SERMON NOTES — November 10, 2024

Christian Nationalism won the battle this week. The cross and resurrection of Jesus assures us that the fight of God's Reign is won and will someday bring lasting peace. For now, we prepare to live under Christian Nationalism armed with the power of God's love.

Four steps of preparation:
#1 Daily prayer that centers us in God's love
#2 Read the Bible as the ongoing story of God's love

Steve Garnaas-Holmes' website unfoldinglight.net helps with both these first two steps. It provides daily meditations designed for grounding in love. It often reads Bible passages from the weekly lectionary in terms of the story of love. Here's an example using this week's Gospel:

"The Widow's Might"

I know, it's the widow's "mite."
But consider.
Wealth was seen as divine approval.
(Is our world any different?)
A widow, destitute without a husband's income,
was a model of poverty and helplessness,
and therefore also (are we any different?) shame.
But, in the same spirit in which he said
"Blessed are the poor," Jesus honors her,
praises her generosity and self-determination:
she has done something powerful.

The sharing Jesus taught was not mere kindness;
it also confronted the boundaries of "mine" and "yours,"
and therefore the hierarchy of rich and poor.
In his praise Jesus questions
why she is poor in the first place.
Why do we have rich and poor?
Because the rich like it that way;
otherwise they'd change it.
The rich are afraid to share, but not the poor.
And sharing is powerful: it disturbs the line
between mine and yours, between rich and poor.
It changes the world.

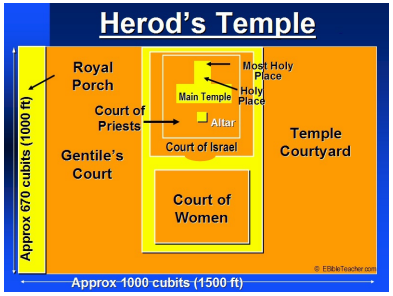
Empowered by her faith,
unswayed by social expectations,
she has made her choice.
This is the widow's might.
May it be your power as well.

#3 Learn to understand today's political issues in light of the power of love in God's Reign, which Jesus came to launch

Another example from the poem: "Why do we have rich and poor? Because the rich like it that way; otherwise they'd change it. The rich are afraid to share, but not the poor." Choose leaders who have economic policies that contain the greed of the wealthy to lift up the poor and middle class.

#4 Prepare to protest, to stand against the violence of nationalism, and to advocate for the least, those most harmed by nationalism

Example imagine that the widow is there in the Court of the Women in the temple to protest. Her actions say, *You rich people have taken everything else from me — in your finery, with all your privilege and power. I've got nothing left. Take this. Choke on this, you thieves. Lord, have mercy! Defend my cause!*



She had nothing to live on anyway because everything had been stolen. In the Court of the Women in the temple, she shamed her oppressors and threw herself on God. And, while they made a show of their wealth, she made a show of their injustice. Yes, she gave out of her poverty. She was poor. Most likely at the hands of greedy elite. She wasn't meek. She was enraged. But she also refrained from violence. In the power of love, she took a stand and made her protest.

And Jesus approved.