

# “Everything She Had”

Presented by Pastor Scott Walters on 11-11-18  
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Jesus and his disciples have come to Jerusalem, the capital city, the seat of national political and religious power, the symbol of all that Israel means. And they are impressed.

They are impressed with the great temple. Remember, those guys are “hicks” from the out country of Galilee. On the other hand, the Temple of Jerusalem was one of the wonders of the ancient world.

When you and I think of King Herod, we think about a megalomaniacal despot who’s willing to kill infants to make a point. But history also remembers Herod as a great builder.

“Teacher, look at these huge stones, these great buildings!” the disciples say to Jesus – like when I saw the state capitol for the first time, coming to Madison for the first time.

Jesus was not too impressed. He talked about the future destruction of the temple. “Not one stone will be left standing on another.”

And as you’d expect, inside the imposing and august temple are many imposing and august people. You can just picture these 12 country bumpkins from out in Galilee, who have come to the big city. “Master, look at those scribes, people show have spent their whole lives studying the Bible. Look at their long robes and the respect people show them.” (Kind of like a 4<sup>th</sup> grader from central Wisconsin, seeing the well-dressed people while the legislature’s in session.)

Jesus is not impressed. “Beware of scribes who like to walk about in long robes and receive deferential treatment from the people.”

Then Jesus seats them “opposite the treasury,” just across from where people are filing by and offering their gifts to the work of the temple. Now, here’s the place where you can see “who’s who” in Jerusalem. (Like watching people on Rodeo Drive in L.A. or Newberry Street in Boston.)

Remember, they weren’t writing out checks. They were putting big, heavy, obvious bags of money in the treasury.

But then an old lady passes by the temple treasury as people are putting their offering in the coffers. It isn’t just that she gave but that she gave everything she had. All.

Why did she give it all? We don’t know. We are not told. Jesus simply comments on the extravagant nature of her giving. The one who had the least, gave the most.

Why? What was her reason for giving? Maybe she gave what she did because what she did was beyond reason. Perhaps she got carried away. I know people who have.

This past Thursday was, I hope, my last meeting to chair the South East District Committee on Ordained Ministry. There five times a year, we interview women and men who are at different points in their walk in not just giving their moneys, but also their professional lives over to Christ and the work of the church.

If you ask them about their Christian commitment; about how they decided to follow Christ, many of them will say it wasn’t so much a matter of a decision or a choice. It was about being called or about even being grabbed by God.

For some, it is a call that might be put off for years, even decades. But it is a call that is so captivating that it will not be denied.

It isn’t so much about a man or woman choosing Jesus as much as it is in Jesus choosing her or him.

C. S. Lewis in *The Screwtape Letters*, depicts his devil, Screwtape, advising his apprentice devil, Wormwood, that moderation is one of the keys to avoiding the Christian faith: “Talk to him about

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‘moderation in all things.’ If you can get him to the point of thinking that ‘religion is all very well, up to a point,’ you can feel happy about his soul. A moderated religion is as good for us as no religion at all – and more amusing”

I can think of a young man in his early thirties who had no real church background at all. But of all things, when he heard the open invitation to receive communion, that turned a switch on in his life that changed the direction of his life. At that point, he wanted to serve Jesus and the Church that welcomed someone “like him.”

You might say, I suppose, it sounds a bit extreme – or out of control. But so was that old lady in the Temple that day in Jerusalem.

This young man in his early thirties and that “old lady” in the temple, had come under the control of another who had released in him the vitality and enthusiasm beyond the bounds of a ‘calculated faith.’

God tends to do that to people. Has God ever had that effect on you? Amen.