

## IN GOD WE TRUST MAKES GOOD CENTS

---

Pastor John Hicks

First United Methodist Church

A penny found face up is supposed to be good luck. A penny face down is not so much. I just bind whatever curse or superstition that might be on a penny and pocket it. I'm surprised sometimes at the number of people who don't figure it's worth their while to bother with pennies. Henry Thoreau once stated that the price of anything is the amount of life you exchange for it. I have to confess that I've never really given second thoughts to spending the amount of life needed to bend down to pick up a penny. To quote another famous person by the name of Benjamin Franklin, "A penny saved is a penny earned."

Recently, though, I've been given a new perspective on these coins I pick up. A friend shared the story about a very wealthy man taking some friends out to dinner at a very exclusive restaurant who stopped suddenly, and looked down on the pavement for what seemed to be an unusually long time.

Some of the man's friends followed his gaze downward but saw nothing on the ground but a few pieces of trash, several cigarette butts, and a small darkened object that looked like a penny someone had dropped. The man reached down and picked up the penny. Lifting it up to his eyes, he smiled, and then put it in his pocket as if he had found a great treasure.

Throughout dinner, the entire scene nagged at one of his friends, until she could hold back her curiosity no longer. She casually mentioned that her daughter once had a coin collection, and asked if the penny he had found had been of some value.

A smile crept across the man's face as he reached into his pocket for the penny and held it out for her to see. It looked like an ordinary penny. "Look at it", He said, "Read what it says."

His friend read aloud the words "United States of America". "Read further." "One cent?" "No, keep reading." "In God we Trust?" "Yes!"

"And?" "Whenever I find a coin I see that inscription. It is written on every single United States coin, but we never seem to notice it! God drops a message right in front of me reminding me to trust Him. Who am I to pass it by? When I see a coin, I pray, I stop to see if my trust is in God at that moment. I pick the coin up as a response to God that I do trust in Him. For a short time, at least, I cherish it as if it were gold. I think it is God's way of starting a conversation with me. Lucky for me, God is patient and pennies are plentiful!"

Shopping today, I found a penny in the parking lot. I stopped and picked it up, and the words, "In God We Trust" jumped out at me. I realized that I had been worrying and frustrated about things - most of which were out of my control. I smiled. Yes, God, I get the message.