A.M.D.G. Pentecost 24-B / Remembrance Sunday Text: Mark 12: 38-44

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***Mark 12 ...****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.’*

马克福音12章：38-44节  
耶稣在教训之间，说：“你们要防备文士，他们好穿长衣游行，喜爱人在街市上问他们的安，  
又喜爱会堂里的高位，筵席上的首座；他们侵吞寡妇的家产，假意作很长的祷告。这些人要受更重的刑罚。”耶稣对银库坐着，看众人怎样投钱入库。有好些财主往里投了若干的钱。有一个穷寡妇来，往里投了两个小钱，就是一个大钱。耶稣叫门徒来，说：“我实在告诉你们：这穷寡妇投入库里的，比众人所投的更多。因为，他们都是自己有余，拿出来投在里头，但这寡妇是自己不足，把她一切养生的都投上了。”

For anyone who has been going to church for a number of years – our scripture passage this morning about the ‘widow’s mite’ comes up every 3 years in the lectionary – that 3 year cycle of Bible readings used by many mainline churches. As this reading occurs on both Remembrance Sunday and during our Stewardship Campaign – it was my original intent to focus on the heroic, sacrificial giving of the poor widow. And that would not be inappropriate. ‘The Widow’s mite’ has become a colloquial phrase in Western English-speaking culture that often refers to someone’s meager or small contribution – which has a meaning far more than its size might indicate.But as so often happens in this mysterious, wild and unpredictable task called ‘preaching’ – the bible reading before us this morning took off in a totally new direction as I hosted the story again – and allowed it to speak in new ways to my understanding of the text.

来参加主日崇拜数年的人都知道，被许多主流教会主日布道采用的《圣经》选文集，每三年一个周期，我们今天早上诵读经文“寡妇的奉献”，恰逢阵亡将士纪念日和我们教会的管理经费筹募活动，所以我本打算今天重点讲这个穷寡妇的奉献所体现出的崇高和牺牲精神，这个主题不会不妥。在西部英语里“寡妇的奉献”这个词组， 已变成了俚语，意思是指某人很少的一点捐赠所表达的意义远大于这笔钱的多寡。我在完成这个被称为“布道”的神秘的、令人激动的、不可预测的任务时，跟往常一样， 我想从一个全新的角度来讲解我们今天诵读的这段经文，根据我的理解用新的方式来诠释这个故事。

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As far as the widow knew – no one noticed her among all the others thronging the Temple that day – as she slipped in two small copper coins in the Temple treasury. But then again – no one ever saw her. She was one of those invisible people who come and go unnoticed – the ones who tend to ‘fly under the radar’.

这个寡妇知道圣殿里拥挤的人们没有一个注意到她，于是她往银库里投了两个小小的铜钱，仍旧没人看见。她是那种来无影去无踪、不被注意的人，她是那种想避开“雷达监控”的人。

In the scene the gospel writer Mark describes for us – there were lots of people milling around that day – people who know that other people are watching them and who seem used to it – even pleased – when heads turned and talk stopped for a moment as they made their entrance. When these people came into the room – they announced that Someone – with a capital ‘S’ – has arrived.

马克在他的福音书里给我们描述了这样的场景：那天圣殿里有很多人围观，一些人知道别人正在看着他们，他们似乎已经习惯了、且乐于别人停止交谈、回头看着他们走进圣殿。当这些人走进房间时，他们就像是在宣告大写的“某人”驾到了。

Mark tells us that they were the rich and the scribes – Jerusalem’s elite – many of them doctors of the law - whose long years of study made them the official interpreters of God’s word. They were the religious professionals – the clergy of the day – who wore long robes and whose names were listed in the bulletin. These were clearly the people to watch and to notice.

马可告诉我们这些人是富人和律法学者，是耶路撒冷的精英，其中许多是律法博士，他们研读律法多年，已俨然成为上帝话语的官方诠释人。他们是宗教专业人士，是当日的牧师，他们穿着长长的道袍，他们的名字列示在公告牌上，这些都被人们清楚地看见并注意到。

Only – as our story unfolds – it becomes clear that they were **not**who Jesus had his eyes on in the Temple that day. He seemed far more interested in those who slipped invisibly through the crowd, and hovered on the margins – and in one woman in particular. It’s hard to speculate what it was about her that caught his attention. It was clear that she was a nobody – a woman without means – most probably dressed in shabby clothes, and doing her best to avoid scrutiny. All of which indicated that she was probably a widow – one who lived on the margins of society – with no safety net – so social status to hide behind. When she lost her husband – she not only lost her place and her name – she had become invisible. She was vulnerable in every single way that mattered. Two pennies short of the end. No one saw her anymore and no one cared – except Jesus.

只有当我们的故事被展开-渐渐看清他们并不是那天在寺庙中耶稣注意的那个人。他看上去对那些在人群中偷偷扔钱和徘徊在边缘的人更感兴趣-其中尤其是对一位妇女。很难推测是她身上的什么引起他的注意。很清楚的是她是个无名小卒-一个不名一文的妇女-很可能穿着破衫褴褛，尽可能避免被审查。所有的一切都显示她很可能是一位寡妇-一个生活在社会边缘的人-没有安全网-没有可以躲在其后的社会地位。当她失去丈夫时-她不但失去社会地位，也失去她的姓氏-她变得不被看见。在任何方面她都是弱势人群。没人再看到她也没人在意-除了耶稣。

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He saw her walk to the Temple treasury to offer her two small coins – and something about the way she did it – the length of time she stood there perhaps - or maybe the way she cradled them in her hand like her last two eggs ... something about the way she offered her ‘widow’s mite’ spoke to Jesus – telling him that perhaps it was the end for her – that there was nothing left for her to hang on to. Her sacrifice so captured him that he called his disciples over to witness it. “Truly I tell you,” he said to them, “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.” The Greek word used here makes it clear – she didn’t just give a little – she gave ‘her whole life’ – everything she had.

他看到她走到寺庙的金库捐出她的两个小硬币- 以及她做这事的方式- 她站在那儿的时间的长度- 也许是她握着这两枚硬币的方式就像她最后的两个鸡蛋…一些她尽自己绵薄之力的方式-告诉耶稣这也许是她的所有-她一无所有难以维持生计。她的奉献太吸引他了以致他把他的弟子们叫来看。“我真的告诉你们，”-他对他们说“这位贫困的寡妇所奉献的比所有捐钱的人还要多。他们都是从富裕中奉献，但她是从贫困中奉献，她捐出了她的一切-一切她赖以生存的东西。” 有一个希腊的词语在这儿可以描述得更清楚-她没有只是给了一点点-她给予了‘她的所有生活’-她所有的一切。

Here’s where the conversation took a surprising turn for me as I was preparing for this morning. Here’s where it took on a harder edge than I expected! For - how are we supposed to hear this story? Should we cheer or weep? I had not noticed before in my reading of this passage that Jesus does not praise the widow for what she is doing. He simply calls his disciples to *witness* to what she is doing. He sits them down beside him to compare what she is doing to what everyone else there is doing - to contemplate the disparity between abundance and poverty – between apparent sacrifice and the real thing. We cannot hear what is in his voice as he speaks – whether it is praise or lament.

This is the moment in the story when I’d give anything to hear Jesus’ tone of voice. Is he heartbroken as he tells his disciples to peel their eyes away from the rich folks and look in her direction instead? Is he outraged? Is he resigned? What does it mean to him – mere seconds after he has described the Temple leaders as ‘devourers of widows’ houses’ – to witness just such a widow being devoured? And worse – participating in her own abuse?

当我在准备的时候发现这里是这个对话让我惊讶的地方。这里是比我预期的更艰难的边缘！因为-我们应该怎样听到这个故事呢？我们应该欢呼还是哭泣？在我以前读这段的时候并没有注意到耶稣其实没有赞美寡妇所做的一切。他只是叫他的弟子们来看寡妇正在做什么。他让他们在他身边坐下来，比较寡妇和其他人正在做的事情-来思考富裕和贫穷之间的差距-表面的奉献和真实的奉献之间的差距。当他说话时我们在他的声音里听不到什么-是赞美还是悲叹。正是故事中的这个时刻我会尽我所能来聆听耶稣话语中的语气。当他告诉他的弟子们不要注视那些有钱人，而是转而看她时，他心碎吗？他愤怒吗？他屈从吗？这对他意味着什么-在他描述寺庙领袖是‘寡妇房子的倾吞者’之后几秒-见证这样的一个寡妇被倾吞？更糟的是-加入对她的剥削。

I suspect Jesus had a heavy heart as he watched the widow give everything she had to a morally bankrupt religious institution - to surrender her whole living to those who lived better than she did. I suspect that Jesus is not lifting her up as an example so much as decrying the circumstances that demanded her to make such an offering in the first place!

当耶稣看到寡妇把自己有的一切捐献给这个在道德上匮乏的教会 - 把她的整个生命交给到那些比她生活更优越的人的时候，我怀疑耶稣当时的心情是很沉重的。 我怀疑耶稣在开始斥责当时要寡妇捐出用来养家的钱时，耶稣就没有过多把寡妇做为例子。

Through this story, Jesus shows us a God who cares about this nobody – this woman and her sacrifice. I doubt anyone else, including the religious elite parading around the Temple that day and dropping in their token offerings – noticed her. And I doubt the disciples following Jesus would have noticed her either – had he not drawn her presence to their attention and sympathy. In doing so, Jesus reminds us that God sees our struggles, recognizes our challenges, and cares about where we are hard pressed. And even more – he invites us, as he did his disciples – to look around us – and really see each other – the beauty and the pain all around us: those who are discriminated against, those who feel invisible and voiceless, those who have lost hope, those who live with uncertainty and anguish. Those deemed the ‘nobodies’ in our society. And there are many!

通过这个故事，耶稣向我们显示了神关心无足轻重的人——这个女人和她对神的献身。 我不敢肯定还有其他人， 包括那天在殿堂游走和捐献钱物的那些宗教精英们--注意到这个寡妇没有。 我也不敢肯定耶稣的门徒会注意到她——耶稣并没有让门徒去关注穷寡妇并去同情她。耶稣这样做是要提醒我们神在看我们内心的搏斗，认识到我们面临的挑战 ，和关心我们所处的窘困。 甚至更多——就如同他对待他的门徒一样，耶稣邀请我们看看我们周围，要真正彼此互相关注---周围的美丽和痛苦：那些受到歧视的人，那些感到被忽视的和无发言权的人，丧失了希望的人，生活的不确定性和痛苦的人。 那些在我们的社会被认为“无足轻重的人”。 还有很多 !

And what does this story call forth from us? That we should stand up for those who are most vulnerable? Yes. That we should stand against laws or customs that exploit the poor? Absolutely! That we should press our governments to enact policies that mirror God’s intention to care always and foremost for ‘the least of these’? No question! And I know some of you will be watching as eagerly as I will be – to see if our new Federal Government will fast-track things like living conditions on our First Nations reserves – many of whom have been on a ‘boil water’ order for decades; like an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women; like creating affordable social housing and eliminating child poverty.In the midst of a country with rich resources – these and other issues like them have been a blight on the collective ethical conscience of our country – all of us who are Canadian – and certainly those us of who call ourselves followers of the Christ!

这个故事在呼唤我们什么呢？ 我们应该关心那些最脆弱的人群吗 ? 是的。 我们应该反对那些利用并剥削穷人的法律或习俗吗 ? 绝对的 ! 我们应该要求政府应制定政策反映神对那些弱势群体的关注的意向吗？ 没有任何问题 ! 我知道你们有些人和我一样急迫关注： 我们新的联邦新政府将会快速解决居住在原住民保护区的人们的生活条件--他们很多年来比较“棘手难解决”的问题：比如调查失踪和被杀害的土著妇女； 提供负担得起的社会住房和消除儿童贫困。在有丰富的资源的国家中——这些和其他问题在我们国家的集体道德良知上是一个痼疾，我们的国家 -- 我们所有的加拿大人，当然还有我们称自己是基督的追随者 !

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This story invites us to look for where God is already at work – and to join God’s efforts in seeing – really seeing - those in distress, those who are struggling, those whom the world names as ‘nobodies’ - helping to offer comfort and relief, and to work for a more just world. Put simply: God notices – and invites us to open our eyes as well. God cares, and invites us to care too.

这个故事邀请我们寻找神已经在做的工 -- 我们要加入神的工作，看到了——真的——看到那些有困难的人 ，那些挣扎 ，那些“无足轻重”的人——帮助并提供给他们慰藉和救济，为更加公正的世界而努力。 简单的说 : 神的通告我们 - 并请我们打开我们的眼睛。 神的关爱，神并邀请我们也来参与关爱。

Perhaps, in the end – that ***is*** what our stewardship campaign is really all about after all. In God’s eyes we are all a ‘Somebody’ – with a capital ‘S’; God sees us – regardless of our circumstances; and God believes we all have something to contribute – that we can each make a difference – and that our actions, however small, can help bring into being the vision of the world God intends for all creation.

或许，在结束——这是我们这次“教会监管活动”是真的。 在神的眼里我们都是“重要人物” - 在这里用了大写的“ S ”； 神看着我们——不管我们的所处的环境是什么； 神相信我们都已经做出一定贡献 - 我们每一个人的贡献不同，我们的行动虽然很小，但可以帮助人们看到神对宇宙万物界的意图的愿景。

May it be so! Amen.

可能是如此 ! 阿们。