

Worship Resources - [Be All You Can Be](#)

Pentecost 24, Year B,

7th November, 2021

1 Kings 17:8-16 CEV / Mark 12:38-44 CEV

Prelude [Great is thy faithfulness](#)

music by William Runyan, played by Annie Center

Welcoming Announcements

Pass the Peace

Call to Worship

Come and worship!

We will praise the One between, within, and over.

Trust in the One who co-creates the was, the now, and the will-be.

**Our hope is in the One who creates expansive love
calling us to do the same.**

Follow the One who never breaks covenant.

**We follow the One whose extravagant love calls us
to co-create justice for the oppressed,
feed the hungry, unlock prisons,
and welcome strangers, orphans, and widows.**

Praise the One whose justice is grace-full and inclusive.

We praise the Spirit that spans the ages. Amen!

I'm glad to welcome you to online worship with Olympic View Community Church. We seek to welcome all of God's children to join us in bearing witness to the radically transforming power of God's love.

As we gather today, let's reflect on how we share God's love and peace with each other in the times in which we live, and those we encounter in our day to day lives, as we listen to the following interlude by our church musician Annie.

Reflection Video [Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing](#)

written by John Wyeth, Robert Robinson, played by Annie Center

Invocation

O God,
you broke down the barriers when you crept in beside us. In Jesus, your hands touched all, and touched us.
You opened our eyes to see how the hands of the rich were empty, and the hearts of the poor were full. You took the widow's mite and the child's loaves and used them to show us the Kingdom.

Here in the company of the neighbor whom we know and the stranger in our midst, and the self from whom we turn, we ask to love as Jesus loved.

Make this the place and time, good Lord, when heaven and earth become one, and we in word and flesh know ourselves beloved. Amen.

We light a candle today to represent the Spirit burning within us, and among us, guiding our time together. (light candle) Amen.

In our reading from 1 Kings, we hear of how God multiplied what little a poor widow had to produce much bread. As we listen to these words, let's reflect on what we give of our resources, and how it can multiply for others.

First Testament Reading 1 Kings 17:8-16 CEV

The Lord told Elijah,

“Go to the town of Zarephath in Sidon and live there. I've told a widow in that town to give you food.”

When Elijah came near the town gate of Zarephath, he saw a widow gathering sticks for a fire. “Would you please bring me a cup of water?” he asked.

As she left to get it, he asked, “Would you also please bring me a piece of bread?”

The widow answered, “In the name of the living Lord your God, I swear that I don't have any bread. All I have is a handful of flour and a little olive oil. I'm on my way home now with these few sticks to cook what I have for my son and me. After that, we will starve to death.”

Elijah said, “Everything will be fine. Do what you said. Go home and fix something for you and your son. But first, please make a small piece of bread and bring it to me.

The Lord God of Israel has promised that your jar of flour won't run out and your bottle of oil won't dry up before he sends rain for the crops."

The widow went home and did exactly what Elijah had told her. She and Elijah and her family had enough food for a long time.

The Lord kept the promise that his prophet Elijah had made, and she did not run out of flour or oil.

Scripture Video 1 Kings 17:8-16

[God Feeds Elijah And The Widow](#)

Lectionary bible reading

A Time of Prayer

Today we come together as a community to share together our joys and concerns, and lift them to God in prayer. If you would like to share a specific request to be included in our communal prayer time, please leave a comment in the video below, or email myself at: vicarglenn@gmail.com, and I'll make sure to include that request in next week's service, as well as send a prayer chain email, if you would like.

Joys and Concerns

Today, we lift up the family and friends of AJ this morning, who was died tragically this week a few days before his 14th birthday. A beloved member of our youth group, it is still such a shock for many of us.

We also remember the family of JoAnn Shoemaker, who passed away a few weeks ago after a lengthy struggle with illness. May her husband Bill feel God's presence and strength now.

Let us also pray for all those who struggle among us for adequate housing and shelter as the weather turns to winter. May we all pray and work together to find solutions to the struggles of our neighbors around us.

We also celebrate the new life among us as well, having been blessed by a visit last week from our newest member, born several months ago.

Let's take these concerns, and others in our hearts, to God together in prayer.

Pastoral Prayer

Merciful God of compassion and justice, have mercy on us as we confess our sin. We are not the stewards Christ calls us to be. Riches possess us while others go hungry. We mismanage creation with our pollution and strife to obtain ever more than we already have. We abuse your provision for us by our selfish desires. Help us

hear again Christ's call to be faithful, and through him forgive us as we repent of our sin and turn from it...

Loving God, the widow of Zarephath, with a handful of flour and a drop of oil fed the prophet Elijah before her child and herself. God, teach us the joy of hospitality which welcomes friend and stranger, neighbour and enemy, and so finds You feasting among us....

God of Abundance, the widow of Jerusalem, with two small coins offered to you her love, her worship and all she had. Teach us the joy of giving freely, which counts nothing as ours by right, but willingly shares and so finds you sharing with us....

God of Resurrection, Christ Jesus, with his whole being sacrificed himself for the sake of your love for us. Teach us the joy of giving ourselves to you, so that we yearn for your presence, long for your salvation, and so find you living in us.....

God of Mercy, It is ever your will that we love and work and pray for those who are in need of bread and of shelter, of healing and of wholeness. Hear the prayers we make for those of our world—those of our community, and those of our family who are in need. We lift before you now in the silence of our hearts and with the words of our lips....

.....Lord, hear our prayer...

Bless we pray, O God, your church throughout the world and help it to fulfil the purpose you have given it. Especially we pray for our own congregation....

Guide us each day and help us to give as completely as we have received.

We ask it in the name of Christ Jesus, our Lord and our Saviour, our brother and our friend. **Amen**

In our gospel lesson this morning, we have another story of the generosity of a poor widow. As we listen to these words from Mark, let's reflect on what we are willing to give, and if that is what we are called to.

Gospel Lesson Mark 12:38-44 CEV

As Jesus was teaching, he said: Guard against the teachers of the Law of Moses! They love to walk around in long robes and be greeted in the market.

They like the front seats in the meeting places and the best seats at banquets.

But they cheat widows out of their homes and pray long prayers just to show off. They will be punished most of all.

Jesus was sitting in the temple near the offering box and watching people put in their gifts. He noticed that many rich people were giving a lot of money.

Finally, a poor widow came up and put in two coins that were worth only a few pennies.

Jesus told his disciples to gather around him. Then he said: I tell you that this poor widow has put in more than all the others.

Everyone else gave what they didn't need. But she is very poor and gave everything she had. Now she doesn't have a cent to live on.

Scripture Video **Mark 12:38-44**
[*A Widow's Generosity*](#)
Lectionary bible reading

Reflection ***Be All You Can Be*** Rev. Glenn Brumbaugh

When we think of giving, what comes to mind? In our context at church, I'm sure our gifts and tithes come to mind. But don't worry, this isn't going to be a stewardship sermon. But certainly donating our financial resources is a thought we have when thinking about the term, "giving." We might also think of the other tenets of the baptismal vows, that of our time and talents when thinking about "giving," using our available time or our particular skills to help a particular cause in some fashion. Another way we might reflect on that term would be to relinquish something, as in the phrase "give and take." One thing all of these thoughts have in common is to freely let go of something, to make a donation or commitment in some fashion. In the Christian faith, there has always been an expectation that there is a cost, that one must give to some extent, in some fashion.

In Luke 14:28, Jesus tells his followers that they must "count the cost" of following him, that there will be sacrifices to make. A life as his disciple means giving up many of the things that are considered of value in the world they live in, that they were choosing a radically different way of living that was not easy. Starting in the Torah, in Deuteronomy, Leviticus, and Numbers, we are told that we need to give one tenth of our worth to God as a tithe. The early church in Acts gave all their resources to put into one pot, for all with need to draw from. Giving is certainly a major theme throughout the scriptures. Today, though, I don't want to focus so much on the financial aspect of giving, as looking at giving in a much broader sense. How much of ourselves in total are we expected to give? And what does that look like? I'd like us to consider why we give, what motivates us?

In our scripture this morning, we find Jesus teaching at the temple, most likely the outer court of that complex, as part of our story involves a woman, who would not be permitted in the inner courts. As we've been working through this section of Mark's gospel in recent weeks, this story follows a number of interactions Jesus has with the Temple authorities where he expresses his disdain and criticism of the entire Temple structure of that time.

He starts out in today's reading commenting again on the corruption and graft displayed by some of the scribes and priests. When we read this scripture translated into English, with commas added as we would expect, Jesus appears to be critical of all scribes as a whole, even though earlier in this section he commends a scribe for being on the right track. Unfortunately, in translating from Greek to English, we often add punctuation to fit our grammar rules that did not exist in the original Greek. This is a prime example. By placing the comma after "scribes," the implication is that this applies to all scribes. Yet if we take the commas out, the meaning changes from all scribes to those whose behavior fits these criteria. Jesus refers to those particular scribes who use their authority to gain status and prestige, and flaunt that position by their vestments and by taking advantage of the respect it gains them in social and religious gatherings. Even more insidious, they use one of the roles of their position, as trustees of the estates of widows and orphans, to gain financially from their duties in those transactions, both personally and for the Temple as a whole.

Often creditors would seek to exact seizure of the property of widows and orphans, and the scribes would take exaggerated fees for arbitrating those seizures, as well as recommending donating a portion of the proceeds to the Temple treasury. They grew wealthy while those they were entrusted to protect ended up on the street. Yet there they were, leading lengthy, grand public prayers and visibly donating large sums of their surplus of wealth to the Temple. Their motivation in giving of their time and resources was for personal gain and climbing the social and career ladders. They wanted to be seen dumping a few grand into the Temple coffers. I would wager they planned the timing of such to coincide when just the right people would be there to see it.

Yet, in contrast, we have the approach of a widow woman, who seems to go unnoticed in her activity. Jesus has to point her out to be noticed. She quietly steps up and puts in two copper coins, which according to him, is all she had. To put that in perspective, that amount of money doesn't even equate to one penny. Now, as then, you could not buy anything with such a pittance. She gets no benefit socially from this act. Nobody really even notices her dropping this little gesture in the collection horn.

So why does she give? Is it to meet her religious obligations from the Torah, to be a faithful Jew? Is it to give back to the structure who's charity she may rely on? Or is it something deeper? Perhaps it was a testament to her faith, that she trusted that God would provide,

and she was willing to give her all to God, entrusting that she would be cared for. Jesus is drawing a sharp contrast between the hypocritical faith of the religious elite, who give face time to God through showy displays of piety and the poor whose genuine faith leads them to selfless sacrifice. But as we examined earlier, Jesus wasn't necessarily indicting all the scribes. From our previous story, he did consider some as being insightful. But unfortunately, even those more noble scribes still participated and supported the system that had negative implications for the less fortunate of society.

While this story can certainly give good illustrations of the errant ways of the fortunate of Jesus' day, they don't translate as well to our time. We don't have religious elite walking around the city in flowing robes, nor do we have a lot of seats of honor to fill at our gatherings. But we do have choices in our priorities like those scribes of old. In our churches, do we focus on keeping a healthy nest egg for the building fund, or is our focus outreach to the needy. Do we limit one over the other to keep a healthy "balance?" When we think of who we'd like for new members, do we prefer the new young professional family down the street over the homeless person sleeping in a tent along the freeway? We may not even realize how we, like those good scribes, support a system that keeps some downtrodden at the expense of others. We live our lives like everybody around us in our quiet suburban neighborhoods, often unaware of the challenges those on the other side of the tracks face to better themselves to the same standards we enjoy.

We often don't think about the limited opportunities available to them, based on the lesser resources available to them in education, housing, and employment because of the economically challenged neighborhoods they live in, and sadly because of the racism that is still alive and well today. We go to work at jobs in companies that continually funnel more compensation to the top tier of management, at the expense of the rank and file employees, who sometimes have to work multiple jobs to make ends meet. We participate in a system that lifts up those who accumulate great wealth at the expense of the welfare of most. Maybe we aren't so different from those insightful scribes of Jesus' time in our complicity. I doubt that any of us here has bad intentions for others. But what are we willing to give, or give up, to show the same genuine faith of the widow in our story?

Are we willing to give our whole selves to God, to commit to living the same way we do in this one hour of the week in every hour of every day? Are we willing to give up our attachment to the values of this world, to what is considered sensible and responsible, to take a risk and step out in faith, ignoring the gods of greed and the illusion of control that rules over us? Are we willing to give our priority to reaching and making a difference in the lives of the downtrodden "others" of today? And are we willing to give up our need to be in charge in order to let God lead us?

Too often we give, in whatever sense, out of what suits our need, or out of a sense of duty. Jesus in this story makes clear that it's not the amount of the giving, but the proportion that

is important. We're called to give our all, to be completely committed to serving the faith we confess. We need to be an active participant in the kin-dom in every part of our lives, and aware of how our actions, or inactions, impact others.

Jesus doesn't hire part-time disciples. We're called to live lives of contrast to the values of the world around us, not lives that fit into the structures of greed and oppression that the world is built upon. As you reflect on why you give what you give in your life to God, may you seek to be like the widow in our story and genuinely trust that by giving your all to your walk of faith, to living the life of a disciple, that God will lead you down the path that leads to redemption for all, in the kin-dom that draws near in this world. Amen.

Call to Serve.

God has made us stewards of the rich resources that were given in Creation and are given anew each day.

On this day, we make our offerings knowing that all that we have has come from God who will continue to provide. Let us put our hearts into our offerings as signs of our trust and faithfulness.

As we continue to seek to be a place of compassion and support to our community, we ask that you give prayerful consideration as to how you may support our efforts. If you would like to make a donation, gifts can still be mailed to our church office, or online donations can be made through the link in the video description. Thanks again for all your support, and may we continue to work together to keep being a place of ministry that seeks to promote the growth of God's shalom around us. Today, as we reflect on our own calling as disciples, let's reflect on our own giving, and think if we are being all we can be in service to our God and others.

A Time for Reflection

Reflection on the Word [Video]

[When the Poor Ones](#)

written by Miguel Manzano and Jose Olivar,
performed and posted to YouTube by
Sydney Boggs, used with permission

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

Loving God,

we come to you in thanksgiving, knowing that all we are and all we have is a gift from you. In faith and love, help us to do your will. We are listening, Lord God.

Speak your words into the depths of our souls, that we may hear you clearly.

We offer to you this day all the facets of our lives, whether it be at home, at work, or at school – to be patient, to be merciful, to be generous, to be holy.

Give us the wisdom and insight to understand your will for us and the fervor to carry out our good intentions.

We offer our gifts of time, talent and possessions to you as a true act of faith, to reflect our love for you and our neighbor.

Help us to reach out to others as you our God have reached out to us.
Amen.

Blessing/Assurance

There is more than enough love to go around. More than enough resources. More than enough of everything, when we remember we are one body in Christ, when we remember we are all children of God. Know that you are loved and needed, and that you need to love one another. When we love each other, our needs are met in the care of Christ's community. Go and work to build up the reign of God on earth as it is in heaven, for you are loved, forgiven, and restored. Amen.

As we extinguish this candle, let's carry it's divine spark into our own lives this week, shining God's light into the lives of all we encounter. Amen.

Postlude [The Ash Grove](#)

Traditional Welsh Air, played by Annie Center