

Christ Community Covenant Church
Title – Giving My Whole Life with My Whole Heart
Scripture: Mark 12:38-44
Pastor Scott Parr – March 15, 2015

Big Idea: Give God your whole life story.

Objective: I want the congregation to be moved to offer 1 new part of their lives to God's service.

Story of the Sterling High School principal in the weight room who said to me, "You're a pastor huh? You don't look like a geek at all!"

Pass out ancient Roman coins...

Today, we will look at two stories: both refer to widows, both refer to money, and in both, Jesus is speaking to us about our HEARTS, OUR MOTIVES.

Disclaimer: This story talks about money. If you're here and going "oh that's classic – a religious guy talking about money". Please, don't give a penny today, don't feel guilty about it, and listen carefully to what I'm going to say, because I think God wants to talk to you about more than just money.

I have this struggle – I'm tempted to wear a mask of religiousness to make myself look better. I think of even some of my days in high school and college, when I started to think of myself as a Christian leader – or maybe not even a leader, but at least someone who was trying to set an example and help other people know Jesus better - I became aware that my presentation self – this outside that people see - was bigger and more perfect than the real me.

Do you ever have that struggle too? I think we're all tempted to wear a mask – to try to look better than we really are. Like we have it all together. Like we aren't sinners. And I think Jesus wants to speak to that today.

And I have another struggle. I can easily compartmentalize my life. I can think of my life like my faith, family, work, school, friends, money, hobbies, are all different objects that I pick up and use for a while and then put away. And God is just one of these objects that we pay attention to.

We see this compartmental perspective when people list priorities in order, such as:

1. God
2. Family
3. Work
4. Hobbies

Is God meant to be just one of the many things you pick up and dust off and pay attention to every now and then? Is God one of many priorities that compete for your time? I'm going to challenge us to see it differently this morning.

Let's look at what these stories have to say...

Read Mark 12:38-39

Key points:

- About the scribes
 - o They were highly respected and revered as people who knew and understood the scriptures.

- They wore flowing white robes to signify their position.
- They sat in the front of the synagogue looking out at the people.
- “Devouring widow’s homes” – two possibilities
 - ♣ Scribes lived off of the giving of others. Perhaps some scribes abused the generosity of people, and widows were especially susceptible.
 - ♣ Josephus tells the story of a Jewish scoundrel who pretended to be a scribe and convinced an important woman named Fulvia to make big gifts to the temple. He stole the money and all of Rome, including the emperor Tiberius, was outraged. Perhaps Jesus had this in mind. The prophets of old had railed against preying on widows and orphans. Then, just as now, people succumbed to the temptation to abuse the generosity of others. ~ From James Edward's commentary on Mark.
- Jesus says “Beware of the scribes” (watch out for) – they will receive the greater condemnation
- Application:
 - Don’t pray for recognition
 - Don’t seek honor for religion
 - Don’t take advantage of the oppressed
 - ♣ Jesus is passionate about people who are oppressed – who are taken advantage of!
- Takeaway #1: Jesus is passionate about your heart.
 - So how do you cultivate a sincere heart? Try this: close your door, get on your knees, confess and speak humbly and honestly to God.
- By contrast, you have the next story: Mark 12:40-44
- About the treasury, the court of women, the coin, etc.
 - Treasury: in the court of women in the temple of Jerusalem
 - People would give gifts to God, to the temple, to the national treasury/bank
 - The coins – like those going around – 2 of the smallest coins. Total, that was worth 3% of one day’s wages. So today, it means she put in \$2.
- They contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty, has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.
 - Mark starts with Jesus calling disciples to leave their nets and follow him. They gave up everything they had – their livelihood.
 - This, the last thing Jesus says in public, (the rest of Mark are some of his final teachings just to his disciples and the story of his crucifixion and resurrection).
 - The Greek New Testament is literally that she gave her “bios” her life, her livelihood, all of her possessions.
 - ♣ The Greek meaning of *bios*– it can mean
 - Worldly life
 - Possessions
 - Livelihood
 - Career
 - Bios vs. Zoe:
 - Zoe is the highest kind of life. God’s life that God offers us. Whenever the Bible talks about eternal life, it’s not Eternal Bios, it’s eternal Zoe. It’s what life is REALLY about
 - **Your bios is not your zoe**
 - ♣ Your career is not your life
 - ♣ Your body, your looks are not your life
 - ♣ Your money is not your life
 - ♣ Jesus said: “This is eternal {zoe}: that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” (John 17:3)
 - Bios: think “Biography” – the story of your life

- This widow, in these 2 coins, gave her bios – she gave her whole life. You could say she gave God her whole life story.
 - Thinking about these objects around the room that signify the different priorities and areas of our lives, think about it this way. This little God pouch on the shelf opens up to become a bag that can carry all of the other areas of our lives.
 - o Give God your friendships – how can God use you to reach your friends with God's love? How can you and your friends join together to make earth more like heaven?
 - o Give God your money – how can God use the resources in your hand to free people from suffering? To spread the good news of Jesus Christ?
 - o Give God your home – how can God use your home to host, to bless, to be a refuge?
 - o Give God your activities and your hobbies – how can you love and serve God on your soccer team? With video games? With your musical abilities? At the gym? With your garden?
 - So, these are the thoughts I want to leave you with, in closing:
 Jesus is passionate about your heart. He doesn't want a mask, as show, an impressive number. He wants your heart. And Jesus is passionate about giving you REAL life. And real ZOE life only comes through walking with Jesus. You could have a life where you just chop up your time and money and give yourself a little here and a little there to school, career, family, hobbies. Or you could give all your life, all your passions, all your gifts, all your talents, hold up all your money and possessions with an open hand to God and say, "GOD, HERE IS MY BIOS. HERE IS ALL OF MY LIFE. I WANT YOU TO HAVE IT, AND PUT IT TO USE. AND WHAT I WANT MORE IS YOUR ETERNAL ZOE, NOW AND FOREVER.
- Will you give God your whole life story? Will you give God your whole life story?
- As one big step in that direction, I'd like you to write on a piece of paper one area of your life that you have been holding onto yourself – that you have kept out of your God backpack – and give it to God. Here God, use it. Put that in the offering plate.

Questions for Reflection/Study:

1. Do you struggle with putting on a mask of importance? What could you do to cultivate a more sincere heart for God?
2. Do you compartmentalize part or parts of your life and keep them separate from God? How could you bring that into the "God bag" and devote it to God's service as well?
3. What does it look like for you, like this widow, to give God your entire "*bios*?"