

1. This incident happened on Tuesday of the week when Jesus was crucified. It is found also at Lk. 21:1-4. In both Mk. and Lk. it is preceded by Jesus' denunciation of the scribes (Bible scholars) who made a big show in their dress, in their greetings, who desired the first seats in the synagogues and dinners but who took advantage of poor widows and made long, hypocritical prayers. They will receive greater damnation. They persecuted helpless widows. And now we read of one devout widow in our text.
2. Widows are helpless and usually poor. God Himself has a special interest in widows. Ps. 68:5; 146:9. People often take advantage of widows. God uttered severe denunciations against those who defraud and oppress them. Ps. 94:6; Ezek. 22:7; Mal. 3:5. In the N.T. widows were sustained at public expense. Acts 6:1-6. Paul gave special directions for the treatment of widows. I Tim. 5:3-16.
3. On the Mt. of Transfiguration Jesus' divinity shone through His humanity. His divine nature gave divine qualities and powers to His humanity. That's why He performed miracles. And it is often apparent in what He said and did. Without looking into the coin box, Jesus knew that this widow threw in only a kopek (tenge) while the rich threw in much. Without asking them Jesus knew that she threw in all she had but that the rich threw in what they did not need anyway. In the Gospels Jesus' divinity is always shining through His humanity.
4. In Greek the widow threw in one kodrantes or two lepta. How much is that? The value of money changes constantly. But according to the American dollar she threw in not more than one-half cent or not less than one-eighth of a cent. A cent is one-hundredth of a dollar.
5. Poverty can be a curse or a blessing. If it causes a person to worry and complain it is a curse. But if it makes a person trust completely in the Lord it is a blessing. Riches can be a curse or a blessing. If it causes a person to become a selfish miser who spends all on himself it is a curse. But if it makes a person give all his wealth to the glory of God and the benefit of man it is a blessing. In our text poverty was a blessing to this widow and, very likely, the riches of the wealthy was a curse to them.
6. God created everything out of nothing. And I was a nothing spiritually because of my sin. But God recreated me by His grace through His Son. God owns everything, the whole universe. He does not need peoples' gifts. He despised O.T. sacrifices which were given mechanically. But the Lord loves a cheerful, faithful, giver. He can make wine out of water. He can feed 5000 with a few loaves and fishes. He is like a parent who compliments a little child on a painting which is very artless. The Lord looks on the heart first.
7. One English translation renders vs. 44 this way: "The others put in what they had to spare of their riches; but she, poor as she is, put in all she had---she gave all she had to live on."
8. Imagine yourself very poor. You have only a 100 ruble piece of money. You go to church and discover you have nothing but this 100 rubles. You put it into the collection without complaint, although you have no money to buy food. Would you consider that foolish or wise? Jesus did not commend foolishness. Evidently this widow truly trusted in the Lord and loved Him with her whole heart, soul and mind. She is a model for all of us. She devoted her entire life to the Lord. What did the widow eat that evening? The Lord provided.
9. Read II Cor. 8:12 and 9:6-8. God expects us to give and live according to the blessings which He has given. Remember II Cor. 8:9. He became poor to make us rich not just in money and goods but in our souls and for everlasting life.
10. Jesus once said "Many are called but few chosen." Mt. 20:16. Among the corrupt people and leaders of Israel there were a few like this widow who trusted in the Lord. Some were wealthy like Joseph of Arimathea.

Sermon Outline on Mk. 12:41-44, Trinity XIII

Theme: THIS WIDOW IS OUR MODEL

Introduction: Was this widow foolish or wise? She threw in all her living. The rich threw in what they did not need. She was destitute. The rich had plenty. Was she foolish or wise? What did the Lord think? He considered her wise. Her little was more than the combined much of the wealthy. She is our model.

I-SHE BELIEVED THAT JESUS CAN BLESS WHAT WE CONSIDER LITTLE

God created everything, the whole universe, out of nothing. He spoke and it was. Only God can do that. When man sinned he became mortal and a nothing. But God made much out of that nothing. We were dead in trespasses and sin but He forgave us and made us alive. Eph. 2:1-10. We were His enemies but He reconciled us to Himself. Rom. 5:1-10. He fed the 5000 with practically nothing. He considers a little child, a nothing to us, as the criterion for membership in the Kingdom. Mk. 10:13-16. He became poor so that we might become rich. II Cor. 8:9. A proverb says: "Great oaks grow from little acorns." How true! But especially in the Kingdom of God. Read also the parable of the mustard seed. Mt. 13:31-32. Is the Lutheran Church small in Russia? Worry not. Jesus can bless what people consider little. Just so they are faithful! That's what counts.

II-SHE DID NOT WORRY EITHER FOR HERSELF OR ABOUT ^{WHAT} PEOPLE THOUGHT

A-She did not worry for herself. Read Mt. 6:19-34. The wild birds do not worry. Why should we worry? The wild flowers of the field do not worry. Why should we worry? Why be like the heathen who are constantly saying: "What shall we eat? What shall we drink? What shall we wear?"

B-She did not worry about what other people do. This widow was surrounded by wealthy people who were throwing in much more money than she was and which they did not need anyway. But she did not say to herself: "Of what use is my little kopek? Who cares about the little that I have?" No. She knew better than that. She was doing it for the Lord and not for others or for herself. Little children who are faithful perhaps do not produce very much. But did you ever hear of a child who worries about the little in comparison to the much of others? No. Or think of I Tim. 6:6-12. Never envy the wealthy. Read Ps. 73.

III-SHE MUST HAVE TRUSTED IN THE LORD

Because of His omniscience Jesus knew that this woman was a widow, a defenseless person. People usually abuse defenseless people. Jesus must have known how much (or rather how little) she threw in. Jesus knew that her little was more than the much of the wealthy. If He knew that much, He must have known too what her heart was like. She must have trusted in the Lord although on this occasion He did not even speak to her. She did this wonderful deed without knowing that she was being watched by the God-man, Jesus Christ. But she trusted in the Lord. Prov. 3:5-6 reads "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." Someone has asked: "What did the widow eat when she arrived at her house?" We do not know but we can be sure that the Lord provided for her.

Conclusion: The Lord did not commend this widow for foolishness. He must have commended her for her faith and faithfulness. She believed that He could bless her little offering. She evidently did not worry about what others thought. And, surely, she trusted in the Lord, her Redeemer. She is our model.

Sermon Outline on Lk. 10:25-37, Trinity XIII

Theme: JESUS INSTRUCTS AN IGNORANT BIBLE SCHOLAR

Introduction: In Jn. 3:1-21 we read about Nicodemus who was not a Christian when he came to Christ but who became a Christian later. See Jn. 7:50 and 19:39. In our text today we have a Jewish Bible Scholar who comes to Jesus only to test and tempt Him. By his answers and questions we know that he was not a Christian. But Jesus taught him. We know not what became of him. But the text teaches us.

I-HOW WE KNOW THAT THIS BIBLE SCHOLAR WAS IGNORANT

- A-He came to Jesus with the wrong attitude. Vs.25 says that He came to Jesus to tempt and test Him, not to learn from Him. That warns us as to what follows.
- B-He rightly quoted two OT passages but did not understand them correctly: Deut. 6:5 "Thou shalt love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind." Lev. 19:18 "Thou shalt love your neighbor as yourself." When Jesus was once asked (Mt. 22:35-40) which are the great commandments of the Bible He quoted these two OT passages and then said: "The whole Bible is summarized in these two passages." What did He mean? He meant that to love God with one's entire being means to believe and trust in Him for every need of body and soul. This faith brings new life. And He meant that we prove our faith by loving our neighbor, doing for him what we do for ourselves. This faith in Christ and love toward neighbor is a summary of all of Christianity. The whole Bible is summarized in these two passages. But this Bible Scholar betrayed the fact that he did not do this. He betrays the fact that he thought he was saved only by his own works.
- C-He betrays his ignorance by his questions. In vs. 25 he asks: "What must I DO to inherit eternal life?" He was basing his salvation on what HE, not God, does. And though Jesus commends him on his answer we are told that he wanted to justify himself, make himself look good. And then he asked another question of ignorance: "Who is my neighbor?" A true Christian does not ask this question because he knows that ALL people are his neighbor, an object of his love. By the way, when Jesus said: "This do and you will live" He meant "Trust in the Lord for your salvation and prove your faith by your works." Jesus said: "You've answered correctly." His answer was correct but his question proved that his attitude was wrong.

II-HOW JESUS CORRECTS AND INSTRUCTS THIS IGNORANT BIBLE SCHOLAR

- A-A Christian proves his attitude by his attitude toward his neighbor. There are many examples of this in the Bible. For example, in Gal. 5 after Paul has explained that Christ has made us free from sin, death and the devil he says, vss. 13-14: "You have been called to freedom, brothers. But don't misuse your freedom to commit sin but by love serve one another. For the whole Law is summarized in one sentence 'You shall love your neighbor as you love yourself'." Again, I Jn. 4:19: "We love because He first loved us." And again, I Jn. 4:10: "In this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son as a payment for our sins."
- B-The true purpose of the parable in our text. Jesus pictures this Samaritan as a person whose attitude toward God was correct and therefore his attitude toward his neighbor in need was correct too. This Bible Scholar confessed that the one who had mercy proved to be his neighbor. Only the true Christian knows what mercy is. And so when Jesus said: "Go and do likewise" he meant that this Scholar should confess his sin, trust in Jesus and then prove to be merciful just as Jesus is merciful. Jesus said: "Do this and you will live." He means: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Do for your neighbor what you do for yourself."

Lecture Notes on Lk. 10:25-37, Trinity XIII

1. This account is found only in Luke. It is plainly a parable though Lk. does not call it a parable. Whether or not it is a true-life story is not known. The Jews hated the Samaritans and considered them heathen. A parable in which a Samaritan would show mercy and selfless love to a Jew would be most exceptional and would make the Jew think. The lawyer in vs. 25 was an expert in Jewish Law.
2. Vs. 29 tells us that this lawyer wished to justify himself. That means that he wanted to make himself appear righteous though he was not. In vs. 25 he should have asked "What has God done to save me?" And in vs. 29 he shows his ignorance by asking "Who is my neighbor?" He did not know true love, either of God or of man. He was still unconverted, without true faith toward God and love toward neighbor.
3. In vs. 28 Jesus commends the lawyer on his answer in vs. 27. At Mt. 22:35-40 Jesus says that the whole Bible can be summarized in these two commandments. To love the Lord with one's whole heart, soul and mind means to trust in His mercy and love. To love one's neighbor means to do for him what one does for himself. This lawyer did not know the meaning of the word love. Faith toward God and love toward our neighbor are gifts of God which come to us in the means of grace, the Gospel, baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Bible does not tell us to love God as we love ourselves nor does it say that we should love our neighbor with our whole heart, soul and mind. To love God means to have faith and trust in Him. To love our neighbor means to do for him what we do for ourselves. It is clear that this lawyer did not know that. In vs. 37 when Jesus said: "Go and do likewise" He meant "You've not been trusting God as you should. You've not been showing mercy for your neighbor."
4. Did this lawyer become a Christian? We do not know. But we need not know. The parable is spoken to us. What does it do for us? The same thing as it did for the lawyer. We must confess that in dealing with our neighbor we are like the Priest and the Levite, heartless and merciless toward other people. The robbers left the man half-dead on the side of the road. The Priest and the Levite, who should have known better, sinned just as greatly as did the robbers. They showed no mercy. We are just as sinful as the Priest and Levite. We are in need of forgiveness of our sins. But the Samaritan is an example of the man of God. He is a man of mercy. He has faith toward God and love for neighbor. In vs. 28 Jesus said: "This do and you will live." He meant: "You must love the Lord with all your heart, soul and mind. That is saving faith. And you must love your neighbor as yourself. You must do for him what you do for yourself."
5. Gal. 5:6 says that the important thing is faith which shows itself by love. Js. 2:26 says "Faith without works is dead." Where there is true faith there will be good works and where there are good works there will be true faith. Jesus is the Vine. We are the branches. Only because of Him we are fruitful.
6. Not only did the Samaritan rescue the victim but even took him to an inn, took care of him and made provision for his immediate future. That is true love, doing for others what we do for ourselves. He gave the inn-keeper two denaria. That's two days' wages, quite a sum of money.
7. The lawyer correctly quoted Deut. 6:5 and Lev. 19:18 to summarize the Bible as Jesus did at Mt. 22:35-40 but this lawyer did not know what the words truly meant, though he was considered an expert.
8. At Lk. 6:36 Jesus says: "Be merciful just as your Father is merciful." David cried (Ps. 51:1) "Have mercy on me, O God." St. Paul gave all glory to God for His mercy in Christ. I Tim. 1:12-17. The OT says about twelve times: "Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good." How? "Because His mercy endures forever." God be merciful to me and help me to be merciful to my neighbor.