

Pastor Graham Pfeffer Sermon Community Sunday, 10th November, 2024

Text Mark 12:43 ⁴³ Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has given more than all the others who are making contributions. ⁴⁴ For they gave a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she had to live on."

I think that the widow is a little like our friend Randomly Kind Raham. He is thoughtful and kind, puts the needs of others first, helps others and does not expect things in return.

Just like Jesus does for us.

So, what has Jesus done for us? Jesus gave everything for you and me. In a song, yet not I but through Christ in me, are these words, '*What gift of grace is Jesus my redeemer, there is no more for heaven now to give*'. That's because Jesus has given everything. His life in love and service. His life to take away the sins of the world. His life that we may have eternal life in heaven. There is no more that heaven can give, because we have it all in Jesus.

In this story about the widow, we hear she gave all she had. I can't help thinking though, what is this poor widow going to eat if she gave all that she had?

She now has no money to buy food. She is totally reliant on others to provide her with something to eat. Perhaps her thinking is, if she gives to God, then God will in some way continue to provide for her. We heard how that happened in the first reading for today. Even though that widow of Zarephath had only enough flour and oil to make one last meal for her and her son, the flour and oil never ran out during the drought. There was always just enough to feed Elijah, the widow and her family.

It's a bit like how God provided the Israelites with water and food as they travelled the wilderness for 40 years. God gave them enough for each day.

God's instructions have always been for the community and for his church to care for foreigners, orphans, and widows, so that they will have enough to eat. The Bible is clear that God values every person and cares deeply for orphans and widows specifically. We are to share in that care.

As school and church, you did that a couple weeks ago in giving food to be blessed at the harvest thanksgiving service, that went to the angels community group so the poor and needy in the Bundaberg community can come and receive this food.

In this bible story today, Jesus was at the temple watching as people put their offerings into the collection box and observes many rich people who gave large amounts of money. Then he sees a poor widow come and put in two very small coins. Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "This widow has given more than all the others. They gave out of their wealth, but she gave all that she had."

What is even more amazing about this widow giving all she had is, in ancient Israel, the "poor" were not required to give. SO why did she give her last two coins. Did she give all she had because she was grateful for the welfare she received from those who did look out for her? Did she simply trust in God that he would provide for her daily needs? That God's command to care for the poor and the widow would be adhered to by the religious institution.

Remember, Jesus always knows what is our hearts.

Jesus knew what was in the scribes and pharisees hearts. As the teachers and leaders of God's people at that time, they would know all the bible verses of how important to God is the caring of the widows, the poor and the needy. It was especially those church leaders duty to see to it that the widows are cared for. They were meant to be cared for by the community as a whole. Those who have, gave to those who do not have.

This special care for the poor and the widow continues into the early church after Jesus resurrection. In Acts 6, the early church selected seven men to care for a large population of widows, providing food for them. In those days, there was no government assistance and widows were an especially vulnerable class. Without their husbands, they often had to turn to begging. While we understand widow in the English language of a woman whose husband has died, the Greek word simply means where a woman has suffered loss," or is "left alone without help."

God expects us as church and community to care and to make sure, these vulnerable women are not treated unfairly. Jesus was disgusted when he saw that some of the the scribes and Pharisees were doing just that. Instead of watching out for the widow's welfare, they were cheating them out of their homes, by taking the welfare that was meant to go to the widows.

Yet the widow still gave all she had. To the rich they were worthless coins. A bit like our five cent coins. But this was all she had to give.

This is exactly what Jesus did for you and me. In Philippians 2: 5-8 It reads,

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross!

In becoming nothing, in becoming a servant who put his own needs last, Jesus gave everything he had, so that you and I can be made right with God. To have our sins forgiven. To be saved from our own selfishness and all the times we don't give of all we have as a servant of God.

When Jesus was hanging on the cross, he was mocked by the priests, the teachers of religious law, and the elders who said of Jesus. "He saved others, but he can't save himself!

They didn't realise how true those words were. In order to save you and me, Jesus could not save himself. Jesus is God's plan to save the world.

I think that the widow is a little like our friend Randomly Kind Raham. He is thoughtful and kind, puts the needs of others first, helps others and does not expect things in return.

Just like Jesus does for us.