

Sermon- Our Saviors Lutheran Church- June 16th 2019

Text- Mark 12:38-44

What Impresses God

Grace and Peace to you and from our Lord Jesus Christ. What a Gospel this morning. As I read it I began pondering how we are preoccupied with the concept of “stuff.” I’ll get to the Gospel in a few moments. Just some data for you.

Gross Domestic Product or GDP. Each State in our glorious nation has a GDP larger than most countries. Here in Wisconsin our GDP is the same as the nation of Denmark. In the average home we have 300,000 items, most of which we don’t use. The average size of the home in the US has tripled in the past 50 years. (I remember when Pastor Elyateem visited my home a few years back. He was born in Palestine. As we drove through the neighborhood, he looked at all the large homes and asked, “how many families live in these houses?”)

There are 50,000 storage facilities in the US. One in 10 rents one to handle our stuff. 25% of our homes with two car garages do not have any room to park their cars. In our homes, there are more TV sets than people. We are impressed with stuff and the concept of more and more.

You go into the famous fast food place and you order the #3 special. Sandwich, fries and soda. Even though your latest cholesterol level says you shouldn’t have the #3. The kid says, “Do you want to supersize that?”

You go out to dinner and the serving you get is enough for two people. Even before you order the meal you know you will ask for a doggie bag. Yes, we are impressed by more.

So, let’s get to the Gospel. You knew I would eventually get there. Jesus has been teaching about people who go through detailed religious practices. People who seem to recite public prayers for show while trampling over poor widows. Then Jesus sits across from the temple treasury where people are standing in line to give their gifts. There are wealthy people putting in large sums of money. Undoubtedly they are making an impression. Unnoticed by the crowd is the lonely figure of a small widow who puts two small coins that do not even have the value

of a Happy Meal. And Jesus seems to say God is Impressed. Listen to the line from the Gospel - "this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything, all she had to live on." God was impressed with the widow's faith. For sure, the widow would not have been on the "major donors list." But Jesus took notice and God was impressed.

If you were here about a year ago when we were doing a major appeal to pay off the mortgage, you might recall the story about Julie. This story was about the other Our Saviors in Appleton. Julie had little, worked two to three jobs just to make ends meet. Could not make church during the week or on Sunday. Too busy working. But every Monday morning there would be an envelope in the mailbox from Julie. It would contain \$1 and a note from Julie. This went on for at least a year. God was impressed.

Wait a minute. Is this a Stewardship sermon in June? I guess it is. After all, who knows if I will be here In November when we do a normal Stewardship Sermon? And then of course we all need a wake up call about what impresses God.

So what's is all about for you and me. Just concluded our 30/30 appeal. Quite successful but only about 20% of our congregation responded. Is there still time for you to respond? Of course there is.

We enter our summer months. Rough time for the finances of your church. We all need to be reminded of what it means to be faithful. It's not what we have but what we give that impresses God. And, it's not all about money, much bigger than that. It's about stuff like:

The Pillars meal for the homeless.

It's about the kits for Lutheran World Relief.

It's about supporting Mission Trips.

It's about donating food for emergency food pantries.

And, it's even more than that.

It's about sharing forgiveness, of praying for others.

You see, ultimately it's about giving of ourselves. Of not keeping but of giving - everything we have- much like the widow in the Gospel.

And God was impressed.

Amen. Let it be so.

