

Gospel lesson

We pick up shortly after we left off last week. After the scribes stopped asking Jesus questions, He asked them a challenging question about how the Messiah could be a son of David, for David called Him "Lord."



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/Lumo-widow-mite/>; credit: LUMO

Mark 12:38-44

(NRSV)

³⁸ As he taught, he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces,

³⁹ and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets!

⁴⁰ They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

⁴¹ He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums.

⁴² A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny.

⁴³ Then he called his disciples and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury.

⁴⁴ For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

The word of God for the people of God

<Interactive/Children's Time>



picture from MMMS collection

<Clink coins> What do you hear? <Let them respond, then pass out coins>

Do you know what words are on the face of all circulating US coins? <Let them respond>

US coins did not have those words when the country started. When do you think the government began putting them on coins? <Let them respond>

During the **Civil War**, a law was passed to allow the wording "In God We Trust", but it was not put on all coins until 1938, just before **World War II** began. Why do you think it happened then? <Let them respond>

When do you think most people look to God?
<Let them respond>

Many times it takes feeling completely overwhelmed,

scared, and with no other help available – a crisis – for people to start talking to God. What would you call a crisis in your life? <Let them respond>

What do you do when something terrible happens in your life, that you cannot handle? <Let them respond>

We just read about a widow who had almost nothing left. What did she do? <Let them respond>

Just as the widow gave her life in trust to God's will, let us remember during our troubles (and even during good times) to trust and talk with God.

<Hymn "More Precious than Silver"

TFWS #2065>

Message: Out of Their Abundance



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/truth-telling/twenty-fifth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-lectionary-planning-notes/twenty-fifth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Abundant Provider of all that we have,
as we take time now to further consider today's scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may realize how blessed we are and pay attention enough to care for all of Your children,

whom You have provided as blessings in our lives.
Amen.

We begin a new series today, “Truth Telling.” The first truth we consider is how people give and judge “Out of Their Abundance.”

“In the active soundscape of today’s text, the sound of two coins would easily be drowned out. Except, Jesus noticed and makes us notice too.”¹

I attended a webinar this week, “Respite for All.” Do any of you know what that is? <Let them respond>



pictures from
<https://respiteforall.org/>

It started in Alabama, when a church prayed about providing support to a growing community issue. Surveying the community about unmet needs, they realized something was needed for families dealing with dementia.

After more prayerful consideration, they began a program where people living with dementia and trained volunteers could come together for games, art, music, exercise, shared meals, and service projects for the community. Family members and caregivers were also invited for a short worship experience once a week.

¹ Theme summary taken from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/truth-telling>.

Data shows that the participants, their caregivers, and the volunteers all benefitted from the program. It gave the participants a renewed sense of [purpose and community], and the family members/caregivers a four-hour break. The volunteers found that, in the joy-filled atmosphere, they learned to be less self-centered and more attentive to community needs.

Unexpectedly, they understood better what Jesus taught about living God's love. Instead of thinking differently in order to learn how to live, they lived differently and learned how to think. They were transformed in the process to true discipleship.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/ruth-3/>

Naomi and Ruth needed security. Naomi could simply have had Ruth work to support both of them until she (Naomi) died, but that would not give Ruth security. Naomi thought beyond herself about how to help Ruth prosper too. And, if you read the book of Ruth, you will see that Boaz paid attention to the needs of his kinsmen as well, before today's passage.

Because both Naomi and Boaz were willing to share what they had for Ruth to prosper, both were blessed when she bore a son - and ultimately, the entire kingdom of Israel was blessed abundantly as well, for Ruth was a great-grandmother of King David.

The psalmist refers to threats from without, with guards at the gate and such. However, we often face threats from within even more than those without. Unless we live in the abundant love of the Lord, we may be undone by those threats within and without.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/gnpi-080-widow-mite/>

In Jesus' day, the priests of the temple were supposed to be paying attention to the needs of those in the community and helping them. Unfortunately, they tended to look more at their own needs without considering the situation of others in the community. The poor were overlooked then, much as society often overlooks them now. And the disciples paid about as much attention as most people did - until Jesus redirected their thinking.

Living as a disciple of Christ tends to have that kind of transformative effect on people. When we live for Jesus, we not only help others, **we are changed**. We are called upon to make disciples of Jesus Christ by teaching them through our following Jesus' example how to live in love - and thus transform the world.



picture from <https://www.pexels.com/photo/group-of-children-collecting-plastics-9037596/>; credit: Ron Lach

Those who have little [as the world judges wealth] are often the most responsive to the needs of others. What are we looking at as wealth in our lives? How does that compare to what Jesus reminded the disciples – and reminds us – that we need most?

As was noted about [Jesus' sacrifice on the cross] in the letter to the Hebrews, "Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands." *We* are the body of Christ – the Holy Spirit enters into those who invite God in, making the faithful the "Holy of holies" in which God dwells. We are blessed with abundant love and forgiveness, plenty to share with others.

So, how are we helping the world see the holiness and goodness of God? What are the needs within our community that are being unmet unless the church takes action?

I want you to think about that this week.

- † As always, start with prayer. Seek the wisdom of God amid/above the noise of this sin-filled world.
- † Share what you have, especially where you see need. If someone denies their own need, ask them to help or honor you in accepting what you have to offer.
- † Let others share with you. It is sometimes surprising what comes from what is offered!
- † If someone offers what you do not want, thank them and find a way to validate them as people, because good hearts are a treasure! Invest in them!



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/truth-telling/twenty-fifth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-lectionary-planning-notes/twenty-fifth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-graphics>

Let God bless us with relationship building and stronger communities by our living the love of Christ, transformed as Jesus' disciples and transforming the world out of our abundance in the Holy Spirit's blessings.