

November 5 2017

Reading from the Bible *Luke 12:22-34*

Sermon *“A Widow, A Smart Guy and Shorty”*

The widow came to the temple where the people gave their offerings. On that day, a lot of people brought their offerings. Today in our churches many offering plates have a cushion on the bottom so you don't hear the coins as they are dropped into the offering plate. Some churches use a bag so no one can see what you put in. But in the time of Jesus and the Jewish Temple, if you went to the outside court where Jesus was seated, you would put your money into a large metal container. And I understand that when people put in coins it was a very noisy proposition. And there were some people who liked to make as much noise as possible. Some would even break down their offerings into many coins so there was a lot of noise as they threw their money into the container. They wanted to impress the watchers as to how much their offering. As Jesus was watching, he was talking to his disciples about what was happening. He watched as the widow put her offering into the container. Her offering was about two cents. This was the widow's mite. Jesus said to the disciples as they gathered around "I tell you she put in more than all the rest." Everyone else gave what they didn't need but she put in all she had. They gave out of their wealth but she gave out of her poverty. She gave everything that she had.

And next we have the smarty guy, He found Jesus in the crowd and as he fell at the feet of Jesus, he said, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" He said he had followed the law and I believe he was sincere in his heart. He wanted to do his very best. And Jesus said, "If you want to follow me, go sell all your wealth give it away and then come and follow me. Then your treasure will be in Heaven." Jesus looked into his very soul. He liked the young rich ruler. And Jesus was just as sad as the young man as he sadly walked away. He was very rich. And Jesus said to his disciples, "I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. It is easier for a camel to through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God." Some say that he was talking about a camel gate. What he really was saying was that when we think about all we have, we really have a lot of stuff and we really cling to what we eat, what we wear and where we live. It makes it hard to think about God and his Kingdom. It makes it difficult for all us. The disciples were astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?" And looking at

them Jesus said them, “With people this is impossible but with God all things are possible.”

And finally we come to Shorty. Jesus was on the way to Jericho and was surrounded by a crowd which was looking at the wonder worker. If you were the mayor of a town, you, too, would be excited to have Jesus come to your town. When Jesus came to where Zacchaeus was sitting in a tree, waiting and watching for him, Jesus yelled at him, “Hey you, this is your lucky day, I am coming to your houses.” Maybe Zacchaeus was in the tree because he was short and wanted to see all the action or maybe he was scared of the crowd for fear of getting a knife in his back. He was a hated tax collector. He was Jew but worked for the Romans and often skimmed off the taxes for himself. He was a wealthy man. Zacchaeus was excited when Jesus said, “I am coming to your house today.” He scrambled down the tree hardly believing his good luck. He took Jesus to his home. The crowd was outraged. All the people when they saw this began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”

During the dinner, Zacchaeus stood up and said, “Look, Lord! I believe and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay them back four times the amount.” He made this promise in front of everyone. His life was changed right there and then. He believed in Jesus.

Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house because this man, too, is a son of Abraham, for the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Is it possible for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven? Yes, Zacchaeus was a wealthy man. He welcomed Jesus. We are to first seek that which really matters, the Kingdom of God. Zacchaeus was able with God’s help to turn his life around.

No matter how we talk about wealth. We in our country have the most wealth of any people in the world. So if you were giving an offering at the temple would you be making a big deal in putting your money? What should be first and what should be the most important in our lives, it is seeking first the Kingdom of God. We need to ask, “Where is my treasure?” Let us pray.

Gracious God, you give us so much and yet we forget all that you give us and we do worry. We pray this in Jesus name. Amen