

“Love Is Sharing”

Living the Good Life Lenten Series
Deuteronomy 6:4-9 & Mark 12:41-44
Rev. James Ramsey ~ March 23, 2014

Want to live the good life? We have seen that it means understanding our purpose within God’s perspective. We know it means being a person of prayer, who regularly cries aloud to God – not to get your own way, but in order to draw your will into line with God’s own will.



Living the good life has everything to do with knowing and loving God. Ancient Israel called it “the Schmaa” – Hear, O Israel, you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.



When God made us He infused us with emotional passion, spiritual depth, inner strength. How do you love God with these?

Hear, O Israel, you shall love the LORD your God...Teach your children, repeat it to yourself, leave friendly reminders around your house, all the time, in the morning and the evening, everywhere you go.

How do you love God?
Love is Sharing...

Jesus tells this little story of the widow depositing two coins into the temple treasury. Many know it as the story of “The Widow’s Mite.” A “mite” was not a coin found in Israel during the time of Jesus. It was found in 17th century England, when the King James Version of the Bible was translated. In the King James, the widow “threw in two mites.”





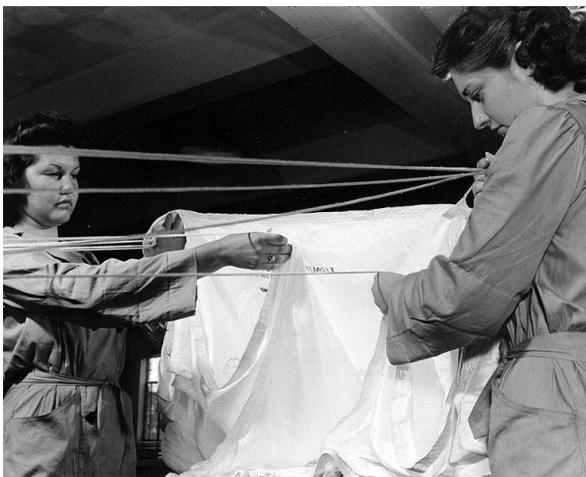
The point was that the widow contributed the least valuable coins available. But little as that was, she gave all she had. It was not the amount of the gift, but the fact that "she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on," that drew praise from Jesus.

The widow shared out of her poverty. We can become those two small copper coins as we offer ourselves to God in Christ. When we love God, we share ourselves. We live in such a way that we honor, help, rescue, heal, lift up, encourage, teach, celebrate other people, especially those who are in need or who do not deserve it.



Loving God means sharing ourselves...
Putting ourselves into circulation with others...
Finding ways to serve others.

It's a commitment that saves lives –
even when it is painstaking, boring, repetitive.



There were women during World War II who worked in factories making parachutes. These parachutes were packed by hand hour after agonizing hour in a tedious process. The workers crouched over sewing machines and stitched for hours every day. The endless line of fabric was the same color. Then they folded, packed, checked and stacked the parachutes. All that was left was for someone to pull the rip cord.



How did they stand it? They stood it because every morning before they began their work, they gathered as a group. One of the managers reminded them that each parachute would save someone's life. They were then asked to think, as they sewed and packed, how they would feel if the parachute was strapped to the back of their son, their father, their brother.

These laborers worked sacrificially, unerringly, uncomplainingly, because they were committed to the saving of lives. Their small efforts were connected to the larger picture, a larger mission. They were just a part, but a vital part to some pilot or airman.

Our sharing of ourselves, even behind the scenes, without glamour, belies our love for God.

Most would have looked past the poor widow at the Temple. If they noticed her at all, they would find her offering pathetically small, virtually meaningless. But Jesus saw a devoted woman not afraid to give all she has to God. She gave because she loved God, and trusted God to provide, she loved and she shared.

A certain Mrs. Epps likes the time she spends with children. So she enjoys her time as a volunteer at the Norge School in Williamsburg, Virginia. There she works with students who have mental and physical disabilities. Her day begins long before she goes on duty at 7 a.m. She has to catch a bus to get to the school.



When she gets there, she greets Drew who has difficulty walking. Another one of her favorites, Bobby, has Down's syndrome. He sits beside her, smiling. She turns on the tape recorder and plays the BeeGees. Andy Gibb sings, "Love is, higher than a mountain. Love is, thicker than water" while her students sing and clap and sway with the music. It takes a lot of energy to work all morning, five days a week, with these children.



Mrs. Fanny Epps is 99 years old. She refuses to waste her time or compromise her values. "I don't want to act dead while I'm still alive," she says. Her love is sharing.

Paul Beyer calls it "the Lord's work." Beyer lives in Leola, Pennsylvania, west of Philadelphia. Every week for 35 years he has driven a truck to New York City, a six-hour round trip, to deliver food to the Bowery Mission, located in one of the seedier sections of Manhattan.



His truck is loaded with produce, canned meats and pastries which the Mennonite farmers and businesses near his town have donated. He says that people trust him with the food he takes and that the reward is to see all the happy faces when the food arrives. Paul's love is sharing.

In Santa Monica, California, and cities all across this country, volunteer pilots fly with Angel Flight, an organization that helps the disadvantaged get to places where they can receive appropriate diagnosis and treatment for their serious medical conditions, care they could never afford to access on their own. These pilots show their love by sharing their know-how.



How do you measure your life? Are you living the good life? Do you love God with all your heart, and all your soul and all

your might? Does your love come across as sharing? What would happen if you began to measure your life by the acts of love that filled it?

Love God, share, give, open yourself... Could be around the table at a Women's Retreat, or across the table at the evening meal for IHN, or at your own kitchen table with your family. Could be during the offering, could be teaching a class, could be making a meal, could be caring for the sick, could be transporting food, could be packing a parachute.



Love is sharing...Christ is in the business of saving lives, so are we.