

The Poor Widow

“Unknown by Name”



“For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.”
Mark 12:44

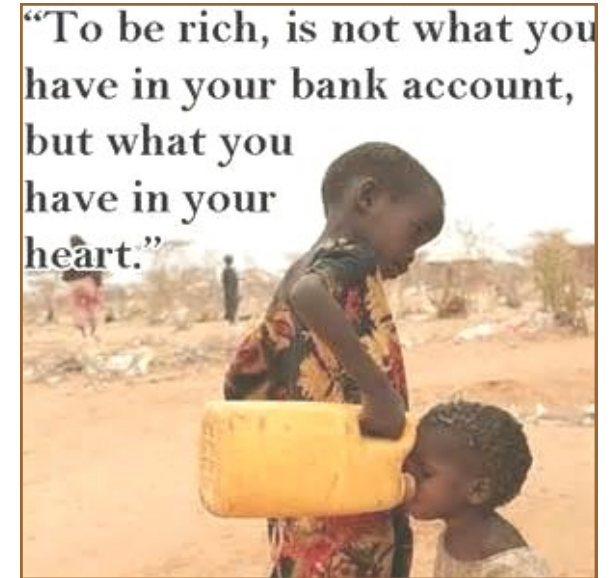
Have you ever been poor? Probably not. There are few of us in America who are really poor (food wise) in the large picture, but there are many poor around us every day. Poor in many ways. In the Scripture for today, Jesus has been sitting watching people put in their offerings. This was a monetary offering. It is probably a good thing He isn't watching us! Or is He? Christ didn't criticize those who had much and gave much. We are so grateful to those people. I consider it a privilege to know some people who give willingly to help others. They are a blessing to us and to God.

But, Jesus warns us about people who love to go around “dressed to the nines” and talking all the time. He talks about the scribes. They were well versed in the law, and it was their duty to protect the law. We all need laws, without them there is no freedom.

But, sometimes Christ warns, these scribes have let their power go to their heads. They are very self-assured and want to make sure that everyone knows who they are, and that they are very important. You didn't want to be on the wrong side of the scribes because they kept a close eye on every transaction and recorded it. They could do you great good, or they could be very harmful.

In Matthew 12:38-44 Christ tells about his sitting as people were putting in their offering. They weren't making any big sacrifice, but then a widow passed by and threw in two mites. That would be like two cents today. In fact the coin no longer exists in any currency. People just didn't go past the offering box and put in two mites. They were supposed to put in silver, at the very least bronze. But she gave two mites. This was supposedly just a small copper coin.

Why? According to what Christ says, that is all she had. Others were giving a portion of what they had; she gave everything to support the work of Christ. She wasn't worried about saving for tomorrow. I think she was happy. What a wonderful peace of mind she must have had. According to history, the authorities took half of everything that was given. However, history also tells us that the temple failed soon after this. The passage does not encourage us to live in poverty, but it does encourage us to give generously when we can. Another reference tells us that God loves a cheerful giver.



“To be rich, is not what you have in your bank account, but what you have in your heart.”

But there is another twist for us to hear in this story. The Bible also tells us that to whom much is given, much is expected.

I personally don't think the story here is about money only. It is about our being willing to give our life to Christ. I remember a calligraphy I read once. It said “I'll put it in God's hands tonight, and tomorrow I'll take it back and settle it.” Many times, we are not willing to give complete surrender. We can always handle it. Until!!! Then it actually comes to a time when we can't. Then we are willing to surrender. That has been true of individuals, societies, and governments for years. We are no different, but we

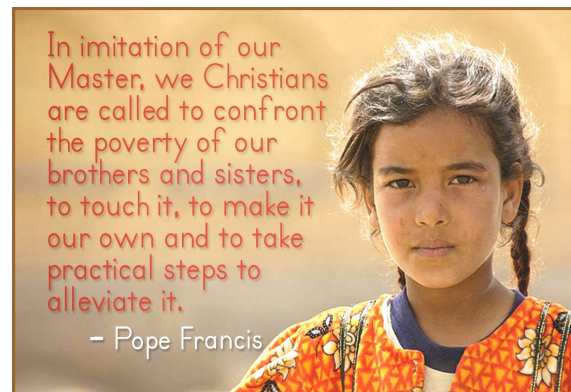
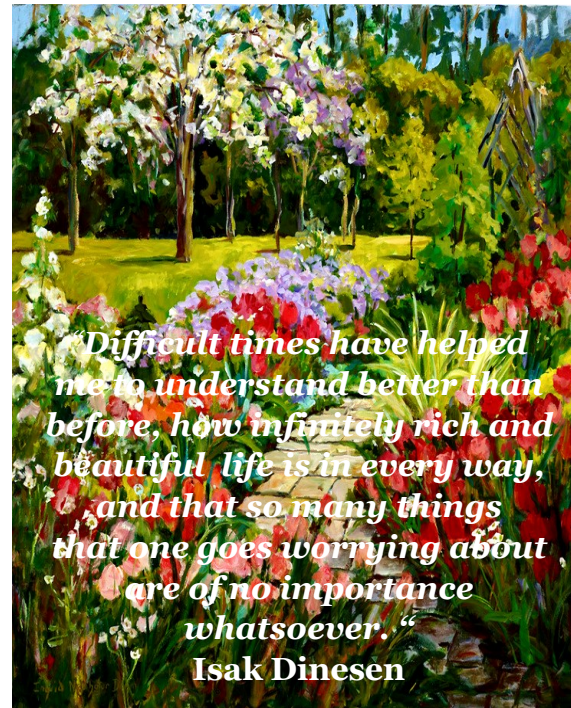
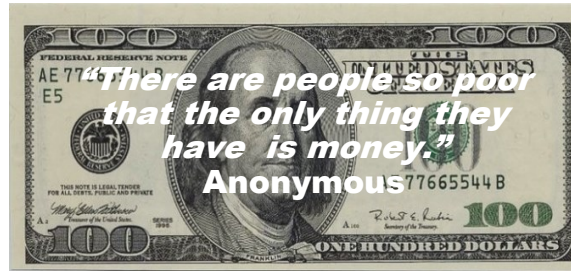
“If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.”
John F. Kennedy

just have to learn it for ourselves.

Have you seen Christ watching you? He is always with us, not just watching the poor widow. He is there for us whenever we need him, whether we are rich or poor, whether we are black, white, red, or yellow. I have a favorite camp song that has meant a lot to me over the years. It is called "Reach Out and Touch".

*"Reach out and touch a soul that is hungry,
Reach out and touch a spirit in despair;
Reach out and touch a life torn and dirty, a man who is lonely...If you care!
Reach out and touch that neighbor who hates you;
Reach out and touch that stranger who meets you;
Reach out and touch the brother who needs you;
Reach out and let the smile of God touch through you.

Reach out and touch a friend who is weary;
Reach out and touch a seeker unaware;
Reach out and touch, though touching means losing a part of your own self...
If you dare! Reach out and give your love to the loveless;
Reach out and make a home for the homeless.
Reach out and shed God's light in the darkness.
Reach out and let the smile of God touch through you."*



Prayer: Thank you Lord for all the blessings I take for granted today and every day. Amen.

1. Look again at the picture at the beginning of this devotional. Have you stopped to think that the poor widow may not be an older lady? Does that put more of a burden on us?
2. I have had the privilege of knowing some people who were very poor monetarily, but so rich in everything they said and did. Have you met someone who has given you that uplift?
3. How do we judge how much a person has? Money? Love? Friendship?
4. How can you help someone today that is poor? How can we "Reach Out"?
5. Are you poor in any way that can be helped by sharing God's love with others?
6. Count your blessings. How rich are you?

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info@rgscripts.com

*"Let my soul smile through my heart and my heart smile through my eyes, that I may scatter rich smiles in sad hearts."
Yogananda*