

By [Glenn CJ Byer, MA SLD](#)

The readings today are an example of how the scriptures can become too familiar to us – we can cease to be surprised by some very shocking things. In both the first reading and Gospel we come across people who were downtrodden for so many reasons it is hard to know where to begin – they were women, they were poor, they were widowed, and so without property – all the things that would make someone useless in the eyes of the society of that time. And yet they are examples of service. Death? Bring it on! Hunger? Don't make me laugh! There is absolutely nothing that stop these people from doing for others.

What could motivate this kind of action? In the nomadic cultures of the Middle East, well actually in most cultures except our modern one, we know that hospitality was not an option. To deny food to someone who came by – to not share what little you had – this was the same thing as murder, since without food, one would die.

But there is more. In both of these cases, the ability to give is based on the sure knowledge that nothing we possess is ever completely our own. All our goods, all our wealth is of God. Whether it is a little or a lot, it is on loan, and should someone or some cause come our way, we give. That is what these women teach us. That is what the Psalm teaches us.

As followers of Jesus we have an additional reason to give, and just in case we forgot, there it is in Hebrews. As Christ made of himself the one perfect sacrifice, once and for all, so let us make ourselves like him in offering our lives for the good of the many.

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