Giving your all

Mark 12.38-44

Jesus has been welcomed into Jerusalem with crowds cheering and waving palm branches. Just after this he visits the Temple, and makes it clear that making a show about giving of lots of money isn't what giving is about, and that the widow who quietly gave the little that she had had given far more. The leaders don't like what they hear and try to find ways to silence Jesus.

Now read **Mark 12.38-44** see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

Jesus gives some very clear advice about giving. Giving what we have, giving our best, and our attitude to giving are all are more important than the amounts we give. How easy do we find it to give with a generous heart, and do we think about giving as being more than money?

Ask yourself: What does living generously mean to you?

COUNT

How do you feel when you have given your best to something? Do you feel pleased or satisfied with yourself? On a small piece of card, draw round three coins. Write one of these words inside each coin: give my best. Cut out the coins and take them with you where you will see them from time to time during the day (e.g. in your pencil case or lunch box, handbag, purse or wallet) as a reminder to give or do your best. Don't compare yourself to others, just focus on giving/doing/being your best with the right attitude.

Donate

Do you have something you no longer need that you could donate to charity? Do you have unopened and in-date food hiding at the back of your cupboard that you don't use and could donate to the local Foodbank? Even one or two items will make a big difference to someone.

Give

Giving doesn't always have to be money or things; it might be giving of your time to encourage someone with kind words or actions. Make or buy a card with words of encouragement and send it to someone. Or, encourage someone by doing or saying something kind to help them. Or, invite someone you know out for coffee and say words of encouragement and appreciation when you meet.

DRAW

On a sheet of paper, draw round your hand. Then draw a heart outline, so that the hand is within the heart. Think of ways you could give with a generous heart. It could be helping someone with a task; making time to chat; sharing a skill you have – e.g. baking, teaching a sports or practical skill, showing a child how to tie their shoelaces. Using different colours, write your ideas around the outside of the heart. Ask God to help you give with a generous heart. Choose one (or more) a week to do. When you have done it, draw a line from the idea to the palm of the hand.

BAKE

Make some heart biscuits – as you do this, think about who you might share them with, and pray that your biscuits will encourage others.

You will need: 125g butter, softened, 55g sugar, 180g plain flour, 125g icing sugar, sprinkles (or small sweets, raisins, etc.), round or heart-shaped cookie cutter, wooden spoon, bowls, rolling pin, measuring jug, baking tray and parchment.

- Heat the oven to 190C/170C fan/gas 5.
- Beat the butter and sugar together. Use a wooden spoon to stir in the flour. Roll the dough to about 1cm thick. Cut out round or heart shapes. Line the baking tray with baking parchment. Place the cut shapes onto the tray. Bake at for 15-20 mins until pale golden. Leave to cool on the tray.
- When cool, mix the icing sugar with 15ml water. Decorate the biscuits with icing and sprinkles (or similar). If the biscuits are round, do this in a heart shape.
- Give the biscuits to friends, neighbours – or anyone you know who might need encouragement.

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Giving your all Mark 12.38-44

Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

Once, while he was teaching in the Temple, Jesus said, 'Watch out for some of the scribes and don't try to copy them.' His listeners looked surprised. 'You see,' he went on, 'some of them like to walk around in long robes that make them look important. They expect people to admire them and bow down to them when they're out in the marketplace. They take the best seats in the synagogues and at banquets for themselves.'

Jesus continued, 'These scribes say long prayers, and try to make everyone think that they're really holy and close to God. But instead of looking after poor widows, they steal their money and make life even more difficult for them! God will have nothing to do with people like this, for they should know better.'

Jesus sat down opposite the big treasury chests and watched people coming to put money into them. Many rich people came and put lots of coins into the chests. Then a poor woman, a widow, came along and

put in two small copper coins, which were worth about a penny. Jesus pointed her out to the disciples. 'You see this woman?' he said. 'She has put in more than all those other rich people put together, because she has nothing, and she has given everything she has to live on.'

Mark 12.38-44

Did you know?

- Scribes were writers who made copies of the Scriptures and teachers who helped people understand them.
- The synagogue is a place of worship for Jews.
- The treasury chests were large boxes into which people were expected to put money to pay for the running of the Temple.

Mark 12.38-44 (NRSV)

As he taught, Jesus said, 'Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the market-places, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honour at banquets! They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.'
He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then 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. For 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.'

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