

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Jun 6th 2015

I have been fortunate this year and I have drawn some of my favorite biblical passages on which to reflect. I suspect that most of us remember the story of the poor widow putting in two small coins and Jesus praising her, saying that she had done more than the rich and powerful who make a show of making big donations. (We read Mark's account today; Luke is essentially an identical one.) At one level the reading is easy to understand: it's good not to be a hypocrite and give for the sake of having people praise you.

But that doesn't mean that giving of yourself shouldn't feel good, even if your circumstances are much better than the widow's. I once was talking with a friend of mine about some volunteer work I was doing and how much I enjoyed it. He gave me some advice that stung a little, but was great advice. He said: "You'll love it even more if you don't tell anybody about it." He was right. At one level I had convinced myself that what I was doing was encouraging people to do likewise. But there was another level at which I was hoping that people would say: "Oh, look what a great guy he is for spending his time doing this!" Once I had that breakthrough, I enjoyed it more.

Now sometimes it's unavoidable that attention will be drawn to you if you make a sacrifice and it does good for a large number of people. But don't let yourself be the one to draw attention to it and it will feel even better.

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