people that have been cured there and the thousands of poor that are ministered to each year.”

All this was set in motion by the simple gift of a little girl’s 57 pennies. Amazing, isn’t it? And true. If GOD could do that with just 57 cents, imagine what HE can do with whatever it is we place in HIS hands. Just like the little boy who gave JESUS his five small loaves and two small fish, “Little is much when GOD is in it.”

The apostle Paul told the elders of the church at Ephesus, “I have shown you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the LORD JESUS, how HE said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'” (Acts 20:35).

Hattie May Wiatt’s gift of 57 pennies was greatly used by the LORD. What will you place in GOD’S hands?

In CHRIST'S love,
Pastor Jeffrey