



Longer Tables, Lower Fences - Reflections for Lent 2019
Week 4 – 31st March (Mothers' Day)
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Scandalous generosity

I wonder if you have ever been on the receiving end of scandalous generosity? Visiting Christians in developing countries, I have been humbled and moved by the way that those who seem to have the least materially in this world, are often the most generous people and sometimes put to shame those of us who have more resources – giving with a disregard for prudent thrift and devoid of greed. Closer to home, my own Mum is one of the most generous people I know – she grew up in terrible poverty and instead of making her want to accrue more it has made her reckless in her generosity, knowing that there isn't really much materially she needs – she has never had a lot of money but has always given much away.

In the story from Mark's gospel known as 'The Widow's Mite' we see this reckless generosity in action. This poor widow had clearly learned to trust God for her daily needs and was able to make serving the Kingdom of God her first priority. Time and again Jesus and the New Testament writers point us to a way of living in which we receive everything as a gift and make everything we have available to help others when it is needed. This attitude is the heart of simple living but not always easy to achieve, especially in this society in which we are bombarded with the consumerist lie that the more we get the happier we will be! Living in simplicity and generosity of spirit is not something that we can do by gritting our teeth, pulling up our boot straps and trying harder. To truly live in generosity and be free of greed we need to ask God to change us from within – to be free from the lust for more and to be so filled with the love of Jesus that we will be open handed to those in need around us and more concerned for the needs of others than ourselves.



With my Mum, daughter and granddaughter

To ponder: Who is the most generous spirited person you know? What do you notice about their attitude to money and possessions? What is your attitude to money and possessions? Do you see your money and possessions as tools to live and help others or objects to be desired? In what ways could you live more simply so that others may simply live? Ask God to show you ways to demonstrate his sacrificial generosity as an individual, as families and as churches. Get together with some Christian friends to discuss practical ways you could be a blessing to others.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, help us to seek you and your Kingdom above all else. Forgive us for the times we seek our own comfort and pleasure while others go without. Help us not to lust after the things this world considers valuable but grow in us the desire to live in simplicity, love, grace and generosity of spirit. Amen.

Bible link: Mark 12: 41 - 44 *Jesus said, 'This poor widow has put more in the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth, but she, out of her poverty, put in everything – all she had to live on.'*

Hymn: Singing the Faith 562 v 1 *'O God what offering shall I give to you, the Lord of earth and skies? My spirit, soul, and flesh receive, a holy living sacrifice: small as it is, 'tis all my store; more would you have if I had more.'*