

1 Kings 17:8-16

“Ever Enough”

25th Sunday af. Pentecost

November 11, 2018

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Pastor Hartwig

Grace, mercy, and peace from God, our Heavenly Father,
and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen!

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ –

[Introduction]

I need some help from all of you...

I want you to take a moment and think about something...
that you would never want to be empty.

I mean, if you had your way, what would be perpetually full?

I'll give you a moment to think about that... **PAUSE**

You are probably thinking of thing like coffee or soda or Halloween candy.
Maybe you are thinking of your gas tank, bank account, energy level.
Wouldn't it be great if these things never ran out!

But here's my question: Has that ever actually happened to anyone?
And I don't mean free refills with your meal?

Truth is, it's never happened.

Our everyday experience tells us time and time again
that... Eventually things run out.
Eventually it's empty.
Eventually what we have is gone.

What we live with day in and day out is this cold reality
that there never seems to be enough. Never enough!

[Text]

This thought leads us into an interesting set of Scripture texts
that begins with a widow on the verge of running out.

At the end of 1 Kings 16, Ahab becomes king of the Northern Kingdom
and he has the audacity to marry wicked queen Jezebel.
Together they do evil in the eyes of the Lord.
They lead the people to worship other gods.

Enter the great prophet – Elijah.

Elijah pronounces God's judgment on Ahab and on the land by predicting a drought.

Then the word of the Lord sends Elijah to a widow in Zarephath,
whom God has instructed to feed him,
and that brings us to today's text.

Here we learn the gravity of her situation. The widow has nothing to offer.
She is living in a land of scarcity.
AND She is ready to prepare a final meal for herself and her son.
SO, she says, "that we may eat it and die" (v 12).

[Gospel]

There's another widow before us in our Gospel reading.

The camera zooms in on a poor widow.
She's virtually invisible
—really nothing more than a speed bump as the rich go about their daily lives.
She pulls out two copper coins
and with no fanfare, with no pat on the back, with no thunderous applause,
She pulls out two copper coins drops them into the treasury.
The smallest drop in an ocean!

Again, our logic kicks in.
Why would she do it?
What's she thinking?
If that's all you have, why give it away?
Our conclusion: it's utter foolishness!

[Today]

Today we are confronted with two different stories,
but human logic gets us to the same place.

If your last supper is on the way, don't give it away.
If you're down to your last penny, don't give it away.

That's how we think.
We will even justify it in our minds saying,
"Certainly, God understands the nature of scarcity."

AND Yes, he does. BUT The problem isn't with him; it's with us.

Scarcity prompts preservation and protection. That's what logic tells us to do.

We're happy to feed the poor when cupboards are full,
We're happy to give . . . donate . . . tithe when the account is overflowing.
BUT When it gets down to it, we tend to trust in our abundance.
Our logical way of thinking is to trust in abundance.

Yet, now I want you to think about this... Yes, I am going to pause again...
How often does abundance reveal itself as a hindrance ?
How often does abundance cloak the movement of God in our lives? **PAUSE**

Do you remember our Gospel reading from a few weeks ago:
Mark 10 told the story of a rich young man.
He goes away sad because his heart and trust were in his abundance.

*Logic is a gift from God, but sometimes the way we depend upon logic
gets in the way of what God is trying to teach us.*

[Lesson]

The accounts of both widows teach the same lesson:
God uses scarcity as a doorway to trust.

Trust in the Lord and his provision
is the only way either of these stories makes sense.

A widow obeys, and they all eat for days.
The Bible doesn't say what happens to our other widow, but the point is clear:
When We Trust in the Lord, There Is Always Enough.

That's easier said than done, of course, but it really should be no surprise,
because God has been using scarcity
to lead his people to trust for a long time.

He provided manna in the desert (Exodus 16).
He brought water from a rock (Exodus 17).
With just five loaves and two fish,
Jesus feed many thousands of men, women, and children.
And there was so much abundance they even had leftovers,
because with Jesus there is always enough.

Yes! Jesus is always enough!

Jesus came to be enough—enough to pay the full price of our sin.
His mission was not about multiplying food to fill our stomachs
but about ransom and restoration to free our souls
and fill us to overflowing with grace and forgiveness.

Those Old Testament sacrifices –
they were never enough to cleanse us from our sin permanently.

The writer to the Hebrews reminds us that Christ came to be enough:
***“He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages
to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself”*** (9:26).
Jesus is always enough.

[Conclusion]

It is ...
into the full sufficiency of Christ that you have been baptized.
You have been joined with him in his life, death, and resurrection.

You are credited with his righteousness,
empowered with his grace,
crowned with his glory, and
loved with a never-ending love.

So perhaps the next time you find yourself hurt,
wondering if you have enough to forgive,
remember that with Christ there is always enough.

As God’s redeemed children,
we need not fear scarcity because our Father is a God of rich abundance.
That is something we can rejoice about!

When we put our trust in the Lord,
when we put our trust in Jesus,
we can be sure, no matter the circumstances,
there is always enough. Amen.

REJOICE always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. AMEN! (1 Thess. 5:16–18)
