

Immanuel (Augsburg) Lutheran Church
Shobonier, Illinois
Pentecost 25B - Proper 27B
November 10, 2024
Mark 12:38-44

All In

And [Jesus] sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. 42 And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. 43 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. 44 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." (Mark 12:41-44 ESV)

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit,

Last week we celebrated the Feast of All Saints. We heard that we are God's children now even as we look toward the goal of our faith – eternal life in the presence of our Savior. Today, our Lord Jesus teaches us more of what it means to be a child of God and how it plays out in our lives. In short, we learn that being a child of God involves being all in.

First of all, Jesus warns of the scribes. They love the attention; they love the applause; they love the place of honor; and while they may fake humility, they love the limelight. And Jesus warns about them because they are in each of us. And if you could only see it in yourself as clearly as you see it in others, perhaps you would blush a deep shade of red. If you'd look up from your navel-gazing, your self-serving, your self-centeredness, you'd realize this is true. And you'd know that's not how a child of God should live. Repent!

But a true child of God is much more like this poor widow. So repent, and learn from her. For she did not claim anything for herself. As a child of God she was all in – and I'm not talking about her offering. Yes, she did give her all, "everything she had, all she had to live on." And from our perspective it even seemed foolish. We certainly wouldn't do that. But it was a profound demonstration of her total trust in God's provision. She gave her all because she entrusted herself and her life to the mercy of God. She believed that God would continue to take care of her and provide for her. And while she didn't necessarily know **how** that would happen, she trusted that He would. She acted as though it all belonged to God anyway – for it does.

Such faith is not disappointed, for the Lord is faithful, and He provides for His people by His grace. That's why the poor widow of Zarephath was able to feed the prophet Elijah "for

many days," as well as herself and her household, "according to the word of the Lord that he spoke by Elijah" (1 Kings 17:15–16). She too was all in as she trusted the word of the Lord. For when Elijah asked her for a morsel of bread, she told him she had "nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. And now I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die." (1 Kings 17:12). And when Elijah said, "First make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son," she did. She believed the promise that "the jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth." She too gave from her poverty "everything she had, all she had to live on." And God provided for her and her son. They did not go hungry. God grant each of us such faith.

Now there was a third widow who also was all in. She entrusted herself to her Lord and was not disappointed. For she gave not her mites, not her bread, but herself and her only Son. She trusted the Word of the Lord when she was told that she would have a Son who would save people from their sins. And as He hung dying on the cross, He entrusted her to His dear disciple. He provided for her through him.

Furthermore, He didn't seek greetings and glory, though the crowds did sing His praises when He entered Jerusalem on a donkey. He didn't seek the best seats and places of honor in the synagogues and at feasts, but He sought the lowest seat, the one no one wanted, when He was nailed to the cross and lifted up to die. He didn't make long prayers for a pretense, but He did often pray for His disciples, His Church, and for His Father's glory. And He taught His disciples how to pray with a brief, succinct prayer which covers about everything needed. He who was rich became poor for our sakes and gave His all, His everything, that through His poverty we might become rich. As He sacrificed Himself for us He held nothing back so that we could become children of God, rich in every blessing. Because of Him we have treasure in heaven that is not subject to moth, rust, or theft. He gave everything so that we might have everything we need to live now and forever.

And because He is our Savior, because He has rescued us from sin, death, and the devil, because He has won forgiveness of all our sins, we also have an abundance of what we need in this life. After all, "He who did not spare own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?" (Romans 8:32). That's why we can boldly confess that in His mercy

He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them. He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.

And when we pray for daily bread, trusting in His mercy, we ask that we would realize that He gives it to us only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, and that we would receive it with thanksgiving. And what is that?

Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

Yes, who can doubt that God has richly blessed us in every way? And yet, there's more. He feeds us, too, by His Word, not only with daily bread for this body and life, but unto the life everlasting in Christ Jesus. "By the sacrifice of himself," by the giving of His body and life and all that He had, He has entered "into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf" (Heb. 9:24–26). He is our great High Priest and the Temple of God, as well as the priestly food with which He feeds us. He has borne in His own body all your shame. He purifies you with His body once given and His blood once shed, bearing all your hurts and wounds and healing them with His cleansing touch and wrapping you up in His very own holiness.

With such bountiful blessings of body and soul showered upon us, let us receive it all with joy, for there is no merit or worthiness in us. And with the widows who were all in, who gave their all, trusting the providence of God, let us gladly return to Him a generous, sacrificial portion of His bounty that His Word would continue to be proclaimed here in Augsburg and around the world. Yet, being a child of God is not about how much or how little you put into the offering plate. It's about receiving all that He has given you – His very self, His heart and soul, His well-beloved Son. God grant that you receive with joy everything Jesus is and has done for you and that you are all in with Him. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

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