

love. Then in each situation I'm not playing games but joyfully I can live true to who I am in Jesus. So even if all the situation calls for is giving a cup of water to someone who is thirsty it flows from a heart of love, which genuinely seeks to care. Then our life isn't an act to impress or get something for me, but we are loving wholeheartedly just as we are loved. We're not testing; being a slave to fear and insecurity, but joyfully, freely, wholeheartedly we love as we are loved.

Let us pray.  
 Jesus thankyou for risking everything to love me. Grow me to ever greater maturity that all my relationships are filled with your love, that I don't hold back, being half-hearted, to scared to risk. May I risk everything that in all I say and do I'm a true reflection of you. May I risk everything that your love finds true expression in the way I treat the people I live work and play with this week. Fill me with the Holy Spirit that I put it all on the nose and don't hedge my bets, because I know I can trust you completely.

8 November 2009  
**THE WIDOW'S OFFERING—All or Nothing**  
 Mark 12:38-44



This week I heard about a radio station in Sydney that was giving away \$20,000. That sounds like a generous offer. I would be happy if someone gave me \$20,000. But there was only one catch. There's always a catch. This couple had to bet the \$20,000 on a single horse in the Melbourne Cup. They couldn't go for a place, it had to be on the nose. All or nothing.

They couldn't hedge their bets to minimise their risk of lose. It was all or nothing, otherwise someone else would get the chance. Of course the good thing was they were risking someone else's money. If they'd come and taken the money out of their own account the risk factor would have risen dramatically. If they'd taken the money out of my account I would have moved quite quickly from and interested observer to a passionate

participant. That's \$20,000 of MY dollars! And it would have grabbed my attention a whole lot more if I only had \$20,000 in the bank. All or nothing takes on a much riskier sound. I'd rather they hedged their bet and went for the place. You don't win as much but you don't loose as much either.

In the Gospel Reading for today we have a true story about a woman who risks everything and butts her money on the nose. She doesn't hedge her bets with risk management. It's all or nothing.

"Many rich people threw in large amounts. (impressive, but they can afford it) But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny... The wealthy all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in

everything – all she had to live on. (she risks everything, withholding nothing. She's got everything to loose)" (Mark 12:41-44)

How do you live? Do you try and play it safe or do you risk everything?

In life there are times and situations to play it safe and there are times to risk everything. Times to hold nothing back but to invest your all.

The story of Ruth is about a woman who risks everything, investing her life in her mother-in-law. Ruth risks leaving the country she knows; the language, the customs, the comfort of fitting in. She risks leaving everything remaining faithful to her mother-in-law. Ruth doesn't hold back but puts it all on the nose. It's all or nothing.

Ruth's sister-in-law Orpah doesn't risk life

**Christ Church Lutheran**

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am  
 Pastor: Tim 0427326553  
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Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

with Naomi. After all what has Naomi to offer? Insecurity, a very uncertain future with no obvious means of support. Naomi is a widow in a country with no pension, or any social security, but Ruth risks everything. Her relationship with Naomi isn't one of convenience, she has invested herself completely; come hell or high water. Ruth leaves behind what she knows and is comfortable with for the unknown, and potentially a life of extreme poverty and hardship.

What would you have done? Orpah took the option with the most chance of success. She didn't leave her country, and remained where she would have the greatest security, with her family and with the hope of remarriage. It made sense for Orpah to abandon Naomi. There was obviously more in it for her to stay.

Ruth doesn't see Naomi as expendable. Ruth doesn't weigh up what her best options are to gain the most for Ruth. She

loves Naomi, abandoning her to be comfortable doesn't come into the equation. Ruth seeks to love Naomi with her all. Naomi isn't a commodity to be used to enhance Ruth's life, she's a person Ruth has been called to love by God. So she risks it all.

How do you live when it comes to relationships?

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### Do you play it safe or risk everything?

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Do you play it safe or risk everything?

In Australia we have the insanity of living together before marriage to make sure the other person lives up to our expectations, so if things don't workout you can always bail out. We are being lead to believe that hedging your bets, withholding yourself till you feel it is safe and the other person lives up to your expectations is the way to go. Thank God Jesus doesn't love that way, otherwise I'd have been abandoned a long time ago.

With Jesus when it comes to loving you he gives his all, withholding nothing. Jesus doesn't give a little testing the waters to see what your response will be, so that he can safely retreat if he doesn't get what he wants. Jesus commitment to you and I is reflected in that Widow's giving. He gives his all, because he loves you and trusts the Father to always love him.

The Widow freely gave all she had, with no strings attached. I

don't think she was expecting to come back later and take some out when the need arose. I don't think she gave trying to impress the rich so they'd look favourably on her and give her more money than she gave away. I don't think the Widow was playing games; she simply was trusting the God who had committed himself to her and her nation. She was trusting him with her life, trusting his love.

Jesus loves us totally. He was born your brother. That's not a half measure.

He chose to be known as one with you; friend of sinner. That's one of the reasons he was crucified. How could the Messiah associate with the likes of those, he must be a fraud. To which Jesus answered; "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matthew 9:12,13)

I like the way Peterson puts it in his paraphrase; "When the Pharisees saw Jesus keeping this kind of company, they had a fit, and lit into Jesus' followers. 'What kind of example is that from your Teacher, acting cosy with crooks and riff-raff?' Jesus, overhearing, shot back, 'Who needs a doctor: the healthy or the sick? Go figure out what this Scripture means: 'I'm after mercy, not religion.' I'm here to invite outsiders, not coddle insiders." (Matthew 9:11-13 Message)

Jesus would rather be ridiculed, yes even

crucified, rather than deny you.

And death is definitely giving your all. You can't hold a little back to make sure the people you're dying for are worth it. In Jesus case, they weren't. But that's isn't why he died for them. Jesus dies, taking the penalty of sin on himself that we might live under the grace and

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### Jesus risks everything.

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blessing of God, simply because he loves us. There's nothing in it for him, except the pure joy of loving you, freeing you to live that same love.

Jesus risks it all, he doesn't hedge his bets because then his love wouldn't be true.

I think Jesus highlighted this Widow not to teach me how to use my money but more how to live my life. How to invest in other people and grow healthy, strong relationships.

Relationships that bear the

very character of God, because they flow from the very love of God to us in Christ Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

I find this story greatly encouraging, not because I love perfectly but because Jesus has given and continues to give himself completely for me, for you, for all people.

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That's what our second reading from Hebrews remind us; Jesus right now, today, is still giving his all for us. Right

now he is our High Priest, the one who stands before God for us, so that we can always be certain in Jesus we are loved.

What wonderful certainty this story gives; knowing without a shadow of doubt that Jesus gives his all from me. Now I can live from that certainty seeking to love those around me the same way. I can give us the silly notion of testing the waters, living together to see if the other person deserves my love or is right for me. I can love others from a heart full of