

November 10, 2024 – Twenty Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

“FIVE THINGS WE CAN GIVE TO GOD EVERY DAY” by Pastor Julio Romero

Gospel: Mark 12:38-44

Here we are, a little over a month before Christmas, and Christmas music is already playing on the radio. Businesses have started putting up their Christmas decorations, and some of you may have already begun your holiday shopping. The Christmas spirit is in the air, and the Season of Giving is almost upon us. In this context, we have a story from the Gospel of Mark about the spirit of giving.

In this passage, Jesus is at the Temple with His disciples, near the treasury box where worshippers deposit their offerings. First, Jesus observes the rich people putting large sums of money into the box. Then He notices a poor widow, dressed simply—perhaps poorly nourished—with a sad expression on her face. She places her last two copper coins into the box—everything she has.

The spirit of giving was certainly present at the Temple that day, with both the rich and the poor giving their offerings to God. But what makes this moment particularly special is what the widow did. She gave everything she had. Two copper coins—equivalent to about \$2.00 in today’s money—might not seem like much. But when it’s all you have, it’s a precious sacrifice.

Why did she give it to God? Can we call it faith, trust, or total surrender to God? It’s hard to find any other reason why she would do such a thing. Her trust in God was so great that she gave the very last of her money. I believe giving is part of the DNA of God’s people—it’s what defines us as Christians. The widow in this story showed us this truth.

One time, a skeptic said to a preacher, “I can’t stand this Christianity business. All I ever hear from you Christians is give, give, give.” The preacher thought for a moment and replied, “That’s about the best description of Christianity I’ve ever heard!”

Yes, that should be the character of a Christian: the one who gives. Even when we don’t have much, we don’t stop giving, because the Christian attitude and spirit is one of generosity.

In his article *The Five Things You Can Give to God Every Day*, Tim Challies writes:

1. Give Your Gifts

The Bible teaches that God gives each one of his children supernatural gifts. These are gifts given by the Spirit to empower us to be a blessing to others. Do you know how God has gifted you? Maybe He has given you a gift of encouragement, so you are able to speak refreshing and life-giving words to others. Or maybe it is the gift of teaching, and you are especially skillful at simply opening up the Bible, explaining what it means, and telling others how to live by it.

The gifts are diverse, given for the benefit of others, and especially for the benefit of our brothers and sisters in Christ. If you are a Christian, God has necessarily given you some of His gifts. Find those gifts and use them for His glory and others' good.

2. Give Your Talents

God has not only given you spiritual gifts, but He's also given you talents, areas in which you are naturally skilled. Perhaps you are a talented musician, or a talented writer or artist or host or leader. Do you know why God has given you this kind of skill? He has given these talents so you can return them to Him, using them for His glory. No matter who you are and what you do, you can commit these to Him and look for creative ways to use them for the good of others and the glory of God.

3. Give Your Time

Time may be that rarest and most precious of commodities. God gives you just 168 hours each week, and He gives them in trust, asking you to use them wisely and to steward them faithfully. Do you surrender your time to God? Do you commit your time to him? Do you plan your time as well as you can to ensure you are putting it to the best use? Begin every day by prayerfully giving your time to God, asking him to help you make each hour count.

4. Give Your Energy

Are you a morning person? A night owl? An afternoon warrior? For some their mind is sharpest and most active first thing in the morning. Or maybe you're one of those rare people who's at your best long after the sun goes down. Do you know when

your energy is at its peak? Plan your day so that, whenever possible, you can give your best times to the highest purposes. Consider how you can use your best moments to accomplish your most important tasks. Plan to give God the best of your energy.

5. Give Your Enthusiasm

God gives us gifts, talents, time, and energy. He also gives us enthusiasm. He makes each of us feel passionately about certain issues or ideas. Where has God given you enthusiasm? Where do your passions lie? Are they toward teaching or mentoring? Are they toward issues of charity or justice? Find ways to deliberately use your God-given enthusiasm to bless others and glorify God.”

None of us is without gifts, talents, time, energy and enthusiasm, and the most beautiful thing to see is people using them to glorify God and bless others. I realize that sometimes we feel that we are running out of energy, that our enthusiasm is low, that we have no more gifts and talents and treasures to give, but somehow, we find ways to keep on giving, to keep on serving, glorifying and praising God.

That’s the story of the widow in the Gospel. She gave everything she had. Did she do it hoping that God was going to reward her for her sacrifice? I don’t think so. She did it out of her heart. She was a giver, that is who she was, and that is what God’s people do. We give out of our hearts, not thinking what favours we will receive from God. It is in our DNA as Christians to give.

The Gospel doesn’t say what happened to that widow—whether she went hungry or continued living in poverty— but we know that God saw her heart. He knew what she did. And when God sees that kind of faith, that’s when miracles happen. That’s when God’s helping hand reaches out to us.

Let us give and give and give—not for the sake of rewards, but because that is what best describes us as disciples of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. **Amen.**

