

Two Small Copper Coins ... or, Your Furniture!

I was the liturgist at our church this past Sunday and read verses from the Gospel According to Mark (12:28-13.2). In these verses, Jesus challenges the power of the high and mighty with the example of a poor widow whose offering demonstrates the strong foundation of her faith. While the rich and prominent were making large contributions, the poor widow gave two copper coins... "She out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she has to live on."

As I sat in the congregation after I had completed my reading of the Scripture, I started to think of someone I know who acted like the poor widow.

Our daughter Jill worked as a Paramedic for fourteen years and one day out of the blue, the owner of the company called Jill and her fellow Paramedics together to tell them that the company lost its funding and that they were all out of work.

Ruth, my wife and Jill's mother, herself a retired nurse, encouraged Jill to pursue her dream of becoming a nurse. Jill had married early, gave birth to three sons and was now a single mother. Her sons were now adults, two of them living with their father nearby and the third in the Air Force. This decision would be life changing...no income, overcoming poor grades she had earned when a very young college student and passing the difficult subjects she would need to gain entry into the nursing program. The program was located near our home and we encouraged Jill to put

her home up for sale, store her furniture, live with us and pursue her dream of becoming a nurse. Several years later, the house still hasn't sold but Jill has graduated and is now waiting to take her State Boards and commence practicing what she has learned the past few years. She admires her mother and her career in nursing, and looks forward to putting her own dream into practice.

During the time that Jill has lived with us, an event occurred that reminded me of the "widow and the two copper coins." One day at our church, an announcement was made by a social worker that one of her clients had lost her home and everything in it to a fire. The client had two young sons and a daughter, and everything else had been lost. The social worker asked that if anyone in the congregation had anything this mother of three could use, they should contact her. When we returned home after church, we shared this story with Jill.

Jill does not attend church and has not seen the church as an important part of her life. While we discussed the case, Ruth mentioned that some of the boy's old clothes might really help this destitute mother. Jill said she would contact the social worker to see how she might help. Several days later, she met the mother and the children and decided that they needed her stored furniture and the boy's used clothes more than she did. We urged her to reconsider her decision as she would be giving away almost everything she owned... her bed, the children's beds, her living room furniture, her kitchen table and chairs, her dishes and pans, and all those outfits for the children. We said she would need these items

upon graduation, as she could not know where her new job might lead her. She was adamant! She gave everything away...and has never regretted it she says.

In our world, there are many folks like the poor widow with two copper coins. They are all around us...helping others when they are in need...helping others. Jill has made some decisions over the years that might be questioned as they were not always in her own best interests. This decision is one that I am proud she made...a selfless act in the service of someone in need. This church-avoiding daughter of ours inspires her mother and me to be more attentive to others in need.

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