

## 11.8.15

### O. INTRO:

\*Gayle Ludwig is my father in law

\*He had his 82 birthday last week, I had the privilege of being there.

\*He has lived his entire life in Joplin, MO.

\*He owned and operated a dry cleaning shop his entire adult just like his dad before him.

\*His only sibling, a brother was killed in action in France at age 19.

\*Year after year for decades he worked long hours...in a dry cleaning plant in the heart of a small city.

\*Over the years he took very little time off...I remember being there over Christmas and if the temp got too low he slept at the cleaners to ensure the boiler would not go out and burst the steam pipes.

\*He raised two daughters on a modest salary.

\*Sent my wife to WSU and paid her out of state tuition even though the University of Missouri offered her a better music scholarship.

\*Why? He believed it was where God wanted her and he was willing to pay the price for the will of God.

\*Can you imagine how grateful I am that he obeyed?

\*God had already gotten Gayle's attention years earlier as a young man with a young family...his heart had been wrapped around some idols(hobbies) and God set him free.

\*From that point on Gayle and Farolyn worked hard...he as a dry cleaner, her as a mom and then running an interior's store from the dry cleaning building.

\*But their lives were given over to ministry...they gave weekend after weekend and evening after long evening to working with teens.

\*Then when the girls were off to college...he gave himself in ministry to business men in the city and as a key leader in the church.

\*Later on he even pastored small churches while continuing to work full time in his business...he had very little free time...maybe none.

\*All this happened, for the most part, off the radar...ministry in the trenches...day by day.

\*But in my opinion...he gave his very best

\*Not in order to earn God's love...but because he enjoyed God's love.

\*Farolyn, Christy's mom grew up in a broken home with a mother who had her own struggles and issues.

\*In spite of this Farolyn, went on to be a nurturing, loving, attentive mom and wife...with her own significant ministry to women.

\*Several years ago Farolyn, Gayle's wife of over 58 years became chronically ill, then she had knee and back surgery...she lost sight in one eye, then a year later...her second eye.

\*Farolyn is a woman who loves color, beauty...her profession was colors and beauty...now the only time she sees any color is when she dreams...she has full color dreams.

\*So their lives...full of ministry, and people, and going and giving and serving...became...very limited in scope.

\*Gayle still teaches a Sunday School class, visits the sick...but most of his life is caring for his bride.

\*Farolyn lives in visual darkness and with daily pain...yet, she is never a complainer.

\*Gayle...cares for her faithfully, he knows her medical conditions and treatments intimately...he cooks, he waits for her as she slowly ambles up the stairs to bed and down in the morning.

\*Their busy lives, giving all...on the go...faithful in the small.

\*Are now...mostly living day by day...still faithful in the small.

\*Their calling has changed in a sense...they are unable to do the things they used to do...but in another sense their calling has not changed at all.

\*Their calling has always been to be faithful with the stewardship God gives them.

\*I see the whole of their life as a thing of beauty...a work of art.

\*They are doing what they have done for many years...be faithful with what God puts in front of them to do.

\*And it is hard...but if you walk in their house...it is full of peace, purpose, faith...there is nothing of the emptiness of those who lose their will because they had a wrong way.

\*When life is about something other than being found faithful...when that something else is taken...there is nothing left.

\*Faithfulness is the one life purpose that cannot be taken...it can be thrown away...but nothing and no one can take it from you.

**Mark 12:35** While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, “How is it that the teachers of the law say that the Christ is the son of David? 36 David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared: “‘The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.”’ 37 David himself calls him ‘Lord.’ How then can he be his son?” The large crowd listened to

him with delight. 38 As he taught, Jesus said, “Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted in the marketplaces, 39 and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. 40 They devour widows’ houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely.” 41 Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. 42 But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. 43 Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. 44 They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything — all she had to live on.”

\*We will call this narrative...the Riddle, the imposters, and the real deal.

### **The Riddle**

\*Jesus is used to fielding questions but here he asks the question...it is a riddle that puzzles the experts but delights the larger crowd.

\*It is likely the crowd had no idea what he was talking about...but they probably enjoyed watching the experts stumped by this outsider named Jesus.

\*Jesus used Psalm 110 to challenge their presuppositions about the Messiah.

\*It was assumed that he would be a king from David's line...but they failed to see that he would be "David's Lord as well as his Son."

\*From Psalm 110, a Poem of King David...Jesus demonstrates that the Messiah will indeed be a descendent of David...but a son whom David calls Lord.

\*So Jesus, in self-reference...demonstrates that the Messiah is of the line of David...but much more...Because to the great human covenant King...David...Jesus is both human heir and eternal Lord.

\*Jesus is unpacking his nature and purpose here at the end of his public ministry.

\*He is the promised King...not merely a human Messiah in the line of David...but the Lord.

\*This is the Riddle, now he turns his attention to the imposters.

### **The Imposters**

\*We know from reading the gospels that not every single religious leader of the time was corrupt.

\*But evidently there was a large-scale problem of hypocrisy among them.

\*Hypocrisy is **not** claiming to know and love God and yet failing to live this out consistently...it is pretending to be what you are not.

\*It is claiming to know and love God in a way that puts you above others...and then living in ways that clearly dishonor God.

\*It is not hypocrisy to claim to know and love God and fail him at times.

\*It is hypocrisy to claim to know and love God and live completely and consistently for self.

\*Hypocrisy is play acting, pretending to be above sinners and their sin.

\*Jesus takes these guys apart...the gloves are off because they are playing with serious things; the lives of people...Jesus is not interested in their games because he loves people too much.

\*Teachers of the law wore long white linen robes that were fringed and reached almost to the ground.

\*So they could sort of "float" among the common folks...standing out as the holy ones among the run of the mill sinners.

\*Most people called them..."Rabbi", "Father" or "Master"...terms that set them apart.

\*In the Synagogue (local places of worship) they sat in the front where they could be seen by all the worshippers.

\*They were often invited to banquets because of their prestige and were given special places of honor...there.

\*Jesus highlights how much they love all this special treatment...but then to highlight their hypocrisy he goes after a particularly heinous (hey) abuse of their power...

\*The way they take advantage of widows.

\*So they presume to represent God in unique ways...while using their influence to take from some of the most vulnerable in society.

\*He has just been asked to summarize the law and he did so with this... "Love God with your whole being and love others as you love yourself."

\*These imposters were revealing their lack of love for God by the way they treated people, vulnerable people.

\*Then there is the final evidence of their hypocrisy...they treat people as tools, they are self-promoters and yet they put on an outward show of lengthy prayers.

\*Droning on and on, pretending to be people who have a conversational relationship with God...but its all for show.

\*Jesus doesn't give a lengthy response...he simply says that their judgment will be sure and severe.

### **Who does this harsh critique apply to today?**

\*Well there are some easy targets...

\*Like the over 250 Catholic priests in Boston alone, accused of abuse...or maybe the ones in authority over them who covered it up for decades.

\*Causing untold harm to countless men and women.

\*Or the Tele-evangelists flying their private owned Jets paid for by using false teaching to soak their donors...many of whom live on fixed incomes and send their checks believing the unfounded hopes espoused by these unscrupulous people.

\*But it also could apply to Lawyers, politicians, business leaders, university professors...or anyone for that matter....who uses their stewardship, their opportunities...to serve self at the expense of others.

\*The clear contrast is between Jesus (the Lord and rightful owner of all)

\*And the self-servers...pretending to serve God and others.

\*Jesus came to serve and to give his life as a ransom...they seek to be served and to take what they can from those they should be serving.

\*Then the narrative goes from discussion to illustration...a living example.

### **The Real deal**

\*This is the last incident in the Lord's public ministry...the remainder of his time will be spent exclusively with the disciples.

\*The setting is a part of the Temple area called the Court of the Women.

\*It was the place where both men and women were allowed to come and where the temple treasury was located.

\*There, Jesus positioned himself on bench where he could watch people bring their offerings and toss them into one of the 13 trumpet shaped boxes. (shofar chests)

\*They were designed so all could hear as you tossed your coinage in...the louder and longer the sound...the more impressive the gift.

\*All of Jewish society's upper class would be here...making a great show of what they give.

\*Thus the offering boxes were designed to make a great deal of noise...to "Trumpet" their giving so all would say..."Wow, what a generous person."

\*Quite a contrast with Jesus' teaching that when giving we should not even let our left hand know what our right hand is doing.

\*Yet...they wanted everyone to know.

\*So they revealed their hearts...they wanted the very immediate and fleeting pleasure of the applause of people.

\*"Oh, look how spiritual, how generous!"

\*The fact is, in the world of people who seek to impress each other in this way...they may say flattering things with their mouths...but in their hearts it is likely they are jealous, or critical of them.

"How wonderful of you to give so much"  
(You think they are so special, so spiritual)

\*Its all illusion...one play actor trying to impress another...doesn't it sound empty?

\*Its because it is empty.

\*Last month a little known college in the forests of upstate NY thought they were going to be relieved of some of their financial pressures.

\*The wife of a Wall Street Billionaire was going to donate \$20 million provided they rename "Paul Smith's College" to "Joan Weill-Paul Smith's College."

\*A judge struck down the name change and the \$20 million pledge was withdrawn.

\*If my name is not going to be on the sign, then why should I give? Why indeed.

\*I've read where this is a growing trend in philanthropy....there are fewer and fewer anonymous donations...more and more its "I'll give if you name something after me."

\*I was very interested to read that a fundraiser for John's Hopkins in justifying this trend said:  
**"There's a natural human desire to leave behind some trace that we've had an existence here and that it mattered."**

\*Humm...your name on a building marks you existence and indicates that your life mattered.

\*What if 50 years from now someone pays for the remodel...guess what, your name is gone...I guess you didn't matter?

\*Ask Henry Levitt...you remember the wealthy Wichita department store owner that Koch Arena was named after back when it was "Henry Levitt" arena...you don't remember him?

\*Of course you don't...that's the point.

\*Jesus is sitting watching the givers come and go...some, no doubt gave of out their love for God.

\*Others, were not giving out of love for God but the praise of men.

\*Their satisfaction was even more temporary than having a plaque on a building...they only received the immediate gratification of impressing whoever happened to be nearby when they threw their money into the noisy box.

\*Jesus is watching and waiting...unimpressed...then she came.

\*A widow walked to the box, unnoticed (except by the Lord), took out her two small coins and put them in.

\*Her two copper coins were the smallest in circulation at the time...they would barely have made sound.

\*So this woman and her gift caught no one's attention...except for the one whose attention mattered the most.

\*He then called his friends over..."Fella's come here, I want you meet someone."

\*The woman has made her offering...she would have normally exited but evidently she is still around...I think Jesus probably knew her, or at least when he saw what she did he went over and got to know her.

\*He knew she was a widow, he knew what she put in the box was all she had to live on...I doubt he came by this information supernaturally.

\*I'm sure he got information directly by getting to know this great lady...can you imagine Jesus **not** going over and getting to know her?...I can't.

\*I bet she was not excited about having the attention, but Jesus was no doubt very gracious about how he introduced her to his little squad.

\*"Friends, I want you to meet someone who is very special to me...I want you to meet a lady who has given her all."

\*There surrounded by the Rich whose offerings echoed loudly through the trumpet boxes and off the walls combining with the noisy, self-exalting greetings of the important ones calling out to other important ones...**is Jesus**

\*His attention is fixed on a nobody who threw two copper pennys into the box...she has impressed him and he wants his friends to know who she is and what she has done.

### **The Three Scenes of this Drama Come Together:**

1. The Riddle: Jesus, is the true King, the Messiah.

2. The Imposters: The self-proclaimed great ones...who are really just play actors in a silly game.

3. The Real Deal: A simple, poor, nobody...who is unnoticed by all except for the true king...the great one.

\*What an amazing narrative....what a picture of true greatness contrasted with human delusions of greatness.

\*What a picture of the gospel.

**2Cor. 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.**

\*Jesus was rich beyond all imagination...all that exists is his.

\*He became poor by his own will, he gave his all so that we might experience the riches of his grace.

\*Here is Jesus, the true King standing between these two narratives, like an optometrist...saying "click...better here" or "here".

\*"Click...the imposters"...can you see life better here?

\*"Click...the real deal"...can you see life better here?

\*"Better here, better here?"

\*This is not a condemnation of wealth or praise of poverty.

\*It is not a directive to give everything you have away.

\*This is descriptive not prescriptive...it describes what happened it does not prescribe what always must happen.

\*Clearly she didn't give all her money every week...or she would be dead in a few weeks...she had to eat.

\*This is a compare and contrast...it is about perspective.

\*Look at what Jesus didn't say and what he did say.

\*He didn't say..."She was right because she gave everything and this is the way it must be."

\*He didn't say..."They were wrong because they didn't give everything and had a lot more to give."

\*Jesus said..."Look, she put more in than all the others together."

**\*What does it mean that she put in more than all the others?**

\*Clearly it wasn't more actual money...what was it "more" of?

\*Higher percentage...more of what she had...does God work off of percentage? (100%)

\*I believe it's about how to measure life like God measures...what does he want?

**"She, out of her poverty, put in everything — all she had to live on."**

\*To turn this into questions of poverty and wealth or percentages is to miss the point.

\*If this woman had 4 pennies the next week and gave 1 had she fallen away?

\*Of course not.

**\*On this day this woman is a living example of what God wants from everyone...everything.**

\*He wants everything from you...all of it...every penny, every minute, every ounce of devotion...all of it.



\*He said..."I'll sum up the purpose of your life...Love the Lord your God with ALL...heart, mind, soul, strength."

\*That's no metaphor...that's the bottom line.

\*How much of my money does he want...all of it. (what happened to 10%?...all of it)  
-You might get to spend some of it...but he wants all of it.

\*Time...all of it.

\*Why? He wants all of us...we are not divisible into parts...time, stuff, affection.

\*We are either "his" or not "his"...there is no portioning us off.

\*The larger question here is stewardship.

**Rom. 11:36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.**

\*What do I do with this? What does it even look like?

\*It sounds spiritual to say "it all belongs to him" but its not practical...I have to make real decisions in the real world.

\*Yes we do have to make real decisions but in the real world...it all belongs to him.

\*The lenses for seeing this real world is here...

**1Cor. 4:2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.**

\*The context is the gospel but the application is any part of the trust you have been given...life (time), resources, family, commitment...all of it is a trust.

**1 Cor. 4:7 "What do you have that you did not receive?"**

\*What God wants from us is faithfulness.

\*How will I know what that looks like?

\*That is the right question...how will I know what faithfulness looks like?

\*I will be positioned to know what faithfulness looks like if I understand that faithfulness is what I am looking **for**.

\*When loss comes, when pain comes, when confusion comes...what are you looking for?

\*A reason to be angry, or a way to escape, someone to blame...or the path of faithfulness here and now?

\*When you love beauty and you lose your sight...what are you looking for then?

\*When you have dreams of traveling and ministering and being active....and you spend most of your days caring for your spouse...what are you looking for then?

\*Faithfulness...the right question is so important...and the right question will always be..."What does faithfulness with my stewardship look like now."

\*The setting changes, the circumstances will be every changing...the right question will always be..."What does faithfulness with my stewardship look like now?"

\*For me personally I find this enormously helpful...as best I can tell what does faithfulness look like for me, here and now?:

-A day of study

-A trip to VA

-Listening to a hurting person

-Watching "Peppe Pig" with my grandson on my lap

-Mowing grass

-Sharing my faith

-Suffering through difficult and dark days...when the heavens feel like iron.

\*The right question is..."What does faithfulness with my stewardship look like now?"

\*The woman illustrated what God wants from us...everything, all the time.

\*Faithfulness with my stewardship is how we make sense of that reality.

\*I can't measure me to you...you might have more or you might have less to measure so I would measure wrong.

\*I can't measure me now to me then...what my father in law's stewardship looks like is different now than years ago...but the stewardship itself is the same...be faithful by giving God what is due him...everything.

\*Is God asking too much?

\*Who else can you give your life to...and what will they do with it?

\*He is giving us much by asking us for everything and being willing to actually accept as an offering the smallness that is our lives.

\*We must understand that he is like my dad when I was a child with no money and no means of getting money on my own...he would give me money to buy him and my mom a Christmas present.

\*So he gave the money, that I used to buy a gift, that I gave to him...and he enjoyed every part of the process.

\*You see it is his gift to us that he allows us to give our lives back to him...he is blessing us by asking us for everything.

\*Faithfulness is the road to this life of receiving from God and giving back to God.

\*A couple of key barriers are:

1. Living out of balance...swerving widely from extreme to extreme
2. Look for a track so you can take your hands off the wheel and stop working so hard

\*This life of faithfulness now is a road that demands small adjustments...ongoing vigilance, help from others, walk with God.

## SMALL GROUP NOTES

### INTRO:

\*Can you think of people (personally or well-known) whose life purpose was directly tied to something that could be taken from them and was?

\*For instance: Actors, athletes, military leaders, models.

\*How did their lives end up?

\*Can you think of people, whose life purpose was closely linked with "faithfulness"? How did they weather the storms of life and the changes they encountered?

### READ:

**Mark 12:35** While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, “How is it that the teachers of the law say that the Christ is the son of David? **36** David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared: “The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.”” **37** David himself calls him ‘Lord.’ How then can he be his son?” The large crowd listened to him with delight. **38** As he taught, Jesus said, “Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted in the marketplaces, **39** and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. **40** They devour widows’ houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely.” **41** Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. **42** But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. **43** Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. **44** They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything — all she had to live on.”

### DISCUSS:

#### 1. The Riddle

\*Read Psalms 110

\*How does Jesus use this Psalm to demonstrate that the Messiah would be both David's "son" as well as his "Lord?"

\*It would have been widely believed that the Messiah would come from the line of David but why do you think it was a surprise for them to think of the Messiah as being the Lord of king David?

## **2. The Imposters**

\*How would you define hypocrisy?

\*It comes from a word that means "to act in a play." How does that help with defining the concept?

\*How might failure be different from hypocrisy?

\*Jesus gave these men a harsh critique. How does what James says apply to these men and why?

**James 3:1 Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.**

## **3. The Real deal**

\*This poor widow gave all she had. Is this "prescriptive" or "descriptive"?

\*Why is it important to know the difference when reading Scripture?

\*What do you think of the quote... "**There's a natural human desire to leave behind some trace that we've had an existence here and that it mattered.**"

\*What part of it is wrong and what part is right?

\*What exactly did Jesus say about the widow's giving in relationship to the other givers?

\*How is the gospel revealed in this narrative?

**2Cor. 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.**

\*The widow gave all she had on that day. How does this represent what God is asking from us? What does it not represent?

## **4. Faithfulness**

**1Cor. 4:2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.**

\*How does faithfulness as a life principle apply in this passage?

\*How does faithfulness function as an "interpretive lens" for making sense out of life?

**APPLY:**

\*Faithfulness is not a "track" we get on like a train and then take our hands off the wheel.

\*It is a road we travel that requires constant vigilance, guarding our hearts, checking in with others and a walk with God.

\*Which of these would best describe your life right now?

- a. Making small corrections on the road of faithfulness
- b. Swerving from ditch to ditch
- c. Looking for a "track" so I don't have to work so hard at this
- d. Other...describe it

\*Reflect on how a focus on faithfulness can help you both navigate the changing complexity of life as well as develop increasing peace in your heart regardless of external circumstances.

(Note: "peace in your heart" not an easier life)

**THE GOSPEL OF**

**MARK**



**Mark 12:35-44**

**“FOR EVEN THE  
SON OF MAN  
DID NOT COME  
TO BE SERVED,  
BUT TO SERVE,  
AND TO GIVE  
HIS LIFE AS A  
RANSOM FOR  
MANY.”**

**MARK 10:45**

**J. STILL**

**Mark 12:35-39** While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, “How is it that the teachers of the law say that the Christ is the son of David? David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared: “‘The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.’” David himself calls him ‘Lord.’ How then can he be his son?” The large crowd listened to him with delight. As he taught, Jesus said, “Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted in the marketplaces, and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets.

**Mark 12:40-44** They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely." Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything — all she had to live on."



**The Riddle**  
**The Imposters**  
**The Real Deal**



**Joan Weill's**



~~Paul Smith's~~ College  
THE COLLEGE OF THE ADIRONDACKS®

**"There's a natural human desire to leave behind some trace that we've had an existence here and that it mattered."**





**2 Cor. 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.**





**"...she, out of her poverty, put in everything — all she had to live on."**

**Rom. 11:36 For from him and  
through him and to him are all  
things. To him be the glory forever!  
Amen.**

**1 Cor. 4:2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.**

**1 Cor. 4:7 "What do you have that  
you did not receive?"**

***I will be positioned to know what  
faithfulness looks like  
if I understand that faithfulness is  
what I am looking for.***

**My stewardship is to give God  
everything...**

and

**I will be positioned to understand what  
faithfulness looks like when  
I understand that faithfulness is what I  
am looking for.**

