

MINNESOTA VALLEY CHURCH; October 10, 2024
25th Sunday after Pentecost; Singers: Carrizales. ?

PRELUDE: Rebekah/Carrizales.?

CALL TO WORSHIP: From Psalm 146

PASTOR: Praise the LORD.

ALL: Praise the LORD, O my soul.

PASTOR: I will praise the LORD all my life;

ALL: I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

PASTOR: Do not put your trust in princes,

ALL: In mortal men, who cannot save

PASTOR: The LORD watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and the widow,

ALL: But he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

PASTOR: The LORD reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations.

ALL: Praise the LORD.

HYMN #564 “God Will Take Care of You”

PRAYER

HYMN #560 “Children of the Heavenly Father”

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE:

READER: Bob Hawksford

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: *Jeremiah 11:18-20 Because the LORD revealed their plot to me, I knew it, for at that time he showed me what they were doing. 19 I had been like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter; I did not realize that they had plotted against me, saying, "Let us destroy the tree and its fruit; let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name be remembered no more." 20 But, O LORD Almighty, you who judge righteously and test the heart and mind, let me see your vengeance upon them, for to you I have committed my cause.*

EPISTLE LESSON: *Hebrews 9:23-28 For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven*

itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. 25 Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. 26 Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, 28 so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

READER: Here ends the reading of God’s Word.

CONGREGATION SINGS: God be praised, for His glad Tidings!

CONFESSION OF FAITH: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ, His only son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit; born of the virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate; Was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven; And is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From where He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; The holy Christian Church; the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the Life everlasting. Amen

GLORIA PATRI: *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is not, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS & PRAYER

PRAISE SONGS: 1 or 2 praise songs chosen by HANNAH

SERMON: “THE WIDOW’S COIN” Pastor Tom Olson Mark 12:38-44 *Grace be to you and peace, from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen*

ATTITUDE: Every business has its own terminology and meaning of words. When you fly an airplane, you talk about the ATTITUDE of the airplane. It doesn’t refer to the personality of

the plane, like positive or negative attitude. It refers to the position of the nose of the plane in comparison to horizon. It is either above the horizon as you climb, at the horizon as you go straight and level or below the horizon as you descend.

PEOPLE: People have attitudes too, and they affect our upward or downward direction. A positive attitude brings you and others up and a negative attitude brings you down. It is kind of related to aviation in that sense.

IMPORTANT: Today I get to tackle another Bible passage that I don't believe I have ever preached on. It is well known as "The Widow's Mite/or The Widow's Coin. This is an important story about the attitude of our heart. It is found in Matthew 12, beginning at verse 38.

I. THE CORRUPT RULING CLASS

Mark 12:38-40 As he taught, Jesus said, "Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted in the marketplaces, 39 and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. 40 They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely."

WARNING: Jesus warns us to keep alert to the dangers of the corrupt ruling class. He says "Watch out for the teachers of the law." The very people who had the job of teaching the people the ten commandments were themselves totally corrupt.

MYSELF: Sometimes I tremble at the awesome position I have occupying this pulpit. Thankfully I have never been in a situation that has massive amounts of power, money and temptation. But my list of personal struggles with sin make me wonder, at times, if I should stand behind this sacred desk.

JUDGED: James 3:1 comes to my mind often: "*Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.*" James goes on to talk about our tongues and the words we speak that we must give an account for. Perhaps my biggest error is not the words I speak but the words I neglect to speak, sharing the gospel, words of encouragement, the giving of thanks and so many more.

Notice what Jesus says are signs of corrupt rulers:

1. **Extravagant Clothing**-most people wore simple crude linen but they had what Jesus called flowing robes. They must have been made with the finest and most expensive cloth. I can understand why the Amish believe in wearing simple, hand-made clothing. They get that idea right here.
2. **Obsession with Titles**-They wanted special recognition in public, titles, special seats at events, people moving out of their way. MUUS: Pastor Marty Horn served for years in Kenyon, Minnesota near the famous Holden Church, the cathedral in the corn field. The noted Holden pastor, one of the founders of St. Olaf College, Rev. B.J. Muus was known for his pompous attitude. (Perhaps that is why his first wife left him!) When he drove his buggy down a country lane, he expected the farmers with tippy cans full of milk being hauled to the creamery to drive down through the ditches, risking their milk so he could pass on the good road without being jostled. This arrogance is still talked about today, well over 100 years later. LINDBERG: This is such a contrast to Minnehaha Falls Trinity Lutheran's former visitation pastor: Dr. Dan Lindberg, retired missionary from Africa, who refused to ride in the comfortable African train passenger coaches and rode in the cattle cars with the poorest people because he felt that he was not any more important than they were.
3. **Conspicuous Giving**-When these people dip into their vast wealth to give money to a cause, they make sure that

everyone knows and sees what they are giving. They love to have their names put on the buildings that they pay for.

HISTORY: Not all rulers are corrupt but if you study history, a high percentage of them are. They were in Jesus' day and they are today. They are rich and powerful; they like to hold on to power and they like to keep the people they rule under their thumbs. They don't have a clue what it is like to be poor and powerless. If they once were, they forget quickly. Stalin in Russia and Castro in Cuba grew up poor but once they got power became monsters who killed people by the millions.

II. THE OFFERINGS OF THE RICH AND POOR

Mark 12:41-42 Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. 42 But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny.

GIVERS: There are big givers and there are small givers when it comes to the work of the Lord and to charitable causes. The temple leadership had set up the giving so that the crowds could watch and see who gave the most money. It ended up being a way to show off for the rich and be humiliated for the poor.

LISTS: When my mom was young, the church would publish everyone's giving at the end of the year. One single school teacher who lived with her mother was a large giver and people actually told her to give less to the church because it made them look bad. She actually was a humble and generous person and this system was hard on her. Thankfully, they quit doing that.

Jesus tells us more in *Matthew 6:2-4 "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. 3 But when*

you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

WATCHING: Everyone in the temple was watching a poor widow who put in a little coin to the temple offering. It appears that there must have been some sort of negative response, like snickering, when she gave so little.

PAPER ROUTE: When I was about 13 years old I had a paper delivery route. I had a number of widows who were living off of tiny social security checks. There was no HUD housing in those days where poor people could get a nice little apartment for 1/3 of their social security check, like there is now. These widows would pay me for their newspapers out of little coin purses that had some coins and a few dollar bills in them that they had saved. They didn't own cars or drive. They lived in rooms above downtown businesses and rooming houses. They had just a few pieces of old worn-out furniture. I doubt that many of them had a television set, maybe a radio. Many were very lonely.

COOKIES: The newspaper was their connection with the world. But it was not unusual for them to have a fresh-baked cookie for me. They had so little but they were generous with what little they had. I treasure the memory of those poor widows. I suspect their church giving was perhaps ten dollars a year or so, and that was difficult for them.

I also remember some of the wealthier members of the community marching into church and parading up to the front seats to sit, very conspicuously in the latest clothing styles. In those days it was plaid pants, fat neckties and pastel leisure suites with flowered shirts! People have not changed since the time of Jesus.

III. THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Mark 12:43-44 Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. 44 They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on."

LESSON: Jesus wanted the disciples, who would eventually be laying the foundation for His church all over the world, to learn a lesson. He wanted them to realize that the destitute widow gave more than the rich. She gave all she had to live on, even though it was so little. God is happier about the spirit of the giving than the amount of the giving.

GUIDELINE: Sometimes people ask me about giving. They ask if they should tithe one tenth of their income, like they did in the Old Testament. I tell them that the tithe is a helpful Old Testament guide but the New Testament guide is found in ***2 Corinthians 9:6-7 "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER."***

EXAMPLES: This widow gave sacrificially and I believe cheerfully to the work of the Lord. In her heavenly home she reaps the rewards of her generosity. This does not merely apply to church giving, it applies to all giving in life like food for the hungry, a listening ear to someone with a burden on their heart, a helping hand to those overwhelmed by life.

OPPORTUNITY: We have an opportunity to give this week. Avoniel Carlson is dying and her daughter has to return to New Jersey for a week to attend to personal responsibilities. There are two-hour periods of time, when the hospice nurse is not there, where someone is needed to sit and watch over her to make sure she takes her pain medication and doesn't try to get up in her mentally impaired condition. Her church, Bethel's Rock, is trying to cover this ministry but there may be some spots that need to be

covered. Her husband, Gary, can't do it himself. This is a great opportunity to give to a couple that gave their lives to serve Christ in South Africa and on a faraway Island.

OTHERS: Perhaps a young mother might need someone to watch her children so she can get some sleep. Perhaps a lonely widow might really need a visit. I have some names if you want to give that way. But the main thing God looks for in giving is a willing heart.

JESUS: That is the way that Jesus gave himself on the cross. It was not out of guilt but out of the anticipation of the joy that would result from purchasing our redemption and opening up eternal life in heaven for us.

Hebrews 12:2-3 "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

SUMMARY: These are some of the lessons we learn from the widow who dropped her last coin into the temple offering almost 2,000 years ago. She teaches us how to live and how to give. Amen

Now may the peace of God that passes all understanding, guard your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen

HYMN #559 "Great is Thy Faithfulness"

LORD'S PRAYER: *Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen*

BENEDICTION

DOXOLOGY: *Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise Him all creatures here below, Praise Him above, ye heavenly host, Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. A-men. A-men. A---men.*

POSTLUDE: Rebekah Olson