

## BE CAREFUL WHO YOU JUDGE

Acts 4:32-35

A young minister graduated from seminary just before World War I and he was appointed to a church in a very small town. He had been there only a couple of weeks when he received the call every new minister dreads, the call to do his first funeral. The person who had died was not a member of his church. She was, in fact, a woman with a very bad reputation. Her husband was a railroad engineer who was away from home much of the time. She had rented rooms in their house to men who worked on the railroad and rumor had it that she rented more than just rooms when her husband was away. The young preacher, faced with his first funeral, found no one who had a good word to say about this woman, until he entered the small old-fashioned grocery store on the day before the funeral. He began to talk to the store owner about his sadness that the first person he would bury would be someone about which nothing good could be said. The store owner didn't reply at first and then, in his silence, he appeared to make a decision. He took out his store ledger and laid it on the counter between him and the preacher. He opened the ledger at random and, covering the names in the left-hand column, he pointed to grocery bills written in red – groceries that people had bought on credit and then the column that showed the bill had been paid.

He said, "Every month, that woman would come in and ask me who was behind in their grocery bills. It was usually some family who had sickness or death or some poor woman trying to feed her kids when her husband drank up the money. She would pay their bill and she made me swear never to tell. But I figure now that she is dead, people ought to know especially those who benefited from her charity who have been most critical of her."

"Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you."

Do we care for those in need? Are we answering the call of Jesus to care for others?

God bless,  
Pastor Barbara