



RED HILL LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

THE WEEKLY BRICK

November 8, 2009.

As you come to him, the living Stone, rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. - 1 Peter 2:4-5

THE WIDOW'S MITE: REAL GIVING 8 November 2009

Mark 12:38-44 This is a story that shows how deeply God is moved by those who give all they are and have to Him--contrast the Rich Young Ruler, [Mark 10:17-22](#). Yeah, go home and read that one!

1. JESUS OBSERVED SOME PEOPLE GIVING (v.41-42).

The word “poor” (*ptōchē*) means pauper. She was not just poor, she was destitute, in deep poverty.

2. REAL GIVING IS SACRIFICIAL GIVING (v.42).

3. REAL GIVING IS MEASURED BY HOW MUCH A PERSON HAS LEFT—NOT BY HOW MUCH A PERSON GIVES (v.43).

4. REAL GIVING KNOWS GOD WILL MEET YOUR NEEDS. (v.44).

She took her need and gave it to God. Her need was financial, so she took what money she had and gave it all to God. She simply said, “God, I have need, the need for money. I do not even have enough money to buy food. If I am to eat, you have to provide somehow, some way. I have worked as hard as I can at the jobs I have been able to find. Here is all I have. Take it; use it in your kingdom. You now take care of me.”

She knew the great principle that God will take care of those who give all they are and have to Him. She knew that if she was to be assured of God’s care, she had to give all to God. If she gave all, God would not deny her anything. He would provide all the necessities of life (Matthew 6:33). She took her need and all that was involved in it and gave it to God. She sought God to meet her need by giving all that she had to God.

5. REAL GIVING IS GIVING ALL A PERSON HAS (v.44).

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

Monday, November 9th Read *Mark 12:41-45*

Jesus observed people giving. Following all the plotting and argument in the Court of the Gentiles ([Mark 11:27-12:40](#)), Jesus walked into the Court of the Women over by the treasury. The treasury was an area in which there were thirteen trumpet shaped collection boxes where the worshippers dropped their offerings. He sat down, apparently all alone, to get some relief and rest from the tension of the past hours. While resting, He “beheld how the people cast money into the treasury.” The word “beheld” (*etheōrei*⁶) means He was deliberately observing, discerning the motives of the people as they made their offerings. He saw many walk by and drop in sizeable offerings. Some were apparently quite large contributions. He could see the handfuls of coins and hear them clang against the sides as they slid down the funnel shaped trumpets. But none attracted His admiration. Finally a poor widow came along and threw in two mites, which were the smallest of coins, coins of very little value. Christ took what he saw and taught what true giving really is.

Read Mark 12:42. I think real giving is sacrificial giving. The word “poor” (*ptōchē*) means pauper. She was not just poor, she was destitute, in deep poverty. Her poor dress and plain appearance showed her desperate plight.

The coins were all she had, yet she gave them despite her own desperate need.

Now note the point: what she gave was a *sacrifice*. What the others gave was not a sacrifice. It did not cost them nor hurt them. They still had plenty left, for they gave only what they could spare. But not the widow. Her gift cost her. It hurt to give, for she gave what she could not spare. She gave what Christ called a *sacrificial gift*. She sacrificed; she went without a meal or gave up something else so that she could give. There is a great difference between giving what one can spare and giving sacrificially, actually giving up something in order to give. Sacrificial giving costs something. Sacrificial giving is giving when it hurts, when a person has nothing left, nothing to spare. The difference needs to be stressed, for God expects sacrificial giving. If the world and its desperate needs are ever to be reached for Christ, then every believer must give sacrificially.

1 Corinthians 16:2 *On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.*

2 Corinthians 9:7 *Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

2 Corinthians 9:12-15 *This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. ¹³ Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. ¹⁴ And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. ¹⁵ Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!*

Tuesday, November 10th *Read Mark 12:43-44*

Real giving is measured by how much a person has left, not by how much a person gives. Jesus called His disciples to him and used the great sacrifice that the widow made to teach a much needed lesson. Note several facts.

1. They all gave an offering to God: both “the people” ([Mark 12:41](#)) who had and the poor widow who did not have.
2. The ones who had plenty gave more money, much more than the widow. Their contributions were generous. Their incomes were dazzling, so their offerings were large.
3. But in God's eyes the widow gave more. Why? Because God measures what was *kept*, not what was given.
 - ⇒ The widow had less remaining; the others still had much.
 - ⇒ The widow had given more of what she had; the others had given less of what they had.
 - ⇒ The widow had sacrificed more; the others had sacrificed less.

In proportion to what she had, the widow gave a larger percent. The others gave a much smaller percent. After they had given they still had 85% or 90% or 95% to spend on themselves.

This is the lesson Jesus was teaching, a critical lesson. God counts what we have left, not what we give. He counts the amount of sacrifice, not the amount of money. The gift that matters is the gift that costs the giver to give. To the thoughtful recipient it is not the size of the gift that impresses, but the sacrifice the giver had to make in order to give the gift. The greater the sacrifice the more appreciative the recipient.

Matthew 6:21 *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

Luke 19:8 *But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”*

2 Corinthians 8:9 *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor; so that you through his poverty might become rich.*

Read Mark 12:44. Real giving seeks to have a need met. Note the words, “She *of her want* [out of her need] did cast in all that she had.” She had great need for food, clothing, and shelter. She had so little; she was the kind of person who would have had to wander about seeking odd jobs just to survive in a depressed economy. Looking at her, a person could tell she never knew where her next meal was coming from. She had no one to care for her and no one to help her. The weight of the world seemed to lie upon her shoulders. There was no man who cared or expressed care. This was evident in her appearance, but she knew something. Men may not care, but God cares; so she came to God for help. And what she did is a crucial lesson for men to learn.

She took her need and gave it to God. Her need was financial, so she took what money she had and gave it all to God. She simply said, “God, I have need, the need for money. I do not even have enough money to buy food. If I am to eat, you have to provide somehow, some way. I have worked as hard as I can at the jobs I have been able to find. Here is all I have. Take it; use it in your kingdom. You now take care of me.”

She knew the great principle that God will take care of those who give all they are and have to Him. She knew that if she was to be *assured* of God's care, she had to give *all* to God. If she gave *all*, God would not deny her anything. He would provide all the necessities of life ([Matthew 6:33](#)). She took her need and all that was involved in it and gave it to

God. She sought God to meet her need by giving *all that she had* to God.

Note something else. Two needs are present and being met.

1. God's temple (church) had need. The widow, though poor, gave to help carry on the ministry of God.
2. The poor widow had need. She gave, believing God would see to it that she had food, clothing, and shelter.

Luke 6:38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

2 Corinthians 9:6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

Proverbs 11:25 A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.

Proverbs 22:9 A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.

Wednesday, November 11th Read Mark 12:44

Real giving is giving all a person has. "She...did cast in all that she had, even all her living." Just imagine! *She gave her living*—not just part—not just a sacrifice—but all! She could have easily said what so many often feel:

⇒ "My gift doesn't matter. It's so little."

⇒ "I have so little. God will understand. He doesn't expect me to give it when I can't even buy food."

The lesson is twofold.

- 1) We lack devotion and dedication in our commitment to God, whether commitment of life, time, gifts, or money.
- 2) We lack boldness in giving and using what we have for God.

Matthew 19:21 Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

Matthew 19:29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.

1 Corinthians 10:33 even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

Ephesians 4:28 He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

Thursday, November 12th Read Mark 12:38-40

There are three ways a person can dress to draw attention.

1. A person can desire and love to wear the clothing that's extravagant and wasteful. The long robe was the dress of the nobility, the rich, the well-known, the person of style. It was a long robe reaching to the ground. A man was unable to work in it; therefore, it was the sign of *higher society* or of a man of leisure. Jesus was not speaking against fine clothing. What He said was, "Beware of [those] who *love* to go in long clothing" (fine clothing). He condemned the person who was extravagant and wasteful, whose mind was on attracting attention, on self, on appearance. A person's mind is not to be on clothing, but on ...

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.

Your life does not consist in the things you have, but in the service you render to others. The world is desperate, swamped with enormous needs. God's will is for all persons to be wrapped up in meeting the needs of the world and not in clothing. This is especially God's wish for the Christian. The Christian's concern is to be righteousness. He is to work for Christ and His kingdom, not for expensive, stylish, ostentatious clothing.

Ephesians 4:28 He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

2. A person can change his dress, his clothing, and his appearance in order to attract attention. A person often desires attention, so he seeks to attract by being different and making himself stand out. This was a sin of the religionists in Christ's day.

- a. They wore phylacteries. These were little leather type boxes which contained a piece of parchment with four passages of Scripture written on it. The Scriptures were [Exodus 13:1-10](#); [Exodus 13:11-16](#); [Deut. 6:4-9](#); and [Deut. 11:13-21](#).

The use of the phylacteries apparently arose from a literal translation of [Exodus 13:9](#) and [Proverbs 7:3](#).

The true meaning of these two passages seems to be that we are to have the Word of God in our minds just as clearly as if we had them before our eyes. The great fault of the religionists was that they not only interpreted the passages literally and wore little leather boxes on their forehead, but they enlarged the little leather boxes to draw attention to themselves as being religious.

- b. They also enlarged the borders of their garments; that is, they wore outside tassels. God had instructed the Jews

to make fringes or tassels on the borders of their outer robe. When a person noticed them, he was to be reminded to keep God's commandments. Again, the error was that the religionist changed his appearance from others; he enlarged the tassels, drawing attention to his being more religious than others.

3. A person can wear clothes that expose the body, that actually attract attention to certain parts of the body. A person can wear clothes that are too tight, too low cut, too high cut, too thin. A person can wear too little clothing, clothing that fails to cover enough of the body. Note: this is why I don't wear leather chaps! What about you?

Jesus very simply said to beware of dressing to attract attention. The religionists did it to appear righteous. Others do it to appear worldly (appealing).

Friday, November 13th Read Mark 12:38-40

Beware of greetings and titles that exalt you. The religionists loved the *titles* that greeted and exalted them with honor. Note the title was "Rabbi" which meant teacher or master. It was only a simple title, yet some loved and revelled in the recognition above other men. It took a man who was supposed to be God's messenger and said, "Here I am; look at me." It honored the man and not the Lord. We exalt one another with titles: Reverend, Doctor, Director, Executive, Chairman—all to elevate one above the masses below.

Matthew 23:12 For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Obadiah 1:4 Though you soar like the eagle and make your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down," declares the Lord.

Psalm 49:17 for he will take nothing with him when he dies, his splendor will not descend with him.

Read Mark 12:38. beware of showing oneself in the marketplace. Displaying oneself in the marketplace was and still is a sin. The marketplace is wherever the people are. It is the center of traffic, the place where a person is seen and can attract attention. It is the streets, the office, the club, the school, the beach, etc. Neither dress nor title is to be used to attract attention and elevate oneself above others.

1 Peter 1:24 For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall

Psalm 49:12 But man, despite his riches, does not endure; he is like the beasts that perish.

What Christ is after is love—love among all men and women, boys and girls. And the only way love will ever rule upon earth is for all to begin serving and *lifting up others* instead of self. Dressing and using titles to draw attention to oneself do not lend themselves to love. They tend to elevate self and to destroy the morals and stability of both families and the nation.

Read Mark 12:39. beware of front seats and high places, seats and places to be seen, admired, and to show one's prominence. In the synagogue the leaders and distinguished men sat on a bench in front of the ark (where the Scripture was kept), and they sat facing the congregation. No leader could be missed.

On social occasions the most honored sat at the right hand of the host, then the next honored at his left hand, and so on, alternating from the right to the left down the table. Position and recognition were set.

Some loved the positions of honor, special seats, and places of recognition. There are those who love the restricted neighborhoods and clubs, the preferred lists. They love the preeminence ([3 John 9](#)). Note what is condemned: not being in these positions and places, but the *love* of them. Someone has to hold the upper positions and fill the major places. It is the *love* of such, the love and the feeling of pride because of the place and position that is wrong.

John 5:44 How can you believe if you accept praise from one another; yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God?

Psalm 49:12 But man, despite his riches, does not endure; he is like the beasts that perish.

