

**BROADWAY CHRISTIAN CHURCH • COLUMBIA, MISSOURI**

**THE WORSHIP OF GOD • NOVEMBER 11, 2018**

**The Psalm Litany**  
Based on Psalm 127

*Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.*  
***Unless the Lord guards the city, the guard keeps watch in vain.***

*It is in vain that you rise early and go late to rest,  
chewing on your worry and anxiety.*

***The gift of rest comes to those who love God  
and know themselves loved by God.***

*Let us pray:*

***Grant us peace, O God, now and at the last. Amen.***

**The Scripture**

Mark 12:38-44

As he taught, he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor 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."

**The Message**  
***A Compliment to Gratitude***  
**Terry Overfelt**

Please pray with me.

*May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts please and reflect your being and love with our gratitude. Amen.*

I know we are all glad to turn on the radio and television stations, since Wednesday, and not hear the campaigning attack ads. Millions of dollars that could have gone into

the treasury were spent to endorse candidates or parties and too often by putting down the other. The negativity was wearing.

Wouldn't it have been refreshing if the methods of public-school campaigns had been employed where you are welcome to come up with slogans that highlight your personality and strengths? You were only allowed so many posters and so many fliers and nothing beyond? No one wasted their limit on derogatory comments about the other candidates. Even if that was permissible, it wouldn't be prudent with a limited amount of expressions allowed to highlight your own strengths and make yourself memorable.

*"Vote for Nick Larson, he's a good parson."*

You see what I did there? Or,

*"Get on board with Deb; she keeps the homeless fed."*

The campaigning was exhausting. After a while we just stopped listening, and we didn't trust what was being said. You knew that if the photo of the candidate was unflattering, it was going to be insulting. "Bad hair" equals a bad ad. But that is how to prop yourself up, by putting someone else down. Isn't it?

## **Two Campaigns**

In today's Scriptures, there are two opportunities to do just that. I mean; Jesus and the widow have lots of reasons to object to the status quo and to campaign for a better way by putting others down and lifting themselves up.

In one way, it looks like Jesus might be doing a smear campaign on the scribes here. He's addressing the crowd. In the previous chapter (Mark 12:28), he commended one scribe who agreed with Jesus that the two most important commandments were to *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love your neighbor as yourself."*

Jesus complimented that scribe saying, "You are not far from the kingdom of God."

This is going to be important to remember later.

Jesus continues in the next verse (Mark 12:35) to make the scribes, whose job it is to interpret the laws, not look like they "know it all." Jesus jokes with the crowd with what seems like a riddle about how King David could call the future Messiah, "Lord," if the Messiah is yet to come from David's own future lineage. Must have sounded like, "Doesn't that make the Messiah-to-come sound like he's his own grandpa?" (Great to the 28<sup>th</sup>...generation and 500-ish years.) The large, listening crowd was delighted.

Then to today's next verse, Jesus is on the campaign trail. He tells the crowd to beware of the scribes who like to walk around in their fancy clothes. They want to be respected by others, be greeted first. They want to have the best seats and to be seen, honored, and served first at supper. Then Jesus really gets pointed and says the scribes devour widows' houses and say long prayers just to look good. And he says they will receive greater condemnation. Now that sounds like the attack ads we've tired of! Doesn't it?

But this is Jesus talking. He is not running for office nor the job of the scribes. His observations are not for the sake of putting down. His are for lifting up. Jesus is pointing out the corruption to prepare hearts to see Spirit and truth. That's it. Spirit and truth. He knows that there is warranted mistrust among the temple crowd. He knows that scribes have been the ones who scroll out the words of the ancient laws and interpret them as teachers. They are studied and appointed through generations since Ezra and oral tradition. They have positions of influence and power...and it can become corrupted and- fake news. Can't it?

Jesus' agenda, and he always has one, is to set the crowd up to see something that is about to illustrate the kingdom of God in their midst.

Jesus is plying their minds and hearts to see the difference between the ways of the world and the ways of God. Jesus wants them to know the difference between the letter of the law and the spirit of the law, between appearances and heart. Spirit and Truth. And here she comes.

Enter the second opportunity for the critical campaign: the widow. She enters the outer area of the temple treasury. She doesn't mumble anything that decries that women aren't allowed to enter inner-sanctum. She doesn't carry a sign that says, "I should own my deceased husband's land!" She isn't entering with a caravan of other widows, orphans, and immigrants. She doesn't chant, "Do not devour, this is the hour."

Jesus is sitting down and watching the crowd putting money into the treasury. They are likely bringing their tithe in compliance to the laws of Moses. This tenth of their wealth is supposed to take care of the widows, the orphans, the outcasts, the priests, and the temple. Many rich people gave large sums. There were 13, trumpeted receptacles for the treasury and thousands of people.

Jesus sees the widow. This woman, who is disregarded and disrespected by her community, is seen by God, who searches the earth for those whose hearts are true. (2 Corinthes 16: 9) Jesus sits down and sees the one, who makes her way and puts in her two copper coins. In dropping in her two coins, she votes "yes" for Yahweh, the name too sacred to be spoken.

Jesus takes notice like when someone reached for his hem. Jesus calls his disciples over and speaks his agenda: Truth. “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.” (Mark 12: 43-44)

Didn't she?

Two campaigns: One for truth and one for trust. I'll keep listening.

## **The Jesus Compliments**

Remember in the earlier verses? Jesus must have felt so grateful that this scribe understood, and he *complimented* the scribe. “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” That scribe had to have been inspired to keep teaching truth: “Love the Lord God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength; and secondly, to love neighbor as himself.

Compliments do that. They inspire our character to continue – affirmed and kindled. The purpose of Jesus' humanity was to save us from the false teachings and to complete the law with love. When he saw evidence of this, he was grateful (they get it) and he complimented generously.

This compliment of the widow: “*She put in everything she had.*”

Matthew 11:7: “*Truly I tell you, no one has arisen... greater than he.*” (Of John the Baptist)

Matthew 5:8: “*Blessed are the pure in heart.*” (Beatitudes)

Mark 14:3: “*She has provided a good service for me, and she will be remembered.*” (Mary)

Matthew 8:5: “*You have unusual faith.*” (Centurion)

Romans 8:6: “*Bringing life and peace.*”

Luke 10:38: “*You have chosen the better way.*” (of Mary)

Luke 22:19: “*Having given thanks he broke bread and gave to them...*”

Oh, and the Psalms that Jesus well knew, so full of compliments to gratitude!

Psalm 34:1: *"I will thank the Lord at all times...my soul will boast about the Lord."*

Psalm 29: *"Ascribe to the Lord the glory due...worship in splendor and holiness."*

## **Compliments for Us**

We have spent the last month celebrating our heritage here as church for how many years? 60! It feels so good to come now to November where we are and to give compliments and thanks. Thanks for the church, for the ministries, for each other, and for the love of God.

Turn to the cover of your bulletins and let's say the mission statement of our church.

*Our mission is to enable persons to encounter the living God, as disclosed through Jesus Christ; to serve and celebrate God in an ever-changing society.*

I want us all to find and listen for ways to serve with our character and strength. Then we will all be gratefully celebrating what God is doing in our midst.

We are so grateful for where we started and to where we have come through our ever-changing society. I think of the many beautiful, ministries we have highlighted and celebrated in the last ten years.

There have been times when we have trusted Christ to prompt our hearts to say, "Yes." Words spoken in the moment caused us to take notice, like Jesus at the temple treasury and ask: "What did you just say?" "What did you just see?" "Who did you say you are?"

Words like those from Lora Hinkle. When Tim went to meet her as a suggested lead for bringing sign-language interpretation into worship, and she put in her two cents saying, "Good for you for seeking this service," and adding, "You know what we really need? Families with children with disabilities need support and a place of welcome to worship and grow in faith."

All God's Children Ministry was born in this exchange.

Or when the winter cold snapped back, and Broadway opened its doors to Room at the Inn to become an extended shelter for those experiencing homelessness.

Or when David Hammer pointed Broadway to the needs for veterans in the healing of moral injury to walk All the Way Home.

## **Compliment to Gratitude**

When we see someone's strengths and heart, in gratitude; compliment! Affirm, embolden, and appreciate both them and those who are watching. Do not hesitate in jealousy, pride, insecurity, competition, or woundedness.

We know it when we are seeing the God thing! The fruit of gratitude is a compliment and the response to a compliment is gratitude.

To our Veterans, you are brave patriots, and we know freedom because of you. "Thank you."

To Sgt. Ron Helus, you put everything in, your life, to save others in the Borderline Bar shooting. "Thank you."

## **Challenge**

Counter the divisive, demeaning, oppressive, unjust, and devouring action with the Holy Spirit and Truth.

Hate rhetoric that polarizes us against each other and godliness. We must ask ourselves, "How many hideous massacres were first seeded by one hateful comment?" All of them.

*"In everything, give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."* (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

*"Give glory where glory is due."* (1 Chronicles 16:29 or from the Backstreet Boy, Brian Litterell 😊)

God prompts us to trust and to give our all. When Jesus calls the disciples to not miss this example of the widow's offering, I think they understood what it meant to give from their poverty or uncertainty with complete trust. What places in your life require this sort of complete trust? Your job?

I'd like to think that Jesus got up and went to the woman to say, "Generous heart, thank you."

To which she responded, "Generous heart, thank you."

Amen.