

Mark 12: 41-44

41 Jesus sat down opposite the treasury of the temple, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. ⁴²A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. ⁴³Then 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. ⁴⁴For 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.'

Meditation: What is true virtue? What is true generosity? Giving is easy when we have a lot to give. Generosity is painless when it doesn't cost us much in terms of what we desire for ourselves. Indeed, such easy giving can even add to our feeling of self-righteousness and sanctimoniousness. We are not like others. We give of ourselves. But beware. For in this passage Jesus points to real giving. Real giving is about sacrifice of oneself, where it hurts. This widow's giving costs her. She must deprive herself fundamentally in order to give the way she does. The rich, on the other hand, give out of their abundance.

Generosity is about money. But it is also about ourselves and stepping out of our comfort zones. So much right now in the news is focused on protests against black racism in the U.S., and around the world. Our black siblings tell us that racism is alive and well here in Canada too and they must suffer it on a daily basis. So what would generosity as Jesus is describing it mean in our context today? It certainly would involve money. Poverty like the widow was living is a big factor in the quality of life of people in our society, and as we've been hearing in the news, Covid-19 like other ailments in society do follow racial lines in terms of communities caught disproportionately in the cycles of poverty.

But generosity is also about listening and learning. It's about giving our hearts and souls, like the widow, to God. This means we take further steps to become genuine allies to our black siblings. We must hear how they must face racism on a daily basis and how systemic it is all around us. This is the only way positive change that Jesus came to bring, can ever be achieved.

Prayer: Gracious God, your love is so generous toward us, giving us everything without conditions. And yet, generosity received with open hearts ought to evoke generosity in return. Fill our hearts, O God, not with fear in what's happening all around us, but with greater passion to learn and understand, to reach out to those around us, to fill our hearts with love rather than judgement. May we grow into human beings whose hearts and lives are ever more aligned to your justice for all your children. We believe you can do this in us, O God. May colour be something we celebrate in each other rather than something that divides us; Amen.