

Scripture: Mark 12:41-44

Text: Mark 12:44b--"she out of her poverty has put in everything she had her whole living."

Topic: "Wholehearted"

Proposition: Wholehearted acceptance of Jesus Christ's concepts makes a lot of difference, in individual lives or in society.

Date written: March 30, 1973
(for a Communion meditation)

Dates and places used:

April 1, 1973 - Oakland Park, Fla.

Reference: Mark 12:41-44

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Topic: "Wholehearted"

Proposition: "Wholehearted acceptance of Jesus Christ's concepts makes a lot of difference in individual lives or in society."

Date written: March 20, 1973
(for a Communion meditation)

Date and place read:

April 1, 1973 - East and West (L.A.)

Introduction:

1. Ben F. Lehmborg died of a heart attack in 1964 or 5, while he was pastor of First Methodist Church in Colorado Springs for 13 or 14 years. During that time the membership grew from about 3000 to over 6000. Ben was not particularly a dynamic speaker, but had many folksy stories, and seemed genuinely interested in individuals. Those of us who knew him well liked him greatly.

2. Not more than a year or two before his death, "Methodist Evangelistic Materials" published a short book by Ben Lehmborg, which was entitled "A New Awakening for Methodism." Nothing startlingly-new was in it, perhaps, but it did give insight into a man who seemed really to believe what he preached, and to try to practice it too. As I read his book recently, on page 54 I found this statement: "Nineteen centuries ago Jesus of Nazareth gave to the world four great ideas which, if accepted, will produce a new world!" He did not mean that these were all the ideas Jesus gave, or all that

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Jesus stood for, but these four were ^{SOME} chief ideas of Jesus which could change the world. We want to look at them as our Communion meditation for today. We present, not prove, them.

I. First. Jesus presented the idea that there is a God who loves every human being so much that we human beings can trust Him in life and death.

1. A Sunday School teacher asked one little girl if she knew the story of Adam and Eve. The little girl answered, "First God created Adam, then he ~~created~~ looked at him and said, 'I ~~can~~ think I can do better.' So, He created girls."

(Herm Albright, in Good Housekeeping, 1-73)

Whether you agree with the little girl's estimates of whether boys or girls are the best, you'll have to admit that for many people the only way things can look better is if they put their faith in God. We're so cocksure of ourselves and our ability that we really do tend to mess up our lives. When we've gone about as far as we can, or at any point before that, God can be turned to, to confess

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that, God can be turned to, to confess

to, to forgive^{us}, to provide guidance through Jesus, the Bible and others.

2. When death comes to a loved one, grief is inescapable. But if we know that our loved one trusted God, and if we trust him, we but mourn our personal loss, for we believe the loved one to be better off and happier than ever before. When the threat of death comes to one of us, we don't have to panic. I don't claim any great faith in God, by comparison with many good and religious people, but I do know that in my recent sickness it never struck me to be fearful that death might be near. Rather, somehow, I trusted God, I trusted the hospital people to do their best, and as far as I was able I was interested in what was going on. ~~Because~~ God can be trusted, in death or life, to treat us justly, mercifully and ^{ultimately} with kindness.

3. We could illustrate this theme with many true stories, but we've made our point. According to Ben Lehmborg, Jesus' second great idea was x

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color of skin, are children of God. He could have said "regardless of nation," or a lot of other circumstances which people can't help.

1. It is possible, of course, for children to "run away" from their parents, to hurt them, to deny them as their parents. That doesn't change the natural fact of their births. Usually it doesn't change the love the parents have for their children either even though it pains the parents a great deal. Those people who deny that God exists, who feel no sense of gratitude nor obligation toward a Deity, neither ~~prove~~ disprove that there is a God, nor make untrue the fact that ~~there~~ existence is due to that force that most people call God.

2. A 5-year-old boy was overheard at a supermarket checkout pestering his mother to buy him a comic book. "Wait until you learn how to read," his mother said. But the child responded quite logically, "By then they'll probably all be gone."

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2. A 5-year-old boy was overheard at a supermarket checkout yesterday, his mother to buy him a comic book. "But will you learn how to read," his mother said. But the child responded quite logically, "By then they'll probably all be gone." Children of all colors and races do come up with cute answers, and are capable of being quite logical.

Parents give in to them quite often in such circumstances. God seems to favor many of us beyond our deserts, too. All are his children.

III. Third, because all human beings are God's children, each of us ought to treat others as brothers, or sisters.

1. Now, we know that brothers and sisters do argue and fight, sometimes so much so that they almost drive their parents wild. But ^{OFTEN} outsiders, ~~usually,~~ better not pick on one of them, for then unity shows up and they stick together, ~~quite often.~~ When the going is really tough, a person is much more apt to help one whom he loves as a brother or sister than someone he's never known.

2. A sign on a church bulletin board recently read: "Drive carefully, Drive defensively. It is not only cars that can be recalled by their maker." Not only to protect yourself, but to protect other people too, you try to drive carefully and defensively, to treat others as brothers and sisters. To be a child of God on the roads is one

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way
of practicing this concept.

IV. Fourth, the measure of a man's worth is not his wealth or his power, but his worth is measured by the services he renders to others.

1. The ~~S~~cripture that we read today makes this clear. The poor widow who put her "mite," her last ~~1~~ coins worth together about a penny, into the temple treasury was said by Jesus to have put in more than all the rich people and their large sums. The more that she put in was her love, herself, all that she had. She was wholehearted. She believed in the God to whom the temple was dedicated, and she held back nothing.

2. That's another way of saying that your wealth and power are not the truly important things. They may be useful tools, but they are not the most important items of life. Your spirit, your outlook, your intent, these are the things that count.

3. Our Churches, health organizations such as the Heart Fund and the Christmas Seal campaigns, and other means allow us to serve others

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in ways that we cannot do alone. There are "solo" ways of helping people too, as some of our people do by visiting the sick, making clothing for needy children, volunteering to serve in hospital jobs, and so on. The intent to serve, the wanting to be helpful, the wholeheartedness of the approach, is what counts.

Conclusion:

1. Jesus taught and set the example for us in these four principles, but they are not forced on us. It's up to you.

2. Your wholehearted acceptance of Jesus Christ's concepts does make a lot of difference, in individual lives, and in society.

3. Your communion with each other is one way of saying that we people here, together, believe in God, trust him in life and death, want to be more brotherly to each other and to others, and will try to increase and improve our service to others.

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