

Sermon- Our Saviors Lutheran Church- November 11th 2018

Text- Mark 12: 41-44

Are You All In?

Grace and Peace to you and from our Lord Jesus Christ. Yes. Greetings to you today. A pastor was making announcements to begin the worship service. 'There will be a meeting of the Church Board immediately after the service', announced the Pastor. After the close of the service, the Church Board gathered at the back of the sanctuary for the announced meeting. But there was a stranger in their midst- a visitor who had never attended their church before.

"My friend," said the Pastor, "Didn't you understand that this is a meeting of the Church Board?"

"Yep," said the visitor. "But I figured after hearing the sermon I was as bored as anyone else around here!"

I sincerely hope that doesn't happen here at Our Saviors.

Today is a special day. November 11. Why? Glad that you asked. Veterans Day- Saint Martin's Day- Martin Luther was baptized on this day. The high school playoffs continue- the NFL and our beloved Packers continue their season- and of course the day has to do with us and Stewardship. Notice how my mind works? First, let's get to the text for the day. It's most commonly referred to as The Widows Mite.

Widows in Jesus' days were extremely vulnerable. If a woman lost her husband, and she was lucky, she stayed with the family of her deceased husband, and ideally married one of her husband's relatives. The second best option would be that she returned to her own family. The worst option would be that she had nobody to fall back onto. We tend to think of widows as elderly, but in Jesus day they were probably young - 25-35. And probably too old to be remarried and too young to have adult sons who would take care of her. And not only that, but because a widow wasn't allowed to own any property or conduct any business on her own, the temple scribes would act as the widow's custodian and conduct the sale of the husband's property. And of course take a huge cut for themselves. A widow in 1st century Palestine was synonymous with being poor. Always!

So in our Gospel for today Jesus attacks this unjust system. Has the widow as the hero. But he also deals with the widow's total commitment. She could have put one coin in the offering plate and kept one for herself. But that's not the story. She has total commitment. She is all in! Wow!

Let's get back to this day.

Veterans Day- the day we remember those who served and serve this country in the armed services. It is a day to honor and give thanks to those who risked their lives for the greater good, those who were injured in body, mind, or spirit. They were All In. That's the point.

St Martin's Day- celebrated in Europe. 4th Century. A normal guy who was a soldier in the Roman Army in what is now Hungary. Found Jesus, became a monk and spent his life bringing light into the darkness around him. He decided to be All In!

Martin Luther's Baptism day: As good informed Lutherans, we know the story of Martin Luther. Spent a lifetime studying God's word and reforming the church. The point- Luther was All In!

High School playoffs. I am most familiar with the University of Kimberly, but certainly these comments could be true for any high school team or NFL team. Those teams that are successful, develop a concept of family. They come together with a culture of being together with a common goal. Every practice, every game has one distinct characteristic. The players are All In.

Which of course leads to us. You and me. We have concluded two aspects of our Stewardship program. The volunteer portion where we were encouraged to consider using our time and talents in service to our church and community. If you have not responded now is the time- To Be All In. And the cash portion of our response. You know the pledge cards that were supposed to be returned by this day.

What portion of our resources will we offer to Our Savior's so that we can do God's work in this time and place? The point is that we need To Be All In.

When you think about it and the widow's mite and all the other reasons for this day, it begs the question?

Are You All In?

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Amen- Let it be so.