

The Lord

King of Glory Lutheran Church

November 9-10, 2024

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Year B: Pentecost 25: Mark 12:38-44, Ps 146, Hebrews 9:24-28

In this space, we are the Body of Christ giving grace to one another. Jesus is our Lord and in God we trust. God is who gets our ultimate trust and allegiance. It's what we do as individuals that make the difference. After this election, what if God is calling us as Christians to demonstrate our ability to love one another and respect one another not only in this space, but also as witnesses of God's inbreaking Kingdom.

Jesus and the disciples were sitting in the Court of the Women, when He saw her. We know absolutely nothing about her except these two things. She was poor. She was a widow.

In Jesus' time, those two descriptors could go together very easily. Because women were nobodies unless they were connected to a male who could provide for them. Remember what Jesus says to John when He was dying on the cross? John Chapter 19. He looked at His own mother, Mary, and said, "Woman, here is your son. And to John, "here is your mother." It was an instruction to take Mary into John's own house and care for her. "From that time on, this disciple took her into his home." (Jn 19:26-27)

In the temple that day, here the widow was, dropping in her two copper coins. Nothing from nothing is a whole lot more than nothing out of something. A person who has only \$10 and gives \$5 away, feels it much more deeply than a person with \$100 who gives away \$50.

Jesus was contrasting her sacrifice, her offering that day with the religious leaders, whom He's just gone toe to toe with. Jesus views the chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees as proud, walking around with their noses in the air, showing off their religious robes. Of course, they were upholding God's Law and God's house, but they didn't do it with grace or kindness.

Do we think that those scribes walking around in their long fancy robes saw this woman? Did they give her the time of day? Did they notice how reverently she came to the altar? Given Jesus' comments about their saying long, loud prayers, it sure doesn't sound like they noticed her.

Jesus remarks, 'She has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.' Surely she trusted God. Surely, she was offering what she had. At times, though I've wondered, was it the hardest thing she'd ever had to do?

Psalm 146 says, "Do not put your trust in rulers, in mortals in whom there is no help." Clink. One. Clink. Two. That's what the woman did. She put her trust in God. In God is our hope.

Put our trust in God. It's the first commandment: "You shall have no other gods." We love and trust God above all else. The first Bishop of the Rocky Mountain Synod was Pastor Wayne Weissenbuehler. He told the following story on himself with a twinkle in his eye.

Pastor Wayne was elected Bishop at Synod Assembly. At his installation service as the new Bishop, the clergy took him outside of the church. They sat him on a donkey and rode now, Bishop Wayne, around the church. It wasn't a re-enactment of Jesus coming into Jerusalem. No, it was to remind Wayne, child of God, sitting on a donkey...on an (ass), that his new role made him no better than anyone else. He wasn't all that and a slice of bread. As Bishop, he wasn't above congregations, or church members, or staff or anyone. They were reminding him as it says in Ps 146, to trust God above himself or anyone else.

Folks, I need to be honest with you. I promise to not be partisan from the pulpit. I don't care if you're red or blue, green or orange. If we cannot talk about real life and all its' issues within these walls, then where does faith connect with our reality? If we cannot be honest about all parts of our lives, then what are we doing here in God's presence and the presence of our followers of Jesus?

Doesn't the Gospel of Jesus change everything? Don't the scriptures inform every part of our lives? Isn't the first commandment to put our whole trust in God rather than any elected leader or earthly ruler?

Beloved in Christ, we've all just experienced a really challenging election season for many months. The division on both sides was intense, real and caustic. This side of Tuesday, half of us are thrilled with the outcome. We are elated and excited with renewed hope. Half of us are not. We are scared and angry and confused. Words like hope, or power, or success, or government carry weight. They also carry different meanings for all of us, based on our particular hopes and dreams for our country.

Lutherans are known for calling a thing a thing. The reality is that we bring all of who we are into this sacred space each week. We do not, we cannot stop feeling or thinking about something that is happening in our lives when we take our seats. That family member who is struggling, that community issue that goes unresolved. God desires that we bring all of who we are into God's presence all the time. We can trust God with everything.

In God, we find our truest identity. In God, we put our ultimate allegiance. In God we find unending love and grace that no government nor any earthly organization will ever be able to provide. In God we find out our next steps for moving forward.

This side of Tuesday, what if...**what if God is calling us as Christians to demonstrate our ability to love one another, care for one another and respect one another even more than before election day? Of course those within these walls – that's easy, but more so with everyone outside these walls.** (repeat)

Because at the end of the day, doesn't the real meaning of life come down to our individual actions? The woman put in her two coins. John took Mary into her home to care for her. At our Christmas Bazaar, I saw a stranger hold open the front door for about ten people. He didn't have to. I told him that was very kind. He said, "Doesn't kindness make the world go 'round?'"

What if...**God is calling us to *not dismiss another person* like the religious elites did in Jesus day, to not dismiss another because of their status, their race, their gender, their party...whatever it is that causes you and me to immediately dismiss them. We are called to notice people, like Jesus did the widow.**

What if...**God is calling us to be the light our community, our state and our nation needs right now. To care for the widow and the orphan. To notice the least, the last, the lost? To give to people their 'daily' bread. That the grace we so freely offer one another, we offer to everyone. God holds space for us. Cannot we do it for one another in real honest ways?**

Like the woman, it might be the hardest thing we've ever done. But when we trust in God alone, and find our hope in Him, it can happen. God's inbreaking of the Kingdom is happening right now! The Lord promises to give justice to the oppressed, and food to the hungry. The Lord cares for the stranger. It is the Lord who keeps promises forever. The Lord loves all people. We are called to do the same.

People who live in third world countries, or even countries in conflict know they cannot wait for their governments to act. They cannot wait for legislation to pass, or an Amendment to be brought. With God's help, they are their own best resource. The world goes round by God working through people like you and me.

To end the sermon, I'm inviting each of us to remember, no matter if we feel like we won in this election or if we didn't, what God calls us to. Because we all have next steps to take. If you would, please turn to page 237 in the front of your hymnal.

Affirmation of Baptism. We renew our promises to all the Baptismal affirmations. To love, to hear the word of God and bring ourselves to the Lord's supper. To work for peace and justice in all the world.

Amen!