

**St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth**  
**Sunday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021**  
**Rev. Gerry Gallant**

**Giving our Penny**  
**Mark 12:38-44**

**Welcome**

**Announcements**

**A Jolt of Hope for your Spirit!**

Are you worn down, wondering what's next, wanting more vitality? Then this event is for you! Vaughan Community Church and the Renewal Fellowship are presenting **Living Hope**, an online conference on Saturday November 13th, 2021. We will be joining this conference through Zoom here at the Church.

**Community Bible Study**

**Wednesday's at 7 a.m., Noon and 7 p.m.**, we are having a community Bible study on the book of James. This will be a line-by-line examination of the book of James in an informal setting. The length of this study will be determined by the speed with which we proceed, but typically it has been 16 weeks or longer.

Things that we will find are emphasized in the book of James are the Word of God; Prayer; Faith and Works; as well as separation from the world. He does this by examining many of the challenges that Christians face involving; suffering, works; controlling their tongue; illness and resisting worldly influences.

**Youth Program**

On Friday's at 7 p.m. the youth 12+ are invited to join Pastor Gerry at the church and explore Faith. We will look at issues of faith that are typical for today's youth, questions about God and faith, as well as spend some time learning about the doctrines of the church, the foundational core of Christianity and how to defend our faith when we are challenged.

The last Friday of every month will be an open question night where Pastor Gerry will answer questions from the youth about God and Faith.

**Contemporary Service**

Sunday's at 1 p.m. we will have a Contemporary Worship Service. This service will be a mixture of a traditional service and modern service. The sermon will be identical to the

10:30 a.m. service, however the order of service will be altered, and the music will be more contemporary in fashion.

It is my hope that though offering a later service we can reach those who are seeking God within the community and help them find a church in which they can take part in fellowship and build their relationship with God.

If you should have any comments, concerns or suggestions please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

God Bless,  
Pastor Gerry

### **Call to Worship (Responsive)**

*In your wisdom, O God, you call us here to worship you.*

**We gather, alive to the Word of God.**

*You call us to be fully alive with your life abundant,  
ready to listen and respond with heart, soul, strength, and mind.*

**We listen, alive to the Word of God.**

*You call us to be always watchful for your Word of wisdom,  
sometimes startling and unexpected,  
sometimes still and quiet,  
but always dwelling among us.*

**We watch and wait for the Word of God.**

### **Prayer of Invocation**

*O gracious and holy God,  
give us diligence to seek you,  
wisdom to perceive you,  
and patience to wait for you.  
Grant us, O God,  
a mind to meditate on you,  
eyes to behold you,  
ears to listen for your Word,  
a heart to love you,  
and a life to proclaim you,  
through the power of the Spirit  
of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

## The Act of Remembrance

### Call to Remembrance

*“At the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month the guns fell silent on the Western Front, to bring to an end the First World War. Our nation and commonwealth has recalled that moment through our Armistice and Remembrance events down the decades, decades during which the men and women of our armed services have continued to pay the ultimate sacrifice.*

### ‘Freedom’

It is the Soldier, not the reporter  
Who has given us the freedom of the press.  
It is the Soldier, not the poet  
Who has given us the freedom of speech.  
It is the Soldier, not the peace camp organiser  
Who has given us the freedom to demonstrate.  
It is the Soldier,  
                    who serves beneath the Flag  
                    whose coffin is draped by the Flag  
                    who allows the protester to burn the Flag  
It is the Soldier, not the politician  
Who has given his  
                    blood  
                    his body  
                    his life  
The Soldier, who has given these freedoms.

*Let us remember before God those who have died for their country in war; those whom we knew, and whose memory we treasure; and all who have lived and died in the service of mankind.*

### Scripture

#### MICAH 4:1-5

**It shall come to pass in the latter days  
that the mountain of the house of the LORD  
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,  
and it shall be lifted up above the hills;  
and peoples shall flow to it,**

<sup>2</sup> and many nations shall come, and say:  
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,  
to the house of the God of Jacob,  
that he may teach us his ways  
and that we may walk in his paths."

For out of Zion shall go forth the law,  
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup> He shall judge between many peoples,  
and shall decide disputes for strong nations far away;  
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,  
and their spears into pruning hooks;  
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
neither shall they learn war anymore;

<sup>4</sup> but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree,  
and no one shall make them afraid,  
for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.

<sup>5</sup> For all the peoples walk  
each in the name of its god,  
but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God  
forever and ever.

### **The Ode**

They shall not grow old as we that are left grow old;  
Age shall not weary them. Nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,  
We will remember them.

**We will remember them.**

### **In Flanders Fields Reader**

In Flanders fields, the poppies grow  
between the crosses, row on row,  
that mark our places; and in the sky  
the larks, still bravely singing, fly  
scarce heard amongst the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
we lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
loved and were loved, and now we lie  
in Flanders fields.

Take up your quarrel with the foe;

to you from failing hands we throw  
the torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
we shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
in Flanders fields.

**Dr John McCrae, 1914/1915**

**In Memory of:**

**World War 1**

George Bothwell  
Walter A Ferrier  
Graham Howie  
Donald McPhail  
Eric T. Spalding  
Harold Stone  
Edwin D. Wilson

Killed in Action in The Great War of 1914-1918

**World War 2**

Fred Burchell  
Kenneth Davis  
Norman Davis  
Charles Donovan  
John McLeod Hogg  
Lorne Patterson

Killed in Action in The Great War of 1939-1945

**The Last Post**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9RwkNVqtog>

**National Anthem**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h31M1EgrVD4>

**O Canada!**

Our home and native land! True patriot love  
in all thy sons command

With glowing hearts

we see thee rise,  
the true north strong and free;

From far and wide,  
O Canada,  
we stand on guard for thee. God keep our land  
glorious and free!

O Canada!  
We stand on guard for thee.  
O Canada!  
We stand on guard for thee.

### **Prayer**

*Lord God of the nations,  
whose sovereign rule brings justice and peace,  
have mercy on our broken and divided world.  
Pour out your peace into the hearts of all,  
that all races and peoples may learn  
to live as members of one family  
in obedience to your law.  
Almighty and eternal God,  
from whose love in Christ we cannot be parted,  
either by death or life:  
hear our prayers and thanksgivings  
for all whom we remember this day.  
Fulfil in us, as in them,  
the purpose of your love;  
and bring us all to your eternal joy;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.***

### **Opening Hymn: "Ancient Words"**

Holy words long preserved  
For our walk in this world,  
They resound with god's own heart  
Oh, let the ancient words impart.

Words of life, words of hope  
Give us strength, help us cope

In this world, where e'er we roam  
Ancient words will guide us home.

Chorus:  
Ancient words ever true  
Changing me, and changing you.  
We have come with open hearts  
Oh let the ancient words impart.

Holy words of our faith  
Handed down to this age.  
Came to us through sacrifice  
Oh heed the faithful words of Christ.

Chorus:  
Ancient words ever true  
Changing me, and changing you.  
We have come with open hearts  
Oh let the ancient words impart.

### **Call to Confession**

*The proof of God's amazing love is this:  
While we were sinners, Christ died for us.  
Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness,  
so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.  
Trusting in God's faithfulness and compassion,  
let us confess our sin before God and one another.*

### **Prayer of Confession**

*Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your steadfast love;  
according to your abundant mercy  
blot out my transgressions.*  
**Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
and cleanse me from my sin.**  
*For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is ever before me.*  
**Against you, you alone, have I sinned,  
and done what is evil in your sight,  
so that you are justified in your sentence**

**and blameless when you pass judgment.**

*You desire truth in the inward being;  
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.*

**Hide your face from my sins,  
and blot out all my iniquities.**

*Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and put a new and right spirit within me.*

**Do not cast me from your presence,  
and do not take your holy spirit from me.**

### **Assurance of Pardon**

*Know that in Jesus,  
God embraces you, forgives you,  
and strengthens you to live a renewed life.*  
**Thanks be to God.**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One.  
For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory,  
Forever and ever. Amen.**

### **Responsive Reading**

**Unless the LORD Builds the House**

**127** A SONG OF ASCENTS. OF SOLOMON.

<sup>1</sup> *Unless the LORD builds the house,  
those who build it labor in vain.  
Unless the LORD watches over the city,  
the watchman stays awake in vain.*  
<sup>2</sup> **It is in vain that you rise up early  
and go late to rest,  
eating the bread of anxious toil;  
for he gives to his beloved sleep.**

<sup>3</sup> Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD,  
the fruit of the womb a reward.

<sup>4</sup> Like arrows in the hand of a warrior  
are the children of one's youth.

<sup>5</sup> Blessed is the man  
who fills his quiver with them!  
He shall not be put to shame  
when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.

**Music Ministry: "God Is So Good"**

**Scripture**

**MARK 12:38-44**

<sup>38</sup> And in his teaching he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces <sup>39</sup> and have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, <sup>40</sup> who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

**The Widow's Offering**

<sup>41</sup> And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. <sup>42</sup> And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. <sup>43</sup> And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. <sup>44</sup> For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

**Children's Hymn # 58: "This Is My Father's World"**

This is my Father's world,  
And to my listening ears  
All nature sings, and round me rings  
The music of the spheres.  
This is my Father's world:  
I rest me in the thought  
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas--  
His hand the wonders wrought.

This is my Father's world:  
O let me ne'er forget

That though the wrong seems oft so strong,  
God is the Ruler yet.  
This is my Father's world:  
Why should my heart be sad?  
The Lord is King: let the heavens ring!  
God reigns; let earth be glad!

### Children's Lesson



In today's scripture we see Jesus at the temple watching people. In the state he sees a bunch of the church leaders who are full of pride. They walk around the city dressed up in fancy robes and brag about how good they are. They want to sit in all the best seats and want to show off about how good they are as Christians by praying long prayers in public and showing others how good they are at following God when they go places. Jesus then says that these people who show off what they have, who walk around in fancy clothes and brag about how good they are at following God are not actually as good as they think. He tells us and them that they should not be showing off like that and instead be humble followers of God.

Then he sees a widow. A woman who has almost nothing. In Jesus's time being a widow was a very difficult role in life. When a woman's husband died, and she was left alone there were laws and rules that existed which made her ability to live very hard.



Jesus watches as this woman who lives this very difficult life walks up and drops two small coins into the church offering. The scripture tells us that this was a penny. Can you imagine that we do not even use pennies anymore because they have no value in our world? Yet a penny is all this woman had to give.

And this penny is what Jesus tells the disciples is the most valuable offering that was given in the temple that day. How can a penny be worth more than the huge amounts of money that the others have given as offerings?

Jesus explains that all the other people gave out of their extra stuff. Out of the things they felt that they did not need to live their lives. Just like many people today, we give out of what we have left after we buy all the things we want. But the woman, she gave before she went and bought all the things she wanted.



She made a sacrifice, giving of the things that she could have used. The others who might have given much more than she gave from the extra stuff they had after they took care of getting everything they wanted. This is the difference, this is what God is looking for, for us to give of ourselves, our time, our money, our heart, mind, soul and body. God is looking for us to give it to him first and then he will give us what we need to live our lives.

As you head off to your Sunday School take a moment and drop one of the pennies, I gave you earlier into the offering plates at the back of the sanctuary the other one keeps in your pocket to remind you of this story.

Adults do the same at the end of worship today. Drop your penny in the offering plate and keep one for yourself as a reminder of keeping God first in our lives.

Let us pray,

*Loving God, we thank you for the blessings that you have given us; food to eat, warm places to sleep, and people who love us. Teach us to share the amazing gifts that you have given to us with those who need them. Amen*

### **Prayer for illumination**

*O God, as we turn to listen for your Word in scripture,  
send your Spirit among us.  
Open our ears to your truth.  
Open our minds to the challenge in your message.  
Move our hearts so that we live out your challenge  
in the name of Jesus Christ,  
your Word made flesh. Amen.*

### **Sermon**

Today we are going to dig into a subject that makes everyone uncomfortable. Giving with sincerity. I think this is one of a few topics that are more uncomfortable for both the pastor and the congregation than divorce.

This is a topic which everyone likes to sugar-coat and make easier to swallow. The pastor does it because they do not want to seem like they are like the scribes whom Jesus uses as an example in the beginning of the scripture. The congregation likes it sugar coated because then they can go home and feel like they have given what they are called to give to their church and continue to live their lives as before.

Now those of you who have been faithfully attending over the last few weeks should know that I am not good at sugar coating. I prefer to call it like it is and let the scripture speak for itself while the Holy Spirit works in you and convicts in whatever manner God chooses. So, as we look at the scripture here today, I ask that we do so with a heart that is open to God's will for each of us in our own individual way.

### **Mark 12:38-40**

**<sup>38</sup> And in his teaching he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces <sup>39</sup> and have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, <sup>40</sup> who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."**

This follows Jesus's teaching on the greatest commandment, where he called for people to 'Love the Lord with all of their heart, mind, body and soul and love their neighbours as themselves'. The scribe that had asked and answered the question of the greatest commandment which resulted in this lesson may have been one of the few that was closer to heaven. The reality is that many of the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees were the ones that Jesus is speaking of in these few verses. In today's world we do not have Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees in the same sense, but they do exist in character.



To begin with, Jesus describes these men as the ones 'who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces.' While we may not have the marketplaces that they had at the time of Jesus we definitely have people who behave the same. They like to show off their status as a Christian to the people around them.

Think about many of the most popular prosperity preachers today. Are they humble people or are they riding high on their popularity? Do they live a simple life, dressed as pretty much everyone else or are they buying extravagant clothing to show off their wealth?

This is what the men were guilty of at the time, being wasteful of the resources that God's people had provided them with. They wore fine robes, they put long tassels on them so that it would appear as if they were floating instead of walking. They reveled in the looks of envy that they received from those who could not afford to live and dress in such an extravagant way.



Do such men exist in the kingdom of God today? Absolutely, in fact it has become a bit of a phenomenon to look at those in God's kingdom who behave in such a manner. There are in fact two social media accounts in particular that show off the extravagance in which some of God's called live. Preacher'n' Sneakers shows off the high end and often exorbitantly priced footwear that Men of God choose to wear. Prophets'N'Watches does

the same with wrist watches. Some of these men are wearing shoes and watches that cost thousands of dollars, the question that needs to be asked is why they are wearing it, for the quality or for the pride it brings them.



Now it might be easy to say that this only applies to people in the pulpit, or in other forms of ministry. However, I believe the message that is intended should carry through to all people, especially once we see it paired up with the story that follows. We are called not to live an extravagant life, instead we are called to set aside our pride.

The reason that these men loved walking in the market was because they looked good and got the attention and envy of everyone around them, and those who saw them were expected too respectfully great them. They enjoyed the feeling of superiority over those around them. They were infected with a lethal dose of pride. Pride that placed them above others in God's kingdom. Pride that made them feel as if some things were below them for the common people, while the higher things of God were intended for them.

This is something we have been hearing Jesus speak out against consistently over the past few weeks. Jesus has spoken of service, giving and humility and these men are the example of the opposite. Think about our own behaviour, are we prideful about our Christianity or are we humble. Do we look down on others who may not be as strong in faith and understanding or do we meet them where they are and teach them as brothers and sisters in Christ.

The pride becomes even more evident when we hear of their demand for the best seats at worship and at feasts. They wanted the seats at the front of the worship so that everyone would see them being faithful to God. If they were facing the teacher they could nod and murmur agreement and everyone behind them could see just how pious they were, at least externally. If they were especially privileged, they might have one of the seats that faced over the congregation, and they could look over them with an air of superiority as they had been selected as the most faithful by their peers.

These men that Jesus speaks of in these few short verses of scripture were supposed to be the men of God who looked after his people, both spiritually and physically. Yet it

appears that they have fallen away from their call and instead are focused on the things of this world. The things that they find pleasure and happiness in and not the things which would bring glory and praise to God.

Jesus drives home the point when he speaks about how they prey upon the widow, devouring their house with the pretense of long prayers. This is something that needs a little more explanation for us to fully understand. Men of God were not paid at the time, they were expected to serve God and not charge for their services. So, they relied upon the charity of the faithful to fund their work.

Yet, over time there had become this sort of unwritten rule that the longer a prayer was the bigger your donation to their livelihood. This meant that many of them started to extend their prayers for others so that they could earn just a little more money and live a more extravagant lifestyle. The main people they focused this on were the widow's, those women who had lost husbands and children and were living well. They would seek out these women and slowly drain them of their assets under the pretense of serving God's Kingdom, all so that they could get a better robe, or new watch and sneakers, and become the envy of those around them.

I hope by now you are seeing how this all ties together for not only those who serve in their call, but also those who sit in the pews in the modern church. This is not just a warning intended for those who are pastors and serve in ministry but for everyone to set aside your prideful ways. The Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees only served God externally, they were serving themselves and their own worldly desires in reality.

People of God, we all need to sit down and look at our own behaviors around our faith. Are we serving our own personal ambition? Do we proclaim our faith only when it benefits us or at all times, even when it may cause us to suffer persecution? Do we dress up as Christians and walk through this world expecting others to look at us and admire us for our piety, do we seek the seats at the front of the sanctuary because we want others to see us, or because we want to clearly here God's word.

Do we walk through the world where we live and work and proclaim our Christians, placing ourselves above others? Looking down on those who are not as strong in faith, at least externally, or do we walk humbly and seek to live the life of service that God has called us to in serving His Kingdom here on Earth.

I hope you can see that this warning of greater condemnation that Jesus lays out in this scripture is intended for all of those who pretend to walk in faith for their own benefit. The false prophets, false teachers and false Christians that seek only to use their status as a 'Christian' to appear superior to others. This is in fact a very broad warning for all of us, preachers, teachers, and congregants to examine the reason we come to worship our God.

Do we come to serve ourselves, and our own personal pride and ambition, or do we come to serve God?

This is the reason why the book of Mark is so vital to Christians today. Mark is very direct; the book is short and to the point. We need to set aside our pride, our personal ambition and focus on serving God. Mark does not believe in sugar coating God's word, he intends for us to hear and understand it, even if it makes us uncomfortable.

Next, we are given an example of the type of person we are called to be as followers of Christ.

### **MARK 12:41**

**<sup>41</sup> And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums.**

The truth is that these two stories come together in the scripture, and they have a direct relationship to one another. Jesus has warned of the danger of pride in oneself over service to God in our public behaviour, but now that same aspect of life will be explored in the religious settings.



Jesus went to the temple, where he sat and watched the people who were coming to the House of God to present themselves before their Lord and offer back to him their thanks for all that he had provided for them.

This all takes place in what was known as the Court of the Women; The temple itself was made up of multiple courts each layer becoming more limited in who was allowed to enter. In the Court of the Women there were 13 trumpet shaped receptacles where those who visited the temple could place their monetary offerings to God.

Remember that this is during Passover, so the city is crowded and the faithful from all throughout the land have come to Jerusalem, to this temple, to present their offerings of thanks to God.

Jesus is sitting there and watching as each person walks up to these horns and presents their offerings. Each horn is marked with the purpose of the donation, some might be labeled for temple improvements, others for providing the life needs of the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees, still others could be labelled for other mission reasons or even for the tithe of sales or income, however there are four horns that are marked for 'freewill offerings' meant as a place for the people to give thanks for the blessings that the Lord has given in their lives.

Jesus is sitting here in the temple and watching. He watches the merchant who has just made a huge profit of the sale of his goods come in and put a portion of the prophets into one of the horns, the heavy clanking of metal resounds off the inside of the horn as the coins funnel their way down. He offers a quick prayer of thanks and is off to buy more goods and move them to market where he can once again turn a profit and continue to live the lifestyle he chooses.



A little later he might see a farmer approach one of the horns. He has had a bountiful harvest this year and has also been to market, where he sold his crop for a healthy sum. He is thankful for the harvest and steps up to a horn and proudly drops handfuls of coins into the opening. Once again, the clanking of metal on metal responds as the coins find their way onto the coffers that are under it. Maybe thinking that now that he has paid for his blessings that he will continue to be blessed in coming harvest seasons.

As the day goes by, Jesus sits and observes all of the people come in and drop their offerings into the horns. The clanking of coins at some times light and at other times so loud that people around turn and look at the person dropping their wealth into the horn.



Everyone is giving what they believe is required of them. Their tithe to the Lord. Their 10% or whatever other number you want to imagine, perhaps 1% or 25%. Everyone who enters the temple during this season of Passover has calculated out what is expected of them to give. They have usually done so under the guidance of the Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees, so they are confident that they are giving all that God requires them to give and now they can go back to living the life they want to until next year when they once again return to give their offering.

Has this changed at all in the modern world? Well for one thing we hate to talk about tithing and money in the church. Since the reformation churches have been hesitant to talk about money because they do not want to be accused of defrauding the widows. So, while we mention tithes once in awhile and call for offering each week, no one is actually calculating how much each person is giving other than for a tax return receipt.

However, the reality that churches need money to continue on is a reality. In fact, since the onset of this pandemic there are many churches who are now financially strained because of the lack of giving throughout the pandemic.

Furthermore, the idea of tithing is foreign to many modern Christians because we have begun to think about it in worldly terms. Tithing is seen as just another tax that people

feel they need to pay, like income tax or sales tax. There are those who debate how we should calculate our tithe, is it 10% gross or net? While that may seem like a foolish idea, think about multimillionaires, there could be a significant difference between 10% gross and 10% net income.

Then there are those who are struggling to make ends meet. The bills are piling up and the thought of just giving money to the church seems to much of a burden. That money could be utilized to pay another bill, buy new clothes, put gas in the tank or a better meal on the table, or maybe just to pay for that Netflix account we all have learned to love so much during the pandemic.

The reality of the costs of living in the modern world are just as relevant today as they were at the times of Jesus. Life takes money and there is no way of getting away from that unless we are willing to live like a hermit.

If you recall a few weeks ago Jesus told the rich young man to sell everything he owns and give it to the poor and then come and follow him. Jesus has repeatedly told people to give up their worldly desires and ambitions and learn to serve. So, the debate between the percentage and whether it is gross, or net starts to seem a little foolish if we look at the whole of scripture and not just a few lines written in the Old Testament. In fact, giving should be a way of life for us.

An example of the truth of the modern Christian is that even when presented with the idea of giving faithfully the desire to calculate out an exact amount and then stick to that amount is strong.

In fact, there is a story about a pastor who was once counselling one of his congregations who was going through some very difficult times in his life. The young man was struggling to make ends meet and his finances were strained. His pastor sat with him and talked to him about his struggles and then sat and prayed with him. As they spent time together the pastor presented the idea of tithing to the young man, explaining that 10% is the traditional number given as the amount of tithe. As they sat together and prayed over it the man pondered the thought and came to the conclusion that he could give 10%, after all based on his income it worked out to around \$1800 per year, less than \$40 a week. If he gave up on some of his luxuries, he could easily afford that.

Well as the years passed the man's financial difficulties disappear and his prosperity grew. He had moved up in social status and was now financially stable making more than \$200,000 per year. He called the pastor to come over once again. However, this time as they sat together the man explained that the 10% he had promised was no longer possible. Now that he was making more than \$200,000 per year that meant that 10% was going to be \$20,000 and he could think of many more ways of putting that money to work for him.

The pastor looked at the young man and told him that would be no problem and suggested that they once again pray together. As they bowed their heads to pray the pastor began by saying, 'Lord, you know what a burden this large salary is on my brother. Lord I would ask that you would remove this burden from his shoulders and return him back to his income of \$18000 so that he can once again afford to tithe his offering to you'

I say this tongue in cheek, but the truth is that this is how many people think about their giving. They have no problem giving when it is just ten or twenty dollars a week. Then as their financial situation changes, they continue to give their ten or twenty dollars. John Rockefeller himself said that if his mother had not forced him to tithe from the first \$1.50, he made that he would never have been able to tithe from his first million.

This freewill offering is one that is intended to be given without a bookkeeper calculating out how much one is expected to give. So how much are we expected to tithe to God; 10%, 15%, 20% or how about 5% or even 1%. Is it supposed to be based of gross income or net income? What about sudden windfalls like winning a couple thousand dollars on the lottery, or receiving money from the estate of a distant relative, do we need to tithe on that? How much and is it on the gross or the net?

All these questions that people have about tithing? All the rules that people have made, churches have made, denominations have made. All of the human focus on tithing is on amounts and calculations. Just like many of the Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees its has become a worldly issue and not a spiritual one.

#### **MARK 12:42-44**

**<sup>42</sup> And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. <sup>43</sup> And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. <sup>44</sup> For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."**



The Jesus observes the widow come to the horn to present her offering to her Lord. She makes her way through the Court of the Women. She passes the wealthy merchants, who are dropping large sums into the horns. She passes the farmer who is grinning as he shares a portion of the profits, he has just earned off his crops. She passes the everyday people who have come to Jerusalem to pay their tithes as they visit the temple. This woman is described in our translation as pauper, she is destitute, she has nothing. She has no husband, she has no wealth, she is living the life of a beggar. She makes her way to the horn and tosses in her two copper coins, less

than a penny. Less than people would earn for an hour of labour. In modern terms probably close to fifty cents.

There is no clanking of the coins as they fall into the offering box, a few clings as they slide quickly down. The sound does not draw anyone's attention and would likely have been drowned out by the offering being made into the horns all around her.

Yet it is this woman and her penny that Jesus calls to the attention of the disciples. This woman who has nothing. Jesus points her out to the disciples as the example of what giving to the Lord is meant to be.

This woman who has nothing to give, gives out of the little she has to live upon to show her thanks to the Lord for her blessings, as meager as they may seem to others, she knows she is blessed with a life that has come from the Lord.

While many have given huge amounts, thousands of times more than what she has given, it is her contribution that Jesus noticed. Her contribution that came from sacrifice and not abundance.

Do you think things have changed in the 2000 years since Jesus observed this at the temple in Jerusalem? According to figures from the IRS in the US those who make just \$10,000 – \$15,000 give three times more to charitable organizations than those who make \$50,000 to \$100,000.

It is often those who have the least to give that do the most for others. I have seen people who are struggling, homeless, begging for food stop to share a bite of food with someone else who is in need, while others who could have easily provided for both walked by head held high ignoring the needs of those around them.

This is what the woman is doing she is giving out of her poverty, out of her need comes a little something to help the needs of others. Think about this for a moment from another perspective. Does God need your money? Does God get all of his books out once a month and try to balance his chequebook and accounts. Does he worry that the church might not make next months budget?

Absolutely not! God can easily provide anything that His church needs. In fact, there are countless stories of money that comes from unexpected places when a church that is loyal to God's word ends up in financial strain. God is not checking to see how much you give yearly, God is not concerned if its 1%, 5%, 10%, 20% or even 50% of your gross or your net. God does not care if its just your salary or if its all the money you take in from whatever windfalls and gifts you receive. God is not at all concerned with the amount; he is concerned with the heart behind the amount.

God does not have a magic number; he does not have an accountant or bookkeeper watching you. God does not have someone keeping track of your good deeds and your bad deeds. God only cares that you place Him first in your life and give to him your penny of wealth or time.

Let us pray,

**Look upon Our Needs**

*Lord God almighty,  
you do not disregard  
the cries of the poor,  
and you do not despise  
the longing of troubled hearts.  
Look upon our prayers  
which we bring to you  
in our needs  
and hear us graciously,  
so that everything  
that the devil  
and the sinful world set against us  
comes to nothing,  
and that they may be converted  
by your good counsel,  
so that we may be undisturbed  
by any affliction,  
thank you in your congregation,  
and praise you at all times;  
through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

**Source: Martin Luther, the German Litany,**

**Hymn: "The Power Of The Cross"**

Oh to see the dawn of the darkest day  
Christ on the road to Calvary  
Tried by sinful men, torn and beaten then  
Nailed to the cross of wood.

Oh to see the pain written on your face  
Bearing the awesome weight of sin

Every bitter thought every evil deed  
Crowning your blood stained brow

This the power of the cross  
Christ became sin for us, took the blame, bore the wrath  
We stand forgiven at the cross

Now the day light flees, now the ground beneath  
Quakes as its maker bows his head  
Curtain torn in two, dead are raised to life  
Finished, the victory cry

Oh to see my name written in the woods  
For through your suffering I am free  
Death is crushed to death, life is mine to live  
Won through your selfless love

This the power of the cross  
Christ became sin for us, took the blame, bore the wrath  
We stand forgiven at the cross

### **Invitation to Offering**

*With joy, we offer our gifts to God  
as a sign of our deep devotion and covenant faithfulness.  
Let us be faithful stewards  
of our time, our talents, and our money. so that our treasure is in heaven  
and our giving pleases God.*

### **Offering**

Presenting our tithes and offerings is an act of worship. I want to encourage you to write a cheque and drop it in the mail to the church using your envelope, if you have one. (St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, PO Box 161, 1 Drummond St W, Perth, ON K7H 3E3) We also have another option for you for giving and that is you can make an e-Transfer. This note from our treasurer.

**E-transfers are now accepted. Please note the new email address for this purpose only. [standrewspert offering@gmail.com](mailto:standrewspert offering@gmail.com) Please include your Offering Envelope # in the message section of the INTERAC transfer page you fill in. If you wish any part of your donation to go to a specific fund (eg Presbyterian Sharing) please mention this in your message.**

### **Offertory Prayer**

*Blessed are you, God of all creation;  
through your goodness we have these gifts to share. Accept and use our offerings for  
your glory  
and for the service of your kingdom.  
Blessed be God forever. Amen.*

### **Closing Hymn: "Holy, Holy"**

Holy, holy, holy, holy,  
Holy, holy, Lord God Almighty;  
And we lift our hearts before You  
as a token of our love,  
Holy, holy, holy, holy.

Gracious Father, gracious Father,  
We're so blest to be Your children,  
gracious Father;  
And we lift our heads before You  
as a token of our love,  
gracious Father, gracious Father.

Precious Jesus, precious Jesus,  
We're so glad that You've redeemed us,  
precious Jesus;  
And we lift our hands before You  
as a token of our love,  
Precious Jesus, precious Jesus.

### **Pastoral Prayer**

*God of all the ages past, hope of years to come:  
We gather in this season of remembrance,  
grateful that you hold each one of us in your memory and your mystery,  
now and for all the time to come.  
Today, we remember all those who have served to uphold justice and freedom  
in the wars of the last century,  
in conflicts of our own generation,  
and in peacekeeping and relief efforts around the world.  
Especially we pray for those who have died in this service  
and for those who carry scars on body and soul, having returned from conflict.  
We remember their courage  
and we pray for their families who still ache for lives surrendered at a great cost.*

*O God, we remember before you the victims of conflict,  
hiding in forgotten corners of the world, longing for safety and peace.  
Especially we pray for people in Afghanistan who fear for their lives and their future.  
We remember victims of violence in our own country,  
still fearful and uncertain about what the future holds for them.  
Give us the courage to speak out for their protection and recovery.*

*O God, we remember those around us who struggle to remember day by day;  
those who must cope with the fear of forgetting those who matter most to them,  
and those who face the fear of being forgotten.  
Help us remember to reach out in comfort and support  
so that no one is forgotten.*

*O God, we remember those around us who carry on  
under the burden of sad and hard memories;  
those weighed down by grief, disappointment, anger, pain and loss.  
Inspire us to offer a listening ear and an understanding heart whenever we can.*

*God of all the ages past, hope of years to come,  
help us to remember you day by day.  
Keep us prepared to shine the light of your gospel into the dark corners of the world  
so that hope is renewed, and need is exposed  
for the sake of Jesus, in whose name we pray. **AMEN***

## **Benediction**

*May God the Father bless you,  
God the Son heal you,  
God the Holy Spirit give you strength.  
May God the holy and undivided Trinity guard your body, save your soul,  
and bring you safely to his heavenly country, where he lives and reigns for ever and ever.*