**Notes for Next Sunday**

25th Sunday of after Pentecost

**The Point of this Week’s Readings**

These lessons deal with the right kind of responses to Christ’s dying sacrifice for us on the cross. Fake religion will not make it.

Psalm (Psalm 146). This is the first of five hallelujah psalms (hallelujah means “praise the Lord!”). Verses 1-2 call for praise and verses 3-4 state why God’s people should not depend on anything earthly because it will fail. Verses 5-6 go back to calling for praise and verses 7-10 tell of that God does for His people.

Old Testament (1 Kings 17:8-16). The Lord sends Elijah to Sidon which is Gentile territory. Through Elijah, the Lord miraculously provides food for a widow in Zarephath. This story illustrates God’s never-ending goodness. He daily and richly provides for all our needs, blessings us far beyond what we deserve or what we ask. (TLSB)

Epistle (Hebrews 9:24-28). This reading speaks of Christ entering heaven not to give another sacrifice. He is finished with that part of His life. Now he intercedes for us as we await the final Judgment.

Gospel (Mark 12:38-44). Jesus teaches His disciples about two different kinds of people. He warns the disciples against the teachers of the law and their hypocrisy when it comes to showing off in public to get praise but in reality they are robbing the less fortunate. On the other hand He uses a widow’s mite to point to true giving and living.

*For more in-depth commentary on each reading, read the notes found after each text below.*

**Psalm 146**

**1﻿ Praise the LORD.﻿Praise the LORD, O my soul. ﻿2﻿ I will praise the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. ﻿3﻿ Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save. ﻿4﻿ When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing. ﻿5﻿ Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God, ﻿6﻿ the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them— the LORD, who remains faithful forever. ﻿7﻿ He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free, ﻿8﻿ the LORD gives sight to the blind, the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down, the LORD loves the righteous. ﻿9﻿ The LORD watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked. ﻿10﻿ The LORD reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the LORD.**

The following are some insights about the text…

*146:1* “Alleluia” means “Praise the Lord.” It is used a lot when the family of faith gathers together as a special “church cheer.” It is like we are saying, “Hurray God.” (Worship Notebook for Kids)

*146:3–4* The call to trust in the Lord (see vv. 5–9) is heightened by contrast. (CSB)

*146:5–9* Exhortation to trust in the covenant God of Jacob, who as Creator is Lord over all, as the Faithful One defends the defenseless and provides for the needy, and as the Righteous One shows favor to the righteous but checks the wicked in their pursuits. (CSB)

*146:10* Concluding exultant testimony to the citizens of God’s royal city. (CSB)

**Old Testament – 1 Kings 17:8-16**

**8﻿ Then the word of the LORD came to him: ﻿9﻿ “Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food.” ﻿10﻿ So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, “Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?” ﻿11﻿ As she was going to get it, he called, “And bring me, please, a piece of bread.” ﻿12﻿ “As surely as the LORD your God lives,” she replied, “I don’t have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die.” ﻿13﻿ Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. ﻿14﻿ For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD gives rain on the land.’” ﻿15﻿ She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. ﻿16﻿ For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the LORD spoken by Elijah.**

The following are some insights about the text…

*17:10* widow. Jesus refers to the widow of Zaraphath in Luke 4:26. There were many widows in Israel who, theoretically, could have provided for Elijah. But God pronounced judgment on His people’s unbelief by sending His prophet to a Gentile woman. When God’s own people worship idols instead of the Lord, then God sends His prophets and His blessings to others. (PBC)

*17:12* *As surely as the Lord your God lives.* Vow to affirm the truth of her testimony. The widow recognized Elijah as an Israelite, and her expression may indicate frail faith in the true God. (TLSB)

*17:14* *what the Lord, the God of Israel, says.* Elijah can tell the widow “Don’t be afraid” (v. 13) because the demand of the covenant is not given without the promise of the covenant. The Lord does not ask more than he promises to give. (CSB)

*17:16* *jar of flour was not used up.* At the brook of Cherith, the Lord had sent ravens with food for Elijah; now He miraculously provides sustenance for the widow. In the religious crisis during the days of Elijah and Elisha, more “signs and wonders” witnessed to the power of the true God than in any period since the exodus (Ex. 7:3) (TLSB)

**Epistle – Hebrews 9:24-28**

**24﻿ 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.**

The following are some insights about the text…

*9:26* *end of the ages.* His coming has ushered in the great Messianic era, toward which all history has moved (see note on 1:2; cf. 1Pe 1:20). (CSB)

*9:27* *destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.* Because all humans die once, Christ’s sacrifice cannot be repeated. Also, one cannot hope for a second life by which he might appease God through his own actions. (TLSB)

*9:28* *to bring salvation.* He comes without our sins (Is. 53:6), which He bore as a heavy load (John 1:29) when the father made Him to be sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21). Also, He comes not in the likeness of sinful flesh (Romans 8:3), but in the majesty of His transfigured body (Mt 24:30; Php 3:21). (TLSB)

**Gospel – Mark 12:38-44**

**38﻿ 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.”**

The following are some insights about the text…

*12:38-40* Jesus warns against using self-serving religion to elevate ourselves above others. Clergy especially need to listen to Jesus at this point. Jesus shows all religious leaders and scholars the model for their leadership: humility, service, for His sacrifice has atoned for us all. (TLSB)

*12:38* *flowing robes.* The teachers of the law wore long, white linen robes that were fringed and almost reached to the ground. (CSB) Mark of distinction, perhaps associated with holiness. (TLSB)

*12:39* *most important seats in the synagogues.* The place at the front of the synagogue or nearest the host at a banquet. (TLSB)

*12:40 devour widows’ houses.* With no other source of income, scribes often lived off the generosity of benefactors. Abuses followed. (TLSB) The charge that the scribes “devoured widows’ houses” refers to the fact that they sponged on the hospitality of people of limited means. (Lane)

*12:40 lengthy prayers.* Prayers offered to impress listeners, long in duration and short on faith. (TLSB)

**41﻿ 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.**﻿**43﻿ 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.”**

The following are some insights about the text…

*12:41-44*Jesus uses the sacrifice of a widow to illustrate for His disciples the character of absolute dependence on God. Wealth and possession can pose a spiritual threat – wealth has a way of owning its possessor. Jesus’ love and sacrifice motivate us to offer our whole lives to Him as our daily offering of gratitude. He gave up everything, including His life, on the cross for us. (TLSB)

*12:41* *the temple treasury.* Located in the court of the women. Both men and women were allowed in this court, but women could go no farther into the temple buildings. It contained 13 trumpet-shaped receptacles for contributions brought by worshipers. (CSB)

*12:41 Many rich people.* Jesus did not say their gifts were not welcome or not needed. What He did want His disciples and us to note is that our gifts are acceptable only if they come from hearts filled with love and trust. (PBC)

*12:42 very small copper coins.* The smallest coins then in circulation in Palestine.