

SERMON NOTES

25<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

10<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Text: Mark 12:38-44

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*As Jesus taught, he said, 'Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the market-places, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honour at banquets! They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.'*

*He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.'*

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The contrast between the self-serving lawyers and the widow in Mark 12 couldn't be any greater, and Mark's weaving of these two stories together is, I think, where most of the meaning lies.

The gospels are filled with examples of faith; examples to follow and examples to avoid like the plague.

***Jesus presents the scribes/ lawyers as all about themselves.***

They want to be seen.  
They want to be congratulated.  
They want to be well-thought of.  
They want people saying good things about them in their faces  
AND behind their backs.

They are, Jesus says, totally self-absorbed.  
And these are the religious guys!  
Or, at least they are the professionally religious.

***And then there is the widow.***

Could there be a picture of someone more selfless than her?

She doesn't give out of her abundance,  
what's left over,  
she gives from the very depths of her being.  
Her giving is sacrificial.  
Selfless.  
To me, this section of Mark isn't rocket science.

It's about the kind of faith  
that we are supposed to have,  
and the kind of faith that we aren't.

The faith of Jesus Christ isn't a self-absorbed faith.  
It's a faith that digs deep,  
a faith which is sacrificial,  
a faith which bears the cross.

In essence, the faith of Jesus Christ isn't about us.  
It's not about me.  
It's not about you.

It's about what we give to God.  
And it's about the amazing riches that God gives in return.

It's about a God who isn't self-absorbed,  
a Christ that isn't self-absorbed,  
and faithful Christians who aren't self-absorbed.

Whether we are professionally religious or not,  
we are to be the window.

Loving, living, and giving sacrificially.