

THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME: Cycle "B"  
Sunday, 11 November 2018 (SHO / SPW)

WE SACRIFICE; IT'S A PART OF DAILY LIVING

- WE GIVE UP SOMETHING FOR SOMEONE OR SOMETHING ELSE, AND WE GIVE IT UP FOR A PURPOSE
  - WE'LL SACRIFICE SLEEP → TO BE WITH FRIENDS, OR
  - WE'LL SACRIFICE TIME WITH FRIENDS → TO STUDY ... OR TO GO TO WORK, OR
  - WE'LL SACRIFICE DESSERTS → TO LOSE THE 10 POUNDS THE DOC DEMANDS SO I DON'T HAVE ANOTHER HEART ATTACK
- SOMETIMES WE'RE SO PASSIONATE ABOUT A PARTICULAR GOAL, THAT WE DON'T THINK TWICE ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT'S INVOLVED IN ACHIEVING THOSE GOALS.
  - NO ONE HAS TO COAX US OR BRIBE US.
  - IT'S LIKE SECOND NATURE;  
I'M WILLING TO GIVE UP WHATEVER TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL.
- THIS IS A NATURAL PART OF DAILY LIFE:
  - WE'RE WILLING TO TRADE THINGS OF A LESSER VALUE, FOR THINGS THAT MEAN MORE TO US.
  - WE'RE WILLING TO TRADE (or sacrifice) THINGS THAT ARE ORDINARY ... FOR THINGS THAT to us ARE EXTRA-ORDINARY!

BOTTOM LINE IS THAT IT'S IN OUR NATURE TO GIVE:

- THAT'S WHAT SACRIFICE IS:  
THE GIVING ... HANDING OVER ... OR TRADING SOMETHING IN EXCHANGE FOR SOMETHING EVEN GREATER

THE CONCEPT OF TITHING IS DEEPLY BIBLICAL:

- IN THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES,
  - JEWS WERE DIRECTED TO LEAVE 10% OF THEIR FIELDS UNHARVESTED;
  - THEY WEREN'T TO GO BACK TO SCAVENGE FOR WHAT THEY MISSED; THAT 10% WAS FOR THE LORD ... FOR THE POOR.
  - IF THEY GREW GRAPES, THEY DIDN'T GO BACK TO PICK WHAT WAS MISSED; THOSE WERE FOR THE LORD ... AND THE POOR.
  - GIVING TO THE LORD WAS SYNONYMOUS TO GIVING TO THE POOR.
- IN ANCIENT ISRAEL, tho ...
  - TITHING DIDN'T JUST MEAN THAT LEAVING IT FOR THE POOR; IT ALSO MEANT THAT BRINGING IT TO THE TEMPLE.
  - WHY WOULD JEWS BRING OFFERINGS & SACRIFICES TO THE TEMPLE?
    - AFTER ALL, GOD DIDN'T NEED ANYTHING THEY COULD BRING ... WHETHER MONEY, OR PRODUCE, OR ANIMALS.
    - THEY BROUGHT TITHES AND SACRIFICES BECAUSE THEIR COMMITMENT TO TITHING REVEALED THEIR HEARTS ...
  - GOD HAS EVERYTHING IN THE UNIVERSE EXCEPT THE HUMAN HEART.
    - AND SO, WHEN THEY SACRIFICED TIME TO GOD, THEY DID SO IN AN EFFORT TO REVEAL THAT GOD HAD THEIR HEART.
    - WHEN THEY SACRIFICED THEIR POSSESSIONS TO GOD, THEY DID IT SO TO SHOW GOD THAT HE HAD THEIR GREATEST POSSESSION: THEIR HEART

TEMPLE SACRIFICE WAS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT IN HEBREW TIMES BECAUSE IT WAS EXPRESSIVE OF GIVING GOD THE ONE THING GOD DIDN'T YET POSSESS: THEIR HEART!

- IN LAST SUNDAY'S GOSPEL, THE SCRIBE APPROACHED JESUS AND ASKED ABOUT THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT.
  - WE HEARD JESUS' ANSWER:
    - TO LOVE GOD WITH OUR WHOLE HEART, SOUL, MIND, AND STRENGTH.
  - TO WHICH THE SCRIBE REPLIED:
    - "WELL SAID, TEACHER.
    - YOU ARE RIGHT IN SAYING,
    - 'HE IS ONE AND THERE IS NO OTHER THAN HE.'
    - AND 'TO LOVE HIM WITH ALL YOUR HEART,
    - WITH ALL YOUR UNDERSTANDING,
    - WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH,
    - AND TO LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF'
    - IS WORTH MORE THAN ALL BURNT OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES."

- YES, THE COMMANDMENT WAS TO GIVE GOD YOUR FIRST 10% ...  
BUT THE SCRIBE UNDERSTOOD WHAT THAT FIRST 10%  
WAS INTENDED TO ACCOMPLISH:
  - IT WAS INTENDED TO CAPTURE ... to get ... "YOUR HEART" ...  
YOUR UNCONDITIONAL AND COMPLETE COMMITMENT TO GOD!
  - THAT'S WHY THE SCRIBE WAS ABLE TO SAY THAT  
LOVING GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, MIND, SOUL, AND STRENGTH  
IS WORTH MORE THAN THAT FIRST 10% OF "BURNT OFFERINGS."
- AND IT IS AT THIS PRECISE MOMENT THAT  
THE COMMANDMENT OF TITHING SHIFTS ...
  - FROM GIVING GOD THE FIRST 10%
  - TO SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY!
    - JESUS TELLS US, & the scribe understood, THAT  
GOD WANTS A DIFFERENT 10%.
    - AND WE WITNESS THAT DIFFERENT 10%  
IN BOTH THE FIRST READING AND IN THE GOSPEL.

IN THE GOSPEL, WE STOOD BY AS MANY PEOPLE  
PUT LARGE SUMS OF MONEY INTO THE TREASURY.

- BUT ALONG CAME THIS WIDOW, WHO PUT IN 2 COPPER COINS ...  
WORTH ABOUT A PENNY.
  - THE LORD PRAISED HER BECAUSE  
SHE PUT IN MORE THAN EVERYONE ELSE;
    - THE OTHERS GAVE OF THEIR SURPLUS;
    - SHE GAVE OF HER SUBSTANCE.
  - OTHERS GAVE OF THEIR FIRST 10%;  
SHE GAVE OF HER LAST 10%!
- WE WITNESSED A SIMILAR CALIBER OF GIVING  
BY THE WIDOW OF ZAREPHATH IN THE PASSAGE FROM 1<sup>ST</sup> KINGS.
  - ELIJAH CAME TO HER IN A DROUGHT AND ASKED FOR WATER,  
WHICH SHE LIKELY DIDN'T HAVE ANY TO SPARE.
  - THEN HE ASKED HER FOR A "BIT OF BREAD."
    - THE WIDOW, WHO RESPONDED GENEROUSLY,  
DIDN'T GIVE OF HER FIRST 10% OF OIL OR FLOUR OR WATER;  
SHE GAVE OF HER LAST 10% ... THE LAST LITTLE BIT THAT SHE HAD!
    - HAD SHE BEEN STINGY & REFUSED TO SHARE THAT LAST 10%,  
SHE AND HER SON WOULD SURELY HAVE DIED IN A FEW DAYS.
    - BUT, BECAUSE SHE WAS WILLING TO OFFER HER LAST 10%,  
SHE RECEIVED BACK MORE THAN SHE COULD'VE IMAGINED.
    - ▶ SHE WAS ABLE TO EAT FOR A YEAR,  
AND HE AND HER SON AS WELL;  
THE JAR OF FLOUR DID NOT GO EMPTY,  
NOR THE JUG OF OIL RUN DRY,  
AS THE LORD HAD FORETOLD THROUGH ELIJAH.

WHAT'S THE LAST 10% LOOK LIKE FOR YOU???

- THERE ARE 2 WAYS WE CAN LIVE:
  - WE CAN LIVE OUT OF OUR SURPLUS ... WHAT'S LEFT OVER, or
  - WE CAN LIVE OUT OF OUR SUBSTANCE.
- WE CAN ALSO WORSHIP GOD IN TWO WAYS:
  - WE CAN WORSHIP GOD OUT OF OUR SURPLUS ...  
COMING TO MASS or praying  
WHEN NOTHING ELSE IS "MORE IMPORTANT." ... or ...
  - WE CAN WORSHIP GOD OUT OF OUR SUBSTANCE ...  
COMING TO MASS and praying WHEN IT SEEMS LIKE  
COMMITMENTS AND OBLIGATIONS AROUND US ARE MOUNTING ...  
AND WE HAVE NO IDEA HOW WE'LL EVER DO IT ALL.

MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, myself,  
WE TEND TO WORSHIP and pray OUT OF OUR SURPLUS.

- BUT JESUS TELLS US HE WANTS A DIFFERENT 10% OF OUR LIVES.
- HE'S NOT AFTER THE FIRST 10%, BUT THE LAST 10%.

IT MIGHT NOT SEEM LIKE THE FIRST OR THE LAST 10% MAKES A DIFFERENCE,  
BUT IT MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD:

- PERHAPS YOU'VE HEARD THE STORY OF THE CHICKEN & THE PIG.
  - BOTH ANIMALS WERE ELATED BY LIVING SUCH GOOD LIVES.
    - THE CHICKEN COMMENTED ABOUT HOW GOOD THE FARMER WAS;  
THAT THE HEN HOUSE IS ALWAYS KEPT CLEAN,  
WITH FRESH WATER, A HEATER IN THE WINTER, AND THE LIKE
    - THE PIG REMINISCED THAT HIS STY  
WAS THE BEST ANYONE HAD EVER SEEN.
  - BOTH WANTED TO DO SOMETHING NICE FOR THEIR FARMER,  
SO THE CHICKEN SUGGESTED THEY MAKE  
A "HAM & EGG" BREAKFAST FOR THE FARMER.
    - TO WHICH THE PIG SAID: "ABSOLUTELY NOT."
    - FOR YOU, A "HAM AND EGG" BREAKFAST IS A MERE CONTRIBUTION;  
FOR ME, IT'S A COMPLETE SACRIFICE.
- THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FIRST 10% & THE LAST 10%!!!

THE LAST 10% IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN  
BEING INVOLVED & BEING TOTALLY COMMITTED!

- IN MARRIAGE, THE LAST 10% IS CRITICAL.
  - IMAGINE IF, AT THE TIME YOU OR YOUR SPOUSE PROPOSED, HE SAID:  
"I WANT TO LOVE YOU WITH 90% OF MY HEARTY, AND  
I WANT TO SPEND 90% OF MY LIFE WITH YOU.
  - NO ONE WOULD SAY YES TO A 90% COMMITMENT IN MARRIAGE.
- THE LAST 10% IN MARRIAGE IS:
  - NOT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN  
A GOOD MARRIAGE AND A GREAT MARRIAGE; no
  - THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN  
A DISASTROUS MARRIAGE & SOMETHING INCREDIBLE!!!!

THE DISCIPLES WERE WITH JESUS 24/7 FOR 3 YEARS:

- WE WITNESS THE MARTYRDOM OF MOST OF THEM,  
WHO GAVE OF THEIR LAST 10% AND WERE COMMITTED TO JESUS.
- THE ONLY DISCIPLE TO STOP SHORT OF GIVING THE LAST 10%  
WAS JUDAS.
  - THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE THAT THE LAST 10% MAKES
  - THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SAINT AND SINNER.

REAL TRANSFORMATION HAPPENS WHEN WE GIVE GOD OUR LAST 10%

- WHAT'S THAT LAST 10% LOOK LIKE?
  - IT MIGHT BE THOSE TIMES, MOMENTS, PLACES, OR ACTIVITIES  
THAT YOU WANT TO KEEP IT FOR YOURSELF.
    - LIKE THE WIDOW OF ZAREPHATH OR OF THE GOSPEL; IT'S ALL I HAVE.
    - YET, YOU CHOOSE INVITE GOD INTO THE MOMENT.
  - PERHAPS IT'S THOSE DAYS WHEN YOU JUST CRAVE  
A FEW MOMENTS OF PEACE AND QUIET:
    - AND IN THAT QUIET YOU TURN TO THE LORD IN PRAYER ...
    - RATHER THAN KEEPING THE MOMENT FOR YOURSELF.

JESUS WOULD'VE NEVER MADE IT TO CALVARY,  
IF NOT FOR HIS WILLINGNESS TO GIVE US HIS LAST 10%.

- LIKE MARRIAGE, A LIFE THAT ONLY 90% COMMITTED TO GOD  
ENDS AS DID JUDAS'.
- IT'S IN THE LAST 10% THAT LIFE MOVES  
FROM ORDINARY → EXTRAORDINARY; FROM SECULAR → SACRED.
  - HOW HAVE YOU BEEN GIVING GOD YOUR FIRST 10% OF SURPLUS?
  - HOW, THIS WEEK, WILL YOU TRANSITION  
TO GIVING GOD YOUR LAST 10% ... THE 10% OF SUBSTANCE?