

O God, whose blessed Son came into the world that he might destroy the works of the devil and make us children of God and heirs of eternal life: Grant that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves as he is pure; that, when he comes again with power and great glory, we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

LOOK

How would you define a sacrifice?

Describe a time when you sacrificed something important to you for a higher purpose. Was it a hard decision? Were you glad you did it?

BOOK

Mark 12:38-44

Teaching in the temple, Jesus said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor 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."

- 1) Jesus has completed his ministry, ridden into Jerusalem on a donkey, and is now teaching in the temple. Discuss the importance of his observation about this widow given that his death is imminent.
- 2) Did Jesus praise the woman's offering? Does this mean he condones giving that impoverishes the giver?
- 3) Some scholars think that Jesus meant to condemn a temple system that would require a widow to give her last two cents. How does that change the message of this passage?
- 4) Read 1 Kings 17:8-16. Do you think the widow in our gospel was familiar with this Old Testament story? How might that change your view of her?

TOOK

If a friend or relative gave away the only money they had to live on, what would you think? Why?

The Latin root of the word sacrifice is sacer – sacred, holy. What makes a sacrifice holy? Does the intention matter? Does the size matter?

In both of these passages, the widows had to make a decision to give their all – their last resources. We could say they 'set the miracle in motion'; they trusted God's promises. What keeps us from trusting that God will provide for us?

Does a sacrifice have to be uncomfortable?

How is God calling you to pour yourself out
in sacrifice? What is holding you back?

How can your group help you? How will
you pray?