

24TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 11/11/18

*Mount Calvary, West View*

**I KINGS 17: 8-16, HEBREWS, 9: 24-28, MARK 12: 38-44**

**HYMNS: BAPTIZED INTO THY NAME MOST HOLY LSB #590,**

**THE TEMPLE RANG WITH GOLDEN COINS LSB #787,**

**ALL DEPENDS ON OUR POSSESSING LSB #732,**

**ALLELUIA! SING TO JESUS LSB #821**

Theme: Copper Coinage Coffer Collection Cognition

**+ Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. AMEN +**

Our Text is from the continuation of Saint Mark's Gospel, the 12<sup>th</sup> Chapter:

*A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And He called His disciples to Him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For 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."*

How much is too much? That is a question that has been asked concerning offering plate donations since the first plate was passed and the government capped the giving max at 50% of one's income. Can you give more? Sure, you can, but you do not get tax credit for such donations, so some people do not give above such numbers, and ask, "How much is too much." Did you know that the first offering plate was used in the early 1800s, and that many churches passed around a "Pledge Book", listing the operating expenses of the congregation and people signing their "pledge" to give so much a year to cover them? It was not until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century that the collection plate was seen as a common act of worship. "How can this be, since we see this text as having a collection box for the worshipers to use?" Ah, my friend, this is where we get into history.

In the days of Jesus, it was understood that God blessed His people with both spiritual and temporal wealth. Yet, they also understood the scripture, "*For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore, I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to*

*the poor in the land*””. The poor you will have with you always, but that just makes perfect logical sense. If we all put the money in our pockets in the offering plates, and then gave everybody the exact same amount, but I have just one penny less than all of you, would I not then be the poorest among us? That is the logic of such things, so of course the poor will be with us always. In a race, one must win so there will always be losers. No matter how well the Yankees hit, they lost to the Red Sox, so they are poorer in Season 2018 ó just needed to get that out there. You see where I am going.

So, it was incumbent for the rich to take care of the poor. Incidentally, it was also seen as a ósinó to have ótoo muchó wealth, whatever that means. Maybe its 5.9 million to play only 5 Sundays in the NFL\*; that might be too much. Therefore, if one did have too much wealth, it was customary to obey Deuteronomy 8, and make sure you did not forget God gave you such wealth and you took care of those less fortunate since God has obviously taken care of you. So poor boxes, not unlike the nice ones you see in the still standing Roman Catholic churches, were available for use by those so inclined to take care of their fellow man.

But what is this we observe? A poor widow, (that’s *two* problems there, mind you,) has come and put an offering in the poor box. Now what are we to make of this? She should be *receiving* from the box, should she not? First, she is poor, and she is a widow, with no one to care for her. In this instance, the church becomes her beneficiary, so she receives from the box. Well, now how is it she can put those two small copper coins in the coffer? She can, because she has more riches than the wealthy ó she has faith. The poor widow had nothing of a temporal wealth. No husband, no children to care for her, no welfare office of which to receive her "entitlement", and yet, she put in all that she had. Why? Because she trusted in the Word of the Lord. The word that said, "***Do not worry about what you will eat or what you will wear. Your Heavenly Father knows what you need, and He will provide.***" Look at the Old Testament lesson again, that poor widow was even worse off. How so? She still had to care for her son, and since there was nothing left, they were going to eat and die. Yet, her faith was such that she trusted in the Word of the prophet. She listened to the man of

God and believed that such Word came from The God Who cares. In faithful response, she gave of all she had to the man of God and thereby was blessed by God the Father with a jar of flour that was not spent, and a jug of oil that emptied not ó all because of her faith.

Faith is the driving force for God, not offerings. Jesus did not go to the cross and shed His precious flesh and blood to see how much money He could collect. You laugh, but what was one of those 95 theses Saint Martin Luther penned? "They ask, 'Why does not the pope liberate everyone from purgatory for the sake of love (a most holy thing) and because of the supreme necessity of their souls? This would be morally the best of all reasons. Meanwhile he redeems innumerable souls for money, a most perishable thing, with which to build St. Peter's church, a very minor purpose.'" He also remarked, "The indulgences, which the merchants extol as the greatest of favors, are seen to be, in fact, a favorite means for money-getting. Nevertheless, they are not to be compared with the grace of God and the compassion shown in the Cross." Indeed, Christ went to the cross to save sinners, such as you and I. Sinners who know that they cannot do anything to appease the wrath of God, and yet, trusting in the cross for the forgiveness of all sins, makes us willing and able to do good works in the name of the kingdom of God. Good works such as loving husband and wife, loving neighbor without regard for the color of their skin or the beliefs that they hold. Good works such as supporting the government as duly elected and praying for the continued freedom of this great land of ours. Good works of prayers for all those who are away from their families and serving this great nation, and not needing a special "Veterans day" sermon to tell them we appreciate their service ó we should say it every day, like the Lord's Prayer. And certainly, they who are of the faith do not need to be reminded that the service of the Church here on earth runs off offerings received, and that we need to increase the coffers to keep the building open. Every confirmand was instructed that they could give a tithe to the Lord, as they are able, and if they cannot give in monies, there are always the talents and powers therein. Incidentally, even the *Government* acknowledges this.

What we are getting at here is Jesus is not concerned about the amount. The temple widow had just a few coins, the widow of Zarephath had only a few ounces of subsistence, and yet, God did great and

mighty things with such minimal bits and pieces. Recall what He did with just a few loaves and two fish. Faith does great and mighty things when connected to God's Word. It makes a sinner trust in the cross of Christ; makes the waters of baptism a well of living water; makes the simple bread and wine the body and blood of Christ Jesus our Lord ó the power of God and the true source of the forgiveness of sins that allows us to continue to live worry free. We trust the simple Word of God that His Son died once for all, putting away sin with the sacrifice of Himself, that you and I may live by faith, lest any man should boast in his own righteousness.

The temple widow had it right. Give in faith and all will be taken care of through His will. The widow of Zarephath had it right; trust in the Word of God and all things work out for the best. The Writers to the Hebrews got it perfect; we wait not for a judgment from Christ, for when He, *ó will appear a second time*, [He will] *not deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him.*ö Like new born Oscar Albert is, so are we in baptismal faith. So, worry not about how many copper coins clink in coffer collections, cognition should be spent on God's Word and the faith thereof, and actions of faith on the helping of all in need. In our Triune God's Name, we pray. **AMEN.**

+ AND NOW MAY THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING  
KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS IN UNION WITH CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.

AMEN+

**There are only two days on my calendar...today and the day of judgment**

\*Contemporary sports reference, reference to LeBron Bell