**Sermon at Bluff, 8 November, 2015** (Mark 12.37a-44)

Story of the Widow’s Mite is well known and often used to encourage the giving of money to the church. All this is fine but it might miss so much of what this story has to offer.

Context – JC is reaching the final days of his life. He and disciples have gone to Jerusalem for the Passover. Palm Sunday has taken place. He prepares for his final sacrifice.
Is this why he notices the widow making *her* sacrifice?

[1] Can we sacrifice the important stuff?

Nothing wrong with what the rich folk gave, but it did not cost them.

It is easy to give up trivia (chocolates during Lent, say)

What are we prepared to give up? Only trivia?

Only when we are prepared to give up everything can we be in the position of the widow.

Gambler keeps on putting money in, in the hopes of a return. The more he puts in the more wants to put in. A vicious circle.

Same is true when we put a lot into anything - Eg church building, work with children at church.

[2] Is sacrifice the true nature of love?

Farmer who enlisted in 1918 so his son (nearly 18) would be in a reserved occupation – died in the trenches. Clearly his sacrifice changed him; did it change his son? Does it change us?

The act of sacrifice brings about change, almost irrespective of the sacrifice. Eg Jesus on Cross.

How (if at all) did God honour the widow’s sacrifice and/or our sacrifices?

[3] What about ‘pointless’ sacrifice?

If we sacrificed we would want to know it was for a good enough purpose…

Was offering money to the Temple such a purpose?

Is it right to sacrifice for a more dubious purpose/cause? Eg The farmer.

Widow gave to God in the only way she could.

But note that Jesus gave his life, even for those not worth it.

What are we prepared to give for those people, or that cause which is not worth it?

It might be time/energy for a person who just soaks it all up with no obvious change/benefit.

Or for a boss who does not appreciate it.

It might be money on a lost cause.

Sacrifice is key to understanding God and why Jesus came. Sacrifice is the hallmark of the Kingdom. May God help us comprehend, and give us the strength to follow.