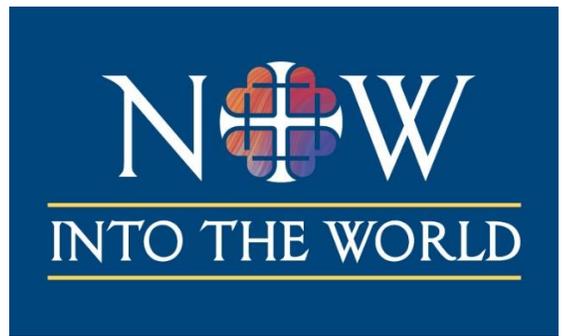


God's Currency

"... she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."



Reflection by Julie Simonton –

The widow's mite is one of the most well-known stewardship passages in the Bible – and frankly I think one of the most well-known stories in the Bible period. As a child of the Deep South ... and not a cradle Episcopalian on a three-year lectionary cycle ... it seemed that this passage was pulled out every fall about this time.

After a while, it became trite and over-used to me, with too clear and quick a line down the middle of good and evil. Many rich against a single, poor widow. Condemnation and glorification.

True, Jesus speaks an unmistakable – and at this point in the Gospels timely – warning against hypocrisy and overtly pious behavior in this passage. But ... but ... making the scribes poster children for sin – and putting the poor widow on the pedestal-of-righteous-living is too easy, isn't it?

Identifying with the scribes is much easier for me. I do, indeed, need and crave for Jesus to remind me ... repeatedly, really, of how I need to continually and every day move my boundaries of compassion in the direction of the difficult. Toward the vulnerable. So yes, identifying with the scribes ... yes. I think can do that.

Identifying with Jesus and the disciples who are watching all of this

going on is also something many of us can do. We all are not as insightful as Christ, but sometimes we can have our moments. Watching, observing, teaching, and learning from our surroundings is something many of us do. No doubt in part because we are people of the Bible, and Jesus has taught us to watch and be observant. So yes, identifying with those who are watching and learning at Jesus' side ... yes, I think I can do that.

Identifying with the poor widow, though, who gives all the money she has. This is not something many of us can do, including me. What she does here, what she gives here is so far beyond what I feel capable of giving, that a barrier of disconnection, of outright detachment immediately goes up. I thought, year after year of hearing this, well, that's not really my story. And as a child I certainly didn't see anyone around me actually taking it up. So no, identifying with the widow ... no, I have a tough time doing that.

Imagine ourselves in the story, though, not as the scribes, not as those watching, not as the widow, but as the two copper coins themselves. These two coins represent more than money. They represent faith all in, belief all in, love all in, potential all in. And that's who we are, who God created us to be, vessels, vehicles – and God's currency – of faith, belief, love ... and potential.

November 11th 2018

Proper 27 | Mark 12: 38 - 44



Reflection Questions

- Where have you found God's currencies abundant in your life?
- How might this text cause the church community as a whole to consider its collective stewardship?
 - What challenges does this present?
 - What actions could be taken?
- In our culture money is transactional. The actions are to give it and receive it. How does your financial gift and offering to God move beyond "giving" and "receiving" into the actions of "becoming" and "being" Christ in the world?

Julie Simonton is diocesan director of congregational development and stewardship.

She especially delights in church parking lot conversations when the Holy Spirit begins to bubble and folks authentically engage with where Jesus is calling us to use the gifts God gives us to do the work God call us to do.

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