



## *Practice Extravagant Generosity*

*Fifth Sunday in Lent*

*Scripture - John 12:1-8*

*Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.*

*Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected.*

*"Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me."*

*March 13, 2016*

## Thoughts for the Week

Scriptures: Isaiah 43: 16-21, Philipians 3: 8-14, John 8: 1-11

I am leery of stones! I have always been that way since my young teenage days on this earth. So, why? Well, those small chunks of the great pre-historic glaciers appeared all over the entire state of Michigan. Anytime I had to dig, for any reason, there were stones in my way, without fail. That's why I am still angry at stones. They wore out my gloves, bruised my hands and burdened my aching back. Granted, sometimes there were also the man-made kind, i.e., bits of concrete and/or brick.

Why am I talking about stones at all? Well, I'm doing so because, by pure accident, stones appear in the gospel of John assigned for this Fifth Sunday of Lent.

Now, we all have encountered stones in our lifetime: some real, others metaphorical, but they are still stones that can do immense hurt.

Here is an interesting sidelight on stones: in most parts of the world they are always close at hand, sometimes, at our very feet. Secondly, stones often turn out to be the nearest and handiest piece of weaponry available for self-defense. Perhaps, as young fighters, we often cast stones at one another. Or, in the Middle East today, Palestinians defend themselves against Israeli soldiers with stones. It all sounds very primitive but sometimes it works. Stones often seem to be the ultimate tool for retribution or punishment.

Today, then, we have the sad story of a woman in John's gospel who has been apprehended in the act of adultery. The Law of Moses prescribed stoning for such a person. It so happened then that the observers of the Law of Moses were deeply offended by the actions of this woman.

At this point in the story Jesus enters the picture; he asks the woman if anyone has actually accused her; "no one," she says. "Neither do I," Jesus replies. "Go in peace."

The question then arises: why were the scribes and Pharisees so upset? They were not offended so much over the woman herself, but rather that she had transgressed the sacred Law of Moses. Therefore, she must die. The same incident occurred later in the life of Stephen the Deacon. He too was stoned for blasphemy. Obviously, in both of these instances law was more important than human dignity.

It often occurs in countries where law is held sacred. Remember, the young girl in make use of other more sophisticated, devastating devices: smart bombs, long rifles, and nuclear weapons.

But, think of this: in our so-called enlightened age we still manage to find other more domesticated ways to "stone one

another" We use the stinging word, the clever retort, the curt response, the hurtful phrase, the little digs. True, they may not physically hurt but each of us knows how deeply our personhood is offended. Remember the old proverb: "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me." I have and will never believe that; I myself have been hurt too many times by words and cast words at others!

All this ultimately boils down to the word judgment. Where do we get the right to judge others? Are we such perfect law keepers that we can find fault in others?

There must be better terms to describe us: tolerant, compassionate, forgiving, respectful, non-judgmental.

Yes, who are we to judge? Life is too short to fall into that trap.

**Here are a few humorous thoughts that might help make your day:**

"If you think nobody cares if you're alive, try missing a couple of car payments."

-Flip Wilson

"Don't go around saying the world owes you a living. The world owes you nothing. It was here first." -Mark Twain

"You know you're getting old when you stoop to tie your shoelaces and wonder what else you could do while you're down there." - George Burns

"Blessed are the young, for they will inherit the national debt." - Herbert Hoover

"If it weren't for the fact that the TV set and the refrigerator are so far apart, some of us wouldn't get any exercise at all." - Joey Adams

"Even if you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just sit there." - Will Rogers

"Committee - a group of people who keep minutes and waste hours." - M.Berle

"Just because nobody complains doesn't mean all parachutes are perfect." - Benny Hill

"Don't worry about the world coming to an end today. It is already tomorrow in Australia."

- Charles Schulz

"You know, somebody actually complimented me on my driving today. They left a little note on the windshield, it said 'Parking Fine.'" - Tommy Cooper

"If at first you do not succeed, then skydiving is surely not meant for you." -Unknown

*Happy Birthday - Rachel (3/17)*

## Prayer Thought – Thailand

Loving and present God, we give thanks for the blessings of life, the beauty of creation and the peace we find in knowing you. May our lives express a full measure of our gratitude and praise.

Forgive us for choices which separate us from you and one another, and form in us the persons you created us to be.

This day, O God, we remember the nation of Thailand and its people who struggle daily for peace and acceptance and justice. Be near them to bless and guide, we pray.

We pray for Community of Christ. We pray for the people affected by the current financial difficulties.

Guide us in becoming ministers of your peace. Amen.

## Stewardship Thought

*"For his sake I have accepted the loss of all things and I consider them so much rubbish, that I may gain Christ" (Philippians 3:8)*

The first commandment says that we shall not put other gods before the Lord. Detaching ourselves from material possessions and considering them "rubbish" does just that.

It strengthens our relationship with Jesus and allows us to live more freely and joyfully.

# Quote for the Week

*“The more you say I don’t know which way to go,  
the more you do not know.*

*If you have decided you are lost, you are lost,  
the Universe cannot find a way through your doubt.”* *Jewd*