

Sunday, November 8, 2009

Those two short stories of pious widow ladies only scratch the surface! – Underneath are all sorts of pots are boiling to catch our attention.

You just can't listen to a few lines of Scripture as if they were the WHOLE BOOK! What about the impressive offerings of so many? Yet – you find little substance or heart there and on the other – 2 pennies worth yet a whole life's time!

? What about the fig tree? Attractive to look at from a distance; but when Jesus went to see – he found “nothing but leaves”. Mk 12:13-21

Then there's the temple in all its wonder – “Look Teacher, the disciples absolutely astounded – “what wonderful stones that make this building!” And Jesus – not one stone upon another will be left here”

And now – On the one hand the scribes in all their finery – with reserved seats in church – praying endlessly - -.

It's all a FAKE, Jesus says. – All a PUT ON! These are the same people who gobble up the lives of poor widows!

HOW DIFFERENT THE POOR WIDOW! No parade – Just a small gift to the Lord – No Big Deal!

And still Jesus can tell his disciples, “Truly – this poor widow has put in more than all he rest. WHY? Because she has put everything she had, her whole livelihood! But be careful: Jesus is not lecturing the wealthy – not even accusing them of show. He is teaching them something about life and the RISK that comes from giving. The widow's gift was greater than all because in giving her pennies she gave up her security – she “PUT IN HER WHOLE SELF.”

Others gave and that was good, but they could leave the temple knowing there was more where that came from. - - For the widow – nothing left but to cast all her care on God.

Nothing left .. – and-

The same for the first widow. A handful of meal and a drop of oil – enough for a cake for herself and her son before they lie down to die.

And a Stranger says, First make me a cake - - But to give the last cake of your life to a stranger because he says – Don't be afraid! ? ? ... What would our answer be!

And here's where the 2<sup>nd</sup> lesson fits. – It says there that “Christ came ONCE FOR ALL” . . . to put away sin. How? . . . by the sacrifice of himself. What made the widow's gift so precious was that she gave everything she had – Again, what made her gift of such importance was that it resembled what Jesus himself would offer on the cross - . . . – HIMSELF!

It's a bloody moment on the cross when Jesus gives up **literally everything** to the Father for us! Like the widow, Jesus gave all he was! Nothing left to give, he gave himself. "This is my body" he says, "which is given for you."

You and I, the whole of humanity from Adam to the last human, all of us have our sins put away, all of us can bend the knee before God and say with confidence Jesus' prayer. "Our Father..."

Jesus is the perfect human, the example of what a Christian should be; then our lives are Christian in the measure that they are shaped to this Christ – like self giving.

The story of the widow, and even more the example of Christ, suggests strongly that the new thing he brought into the world is summed up in what he said of that humble widow: "OUT OF HER POVERTY"

How could it be otherwise? Like it or not, it is the crucified Christ who is the finest example – the pattern – the model for Christian living, for Christian giving and again, the crucified Christ gives – HIMSELF!

Where then is our Christ-likeness? Perhaps only in the difference of WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO! ONLY BECAUSE WE DO IN THE NAME OF CHRIST!

Christ speaks to us where we are. You and me – he knows who you are.

Christ alone can tell us at what point and in what way, we are to go out to our brothers and sisters with trust only in the power of a loving God.

? Why does he not move us? – He who now appears in the presence of God on our behalf.

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