

**Mark 12:38-44**  
**"The Lord Provides"**  
**Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost**

**November 11, 2018**  
**First Lutheran Church, Glencoe, Minn.**  
**Pastor Peter Adelsen**

On this Veteran's Day, we thank the Triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – for His loving care among everyone who has served or is serving our country.

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Amen!

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

***[The Temple Courtyard]***

As the offering plate moves down the pew, do you ever look to see what is written on your neighbor's envelope? Are you ever curious?

Well, that is what was happening on that day in Jerusalem when Jesus brought His disciples to the temple courtyard to watch people place their tithes and offerings into the 13 receptacles spread throughout the courtyard.

Now, Jesus and His disciples were not alone for this was often a spectacle.

Often, large crowds would gather to see how much money their neighbor would contribute to the temple offering.

Unlike today, there were no envelopes, checkbooks and dollar bills, but only gold, silver and copper coins, so everyone would have an idea on what others were giving.

As Jesus and His disciples were watching, there were plenty of people dropping in shiny coin offerings.

But, then comes along a woman, an obviously poor widow, with only a couple of copper coins.

Now, when it comes to coins, the type of coin often told which financial bracket the person was in. You see, copper coins were the smallest coins in circulation and in today's money would only be a fraction of a cent.

As Jesus and His disciples watch the poor widow place her offering, He says to His disciples: ***“Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box”*** (Mark 12:43).

Now, how could this be? She gave two copper coins – a fraction of a cent – while most of the others gave gold and silver coins, which are worth far more?

### ***[Proper Giving]***

Well, there are two things going on here. First, Jesus is reminding His disciples about proportional giving.

For He said, ***“They all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on”*** (Mark 12:44).

Jesus knew that many of those giving gold and silver coins were giving out of their abundance and not of their first fruits. These coins were a surplus, an overflow of wealth. They made a lot of money, so they gave a lot of money.

But, the poor widow gave everything she had. She gave 100 percent of her wealth.

Now, the monetary offerings couldn't compare, but percentage wise, this poor widow gave God everything. She gave God everything because she entrusted her life to God.

Now, proportional or percentage giving has always been the way God prescribed. As we know from the Old Testament times, Israel was required to give 10 percent of their crops or income they received back to God.

Today, some people may say, *“If I had a larger income, I'd give a tithe, but I just can't afford it.”*

Now, God is not going to smite you if you do not tithe. God isn't going to take away your salvation if you do not tithe. But, our offerings should still reflect the way we have been blessed by God.

This is what Jesus was teaching His disciples then and His disciples here today.

So, are you thanking God appropriately for the money you have received? And, are you putting your dependence in God more than your money and possessions?

Remember, the poor widow gave everything she had. She gave everything because she knew that God would provide for her.

*[Faith]*

You see, the other thing going on in today's gospel lesson is about faith.

Yes, it is appropriate to give to the church to help spread the good news of Christ, but there is more than that here.

You see, the poor widow had so little of everything, except for faith.

She had lost her husband, which in those days meant she's lost her source of income.

Yet somehow, this woman believed God would be right there for her at that moment and in her future. She knew that somehow the Lord would provide for her.

She did not know where her next meal was coming from, or if she'd even have a meal. She did not have faith in the next meal, but faith that God would take care of her.

Now, Mark does not tell us what happens next in the life of the poor widow, we end our gospel reading with uncertainty.

But, one thing is for sure: God provides for all our needs of body and soul.

Now, the poor widow knew that her faith in God did not mean that everything would be perfect in her life, but she knew that trusting in God would not end in disappointment (Isaiah 49).

Sometimes, we may be uncertain about how we will pay an unforeseen bill, such as a car repair bill or medical bill. Or, if we are at work or school and we have a project nearing its deadline and it's far from finished, what do we do?

First, stop and take a breath. Then, pray to God and read God's Word. He may give you the answer right there, or you may have to wait.

But, know that if you put your dependence on God, He is right there with you. He will provide even when you least expect it.

*[God Provides]*

Now, I'm sure that many Jews in the First Century did not expect God to walk amongst them. But, there He was.

Jesus the Christ came down from heaven to provide us His grace.

You see, Jesus the Son of God had immense wealth, since He created everything. He owns everything that we see and what we don't see. But, Jesus came to us impoverished when was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and was made man.

Although Jesus was man, He still carried the attributes of God, but He chose to walk among us – in our flesh.

He walked in our flesh to provide for us. Now, God always provides our daily bread – our food, shelter, clothing – but Jesus came to provide us even more. Jesus came to provide us grace.

When God the Father sent Jesus for us, Jesus knew His mission.

For His mission was to reconcile everyone back to God the Father and He would accomplish this through Himself by fulfilling the Law, through taking on our sins as He died upon the cross and reconciling all who believe in Him through His resurrection from the dead.

This was the mission of Jesus. He came to provide us grace, which is undeserved forgiveness. We didn't earn this grace of God. It was provided to us by God.

We live in this grace everyday as a follower of Christ.

We received this grace at our baptism. We continue to receive this grace of forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation each time we repent of our sins and we are forgiven those sins by God the Father. We also receive this grace each time we receive Christ's true body and true blood at this altar.

So, like that poor widow – who trusted that God would provide for her – we should put our faith and trust into the One who always provides for all our needs of body and soul – including life everlasting – our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

The peace of God which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

✠ SOLI DEO GLORIA ✠