Advent Devotional December 4, 2026

Scripture

Luke 20:41–21:4

41 Then he said to them, "How can they say that the Messiah is David's son? 42 For David himself says in the book of Psalms,

'The Lord said to my Lord,
"Sit at my right hand
43 until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." '

44 "David thus calls him Lord, so how can he be his son?"

45 In the hearing of all the people he said to the disciples, 46 "Beware of the scribes who like to walk around in long robes and who love respectful greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets. 47 They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

1 He looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury; 2 he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. 3 He said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them, 4 for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on."

Devotion

The Rev. Dr. Jessica Anschutz, Director of the Center for Adaptive and Innovative Ministry

Each year as I decorate the Christmas tree, I'm instantly transported back to Christmases past as I hang ornaments gifted to me over the years. There are the ornaments given to me by my maternal grandparents—one for each year that they spent Christmas on this side of heaven. The ornaments lovingly handmade by my late paternal grandmother, an avid crafter. The ornaments I've collected in my travels next to ornaments gifted to me by beloved former church members. Perhaps you, too, experience a similar trip down memory lane as you decorate. Which ornaments seem small, ordinary, or insignificant, but with time have become the stewards of cherished memories of days and loved ones gone by? To a stranger, these are just trinkets, but to us, their value is immeasurable.

This contrast between outward appearance and true worth caught Jesus' attention in the temple one afternoon. While proclaiming the good news in the temple and facing scrutiny by the chief priests, scribes, and elders, something caught his eye. In the midst of the rich people giving out of their abundance, Jesus noticed a widow offering two small copper coins. She gave "all she had to live on" (Luke 21:4). Jesus noticed the small gift that, quite possibly, even most of us would have overlooked.

As we prepare our hearts and homes to celebrate the inbreaking of the Christ child into a broken and hurting world, will we follow Christ's example and be attentive to the small gifts? Thanking the person who holds the door open for us as we rush from the car into the grocery store. Sharing homemade cookies with public servants and emergency workers. A handwritten note of encouragement in the midst of the busyness of the season. A neighbor who clears the sidewalk or rakes leaves. A simple smile.

Prayer

Holy and loving God, we give thanks for the reminder to be attentive to the value in small gifts. Open our eyes, hearts, and spirits to see the immense value in small things so that our hearts, like the widow's offering, may be given fully to You. Amen.