

# **Sunday, November 10, 2024 – Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost**

## **1 Kings 17:8-16**

*During the severe drought that Elijah had predicted, God sends the prophet to Zarephath – to the north out of the land of Israel in the land of the Phoenicians (present day Lebanon).*

8-9 - The word of the LORD came to Elijah, saying, "Go now to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and live there; for I have commanded a widow there to feed you."

10-14 - When he came to the gate of the town, a widow was there gathering sticks; he called to her and said, "Bring me a morsel of bread." But she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal in a jar, and a little oil in a jug; I am now gathering a couple of sticks, so that I may go home and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die." Elijah said to her, "Do not be afraid; go and do as you have said; but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterwards make something for yourself and your son. For thus says the LORD the God of Israel: The jar of meal will not be emptied and the jug of oil will not fail until the day that the LORD sends rain on the earth."

15-16 - She went and did as Elijah said, so that she as well as he and her household ate for many days. The jar of meal was not emptied, neither did the jug of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by Elijah.

*Both the First Reading and the Gospel tell of poor widows who gave the last of what they had or everything they had. But there is an interesting difference.*

*In 1 Kings 17 the Lord provided for the widow. The jar of meal was never empty and the jug of oil did not fail until the day when the Lord again sent rain on the earth – and they were only near the beginning of a severe three-year drought. And later in the chapter when the widow's son died, in answer to the prayers of Elijah the Lord restored him to life.*

*When have you experienced God's providing for you – maybe even in an unusual way – when you displayed extra faith, trust, and generosity?*

*But in Mark 12 there is no such statement of the Lord's providing for and in an unusual way blessing the faith, trust, and love of a widow.*

## **Hebrews 9:24-28**

*These verses continue the major theme of the book of Hebrews – the superiority of Jesus, including His superiority over the high priest and the Levitical priests.*

24 - Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but he entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.

25-26 - Nor was it to offer himself again and again, as the high priest enters the Holy Place year after year with blood that is not his own; for then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself.

*What does it mean to you to know that on the cross Jesus fully paid for 100% of your sins and through His resurrection broke the power of and won the decisive victory over sin, death, and the devil?*

## **Mark 12: 38-44 – The Widow’s Mite/Might**

*I think it is very significant what Mark includes immediately before and immediately after his account of the poor widow and her two small copper coins.*

**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 marketplaces, 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.”

*I am always horrified whenever I hear stories of vulnerable, elderly people who are deceived out of hundreds of thousands of dollars – some of them out of their entire life savings.*

**Mark 13: 1-2** – As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!” Then Jesus asked him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.”

**Mark 12: 43-44** - Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

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Our giving to God reflects our values.  
Our giving does not reflect our income or the state of our balance sheet.  
Rather it reflects who and what is most important to us.

Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

What do your credit card receipts and bank statements have to say about whom and what you value the most?

The poor widow trusted God with everything she had.  
She had only two small copper coins – together worth about a penny.  
And she placed both of them in the Temple treasury.

She probably did not know that she was being watched.  
She was probably very embarrassed that she had so little to give.  
She probably gave it as inconspicuously as she could.  
But one Person saw her put in her gift.  
And the one Person who saw it just happened to be the one Person who matters the most.

Those who are faithful in little will be faithful in much.

What does your giving say about what and whom you value?  
What does your giving say about how much you love and trust God?

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BLESSING OF WIDOWS