

Lessons for Twenty-Fourth Sunday After Pentecost

November 11, 2018

Psalm 146 ~ *Praise for the Lord who alone can be trusted to provide and protect the needy.*

1 Kings 17:8-16 ~ *God used a nearly empty jar of flour and a widow's heart full of faith to sustain Elijah.*

Hebrews 9:24-28 ~ *Jesus gave His life in our place once, so that we may have life for all time.*

Mark 12:38-44 ~ *Jesus contrasted those who gave to get, with a poor widow who gave all she had.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: It's the Thought that Counts.

When a gift is less than we'd like, we console ourselves with the thought! Even when the gift is great, the thought behind it is often greater. We cannot imagine a mother giving up the last measure of flour to make bread for a stranger when she and her son will starve! It is hard to grasp the commitment that moves a widow to give her last two coins and face a life of poverty. Neither can we comprehend the love that moved our Savior to sacrifice Himself to do away with sin so that we may enter with Him into God's eternal presence! It is the thought behind that gift that counts!

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Dear Lord and Savior, when I fully understand the gift of love that You have given to me, I wonder at my little gifts of service to You and to my sisters and brothers. Move my heart to generosity that I reach out in loving ways share Your gift of gracious life with all. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: God doesn't measure His love to us in abstract terms, but gives in proportion to our needs. Our need for grace is total, and our Savior's gift is complete! In response we give to God in relation to His gifts to us; however, we can never out give His love!

OFFERING PRAYER: Whether we place one coin or two, or all our living
in service to Your Kingdom, Lord, it is our heart
behind the gift that makes it worth the giving;
May all these coins and each of us be blessed to do our part.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: We are so accustomed to trusting only what we can see that we rely on impressions and judge by appearance. If we were told to give all our savings to some mission project and God would take care of our physical needs, our response would be something like, "Yeah, right!" And yet, God has promised - and provided - much more through the gift of His Son. He not only fills the canisters of our pantry with provisions for physical life; He keeps the storehouse of His grace full of His love for all eternity.