

**24th Sunday After Pentecost (Series B)**

November 8, 2015

Gospel: Mark 12:38-44

Epistle: Heb 9:24-28

Lesson: 1 Kings 17:8-16

Psalm: Psalm 146

**CLB Commentary: Pastor Gary Witkop****Authentic Christian Living**

This can be a difficult text to preach from, in part because most pastors do not like preaching about money, which is part of the second half of this text. The widow's mite. But we should not shy away from any theme in the scriptures as we all vowed to preach the whole council of God. The first half of this may be difficult for some too, as it deals with religious leaders not being what they claim to be. Maybe a mirror for us all.

The law in this text is easy to see. Do not be a false Christian or false leader. Do not give in order to be seen. Do not think more highly of yourself than you ought. Lots of law is available in here.

Where is the good news!? It is in Jesus. Look to passages such as Phil. 2:1-11 where we see Jesus humbling Himself and taking on the form of a servant. Our example is in Jesus, but this can again become law if it is preached as ought to or should. The Gospel comes in preaching this as an opening to be like Him. We are given the opportunity to allow Jesus to live in and through us, not that we force ourselves to look like him on the outside. We allow the God who lives in us, the opportunity to live through us. This opportunity is not just for pastors or other Christian leaders but for all. All believers have the Holy Spirit living inside us and Galatians 5 shows how, by allowing the Holy Spirit to live in and through us, we can bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit. That fruit comes naturally as a result of living connected to Jesus, not by forcing ourselves to fit some social or moral pattern. This is also found in John 15, being connected to the vine.

So in verses 38 – 40 we are given the opportunity to live authentic Christian lives, versus living so that others can think we are religious. This fits with the words of Scripture that tell us that out of the heart flow good or evil things. Matt 12:33 – 37 and 15:17+.

In verses 41 – 44 we are again shown that we are to live authentically instead of so that others can think we are doing right. I would imagine that the widow, in giving her two copper coins, did not do so with any fanfare or in order that others would see her, but rather, humbly and maybe apologetically. Often when someone gives, especially a large amount, they want some sort of recognition for it. We know from many places in the Bible that this isn't the right way to give.

We are called to give so that the left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing, to give so that no one else knows, etc.

This all connects with the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount in Matt. 6:19 – 24, especially the verse “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Where is our heart? Most of the time, if we are honest, it is on me. See me, everyone! See what a great Christian I am! See what a humble person I am! See how important I am! Look at me, everyone!

But going back to Phil. 2, what did Jesus do? He humbled himself. He who truly had much to show off, being very God of very God, didn't act like it. He didn't draw attention to himself. His heart was in the right place, with the Father in heaven.

Let us focus on making sure our heart is with God, and not worry about who gets the credit for anything, so long as God actually gets the credit. That is authentic Christian living, living like Christ.