

Worthy Models

4th Tuesday of Lent



Mark 12:38-40

As he taught, he said, 'Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the market-places, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets! They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.'

Jesus was a keen observer of human behavior and an insightful judge of character. While the scribes were highly regarded in the community and while their wisdom was often sought, Jesus warns that if you are looking for a model for your life the scribes should not be in the running. Beware of them.

In the first place, beware because they *like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets.* What pompous asses they are! Much taken with their own importance, they believe that the best places should be reserved for them.

In the second place, beware because they *devour widows' houses*. They take from those who have the least to give. They are wolves in sheep's clothing for they not only take that which is not theirs to take, but they cloak their greed in acts of ostentatious piety, *saying long prayers* so that others will notice.

Their *respectability* and *goodness* are like the long robes they wear—ostentatious coverings for an inner emptiness of spirit and absence of love that are appalling. Aim higher, Jesus tells those who would pattern themselves after these religious leaders. It does call us to question who we look to as examples of Christ-like living. What example do we set for our children, our family, our neighbors?

Prayer

May my love, O Lord, be a mirror of your love, my grace your grace, my forgiveness your forgiveness. Free me of my pride and help me to live in humble obedience to your will. Amen.