

**Mark 12:38-44  
Creekside COB  
November 8, 2009**

### **What Does She Know?**

**Linus is talking things over with Charlie Brown. He explains to him: "When I get big, I'm going to be a humble little country doctor. I'll live in the city, see, and every morning I'll get up, climb into my sports car and zoom into the country! Then I'll start healing people...I'll heal everybody for miles around!" Then in the last frame he winds it up, "I'll be a world famous, humble little country doctor!"**

**The Greeks have a legend about a youth named Narcissus who was loved by many nymphs, including Echo, the fairest of them all. But Echo could not tell him of her love because she could only repeat what was said to her. In one modern-day version of the story, Echo is in the woods, and she hears Narcissus calling, "Come!" to his companions. "Come," she echoes shyly, stepping forward through the branches. Narcissus, on seeing her, recognizes the love in her eyes and runs away singing, "I'd rather die than say, 'I love you and I give you power over me.'" Echo is heartbroken and her words, "I give you power over me" humbly echo after him. Some nearby nymphs, feeling the youth has been too cruel, utter a curse that Narcissus might feel what it is to love and receive no return of affection. Thus it is that when Narcissus stops at the pool to drink, he falls in love with his own reflection. And so he spends the rest of his life seeking in vain to be loved in return.**

**That is what is happening in today's passage of scripture, the scribes were suffering from a puffed-up self-image. They loved themselves. And they loved what they believed they represented. The passage says, 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 had such pride in themselves. They loved themselves.**

**Now doesn't that remind us of today's culture. People who are really loving themselves - people who crave attention - people who have a need to be noticed. Like Narcissus, they love themselves.**

**Does the name Bernie Madoff sound familiar? You all know him. The person who lived a lavish lifestyle and was so self-centered and built a ponzi scheme stealing hard-earned money. And there are others who fit the same mold, CEOs such as Charles Prince at Citigroup Inc., Stanley O'Neal at Merrill Lynch & Co., Richard Fuld at Lehman Brothers, Kerry Killinger at Washington Mutual Inc. Angelo Mozilo, the former chief executive of Countrywide Financial Inc.**

**These are the scribes of today, they walk around with their long robes - robes of importance. Did you know that Bernie Madoff owned more than one wedding ring and had a collection of watches and would dress every morning matching those things purposely? The scribes of today also want the best seats - did you know that Bernie Madoff owned a Manhattan apartment, two private jets and a yacht on the French Riviera. The scribes of today also devour widows houses. Did you know that it was over 20 years that Madoff bilked his friends out of thousands of dollars? These are the scribes of today.**

**Reinhold Neibuhr in his great work The Nature and Destiny of Man divides pride into three categories. There is the pride of power. That's the sin of Hitler, Napoleon, Ghengis Khan. There is the pride of knowledge. There are many people who allow their intellect to be destructive to their spirit. Then there is the pride of virtue. I am not sure which one they may fall under it may be all three.**

**Pride comes from a love of one self - a self that is inflated - a self that needs attention - a self that is all about me. We find it in this culture more now than ever. I think Reality TV will attest to that. People crave attention and the need to be important, to be recognized to be someone. For what other reason would people bare their souls and their entire life history on national television if there wasn't a deep need for it.**

**Our scribes had a need for the recognition and prestige, they didn't have enough money so they would take widow's homes. Humanity hasn't changed. Prestige, recognition and money are all symptoms of a greater need. As they continue to acquire more recognition, more prestige and more money, their egos become more inflated as they continue the vicious cycle. The scribes of today and in our scripture passage just didn't know how to satisfy those needs.**

**Tell me what satisfies your needs? The Mars company thinks they know. They say that Snickers satisfies. Well, I have a Snicker bar for all of you just to satisfy your needs.**

**(Hand out candy)**

**The woman in today's passage of scripture knew how to satisfy those needs.. She didn't know about Snicker but she knew about something else.**

**Let's look at a video of what she might say. You can munch on your bars as we watch.**

**Jesus satisfies - our widow in today's passage of scripture knew that. She knew that Jesus meets her needs.**

**A man on a camel rode through miles of the sun-drenched desert searching for some sign of life. His supplies were running low when his camel died. Now on foot, he really began to pray as he desperately sought refuge from the heat, and, most importantly, a source for water. Suddenly, he came across a vendor in the middle of the desert. "Thank God I found you!" the man cried. "Please help me. I'm in dire need of some water." "Well," said the vendor, "I don't have any water. But would you like to buy one of these fine ties." "What am I going to do with a tie?" the man asked. "That's what I'm selling sir. If you don't want to buy a tie, I can't help you." The man left the vendor and walked on for many more miles, praying each minute that he would find refuge from the scorching sun. His eyes squinted a bunch of times as he came across a restaurant in the distance. Unable to comprehend a restaurant located in the middle of the desert, he assumed the place was a mirage, but decided to check it out anyway. As he approached the door, his mouth opened in amazement, seeing that the place actually existed. The doorman stopped him before he entered. "Excuse me sir," the doorman said, "But you can't come in here without a tie!"**

**The widow today knew that God knows our needs more than we know our own needs. She gave all she had. You know it takes real courage to do that. She had no Social Security. She relied only on money her husband may have left her, her children or the mercy of society. She knew her God and her God would meet her needs. She had complete**

**trust in the providence of her God. God would provide for her. Her soul is satisfied.**

**She also knew who she was. She was child of God. She knew God loved and cared for in the midst of her own suffering. And because of that knowledge, she trusted God to care for her. Her soul is satisfied.**

**She also knew the character of God who never changes. She knew the God of the Hebrew Bible. She knew a God who is faithful even in our unfaithfulness. Her soul is satisfied.**

**She knew because she believed and lived in the knowledge of the God. She knew more than the scribes. The scribes knew about God and she knew her God. They knew about the law and she knew God. Her soul is satisfied.**

**The Kingdom of God was at hand. God, in Jesus, dwelled among them and she was satisfied.**

**Like the widow, Jesus dwells among us and we are satisfied. Through Christ we have a personal relationship with our God. We have Jesus who fills the voids that drive us to seek fulfillment in places that are not of God.**

**We know something that the scribes of today don't know. We know that nothing more than Jesus can satisfy our souls.**

**One person said of Bernie Madoff, "he was a hero to us." "The head of Nasdaq." "We were proud of everything he had accomplished," says Diana Goldberg, who once shared the 27-minute train ride with Mr. Madoff from their homes in Laurelton, Queens, to classes at Far Rockaway High School. "Now, the hero has vanished."**

**A New York Times article was quoted saying "While he managed billions of dollars for individuals and foundations, he shunned one-on-one meetings with most of his investors, wrapping himself in an Oz-like aura, making him even more desirable."**

**Little gods - that is who they were. They made God seem unattainable. And like Narcissus, they seek the love of the reflection of themselves. It returns void. They can never find it and their**

**appetites are insatiable.**

**Only Jesus satisfies our needs. Only Jesus fills those deep needs of our soul.**

**I believe the little gods of our world and the scribes of the day didn't really know the love of God. Because they didn't know God's love they did not know how to give love. I believe that about all those who seek things that cannot fill them up.**

**There is a song by the Gaithers that may help us understand.**

***I am loved, I am loved  
I can risk loving you  
For the One who knows me best, loves me most***

***I am loved, you are loved  
Won't you please take my hand  
We are free to love each other.  
We are loved.***

**When we begin to know Jesus and his wonderful love it is then that we can give and receive love. Only then can the empty places of our lives be filled.**

**The widow today knew that. I pray that you do.**