**Mark 12:38-44 (ESV)**

“And in his teaching he said, “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces **39** and have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, **40**  who devour widows’ houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.” **41**  And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. **42** And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. **43** 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. **44** 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.”

**“Answering Uncertainty”**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen. The results of voting always turn out to be exciting for some and disappointing to others. How fitting that after the elections on Tuesday now follows the indebtedness due to honoring Veterans Day. Without these men and women having served in military duty, there would be no excitement or disappointment over voting at all. Veterans are not one generation of soldiers nor have they fought the same kind of battles. However, what they share in common is a commitment to the freedoms upheld as Americans. It is the right to vote one’s conscience. It is the right to speak what one believes. It is the right to exercise religion without penalty. Veterans have protected what most take for granted by facing an evil we never see, dealing with danger we never consider, sacrificing what we never think possible.

Of course, if the battle against the darkness rested only in the strength of men or a system of governance. There would be a great deal of doubt with God as Savior of sinners and even uncertainty with the need for His Church. The reading from St. Mark today uncovers what Jesus dealt with in His last days at the temple. In many ways, He was teaching the disciples the truth of how things really worked in the hands of men. Much of what God intended for His people Israel had turned into a form of self-worship and glory. Yet, the poor widow stands out to Jesus as one able still to give not to men, but in hope to God. Like veterans of war valuing freedom more than the political tug-of-war of party lines. The uncertainties of life have an answer of certainty in Jesus who gives all that we need by His faithfulness as Savior.

**Some things never change in a sinful world.**

* The Scribe was a major part of the Jewish system.
* Judicial matters as well as teaching the Torah.
* Position brought self-seeking glory in all places.
* Early Church Father writes, “While devoting great care to the things which were external, they overlooked those which bore upon salvation of the soul.” (ACC 167)
* Poor widow at the mercy of the system still gave by faith to God.
* Is it a “corrupt” system or the uncertainty of one who sits in a seat of importance?
* Jesus did not reject the title Scribe, but stole their status, “And they were astonished at his teaching, for He taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes.” (Mark 1:22)
* There will always be positions to hold and the disciples had to learn what this meant. “And in his teaching he said, “Beware…” (Pride, greed, and hypocrisy)
* It is more than about a system of externals, but the eternal salvation of sinners. “They will receive the greater condemnation.”
* OT reading showed Elijah at the mercy of a widow who took care of him by faith in what God promised.

**Some things surprisingly stand out in a sinful world.**

* Giving goes all the way back to the Old Testament Times.
* Offerings went into the temple treasury be means of thirteen trumpet-shaped receptacles.
* The tithe was a system built on a percentage of giving based on 10% also called “the first-fruits.”
* Not a bad practice, but God sets no percentage by the Gospel.
* Jesus does not reject giving, just the kind of giver. He said, “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.(Mark 12:44)
* Giving is a matter of confident faith in who God is.
* Cutting off from the top does not cut to the heart. It leaves many to worship the system run by men.
* 100% given by the widow was not a last ditch effort. It revealed how rich in faith she was to God more than all who had a secure future.
* St. Paul told the Corinthian Christians, “For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.” (2 Corinthians 8:12)
* Christian giving deals with a matter of God’s faithfulness for me. Past? Present? Future?

**Some things remain uncertain in a sinful world.**

* What happened to the widow?
* We want to resolve the tension or maybe paint a pretty picture.
* It is east to turn the act of faith into a work, as if making a deal with God makes Him now “work” for me.
* Starring into the face of uncertainty brings a better Savior who already saw that widow.
* He would empty His sacrifice on the cross giving abundant salvation of true security for sinners.
* What is going to happen to you?
* We don’t know the future of our country after voting. We don’t know the future of jobs, schools, and even churches. Holding even tighter only brings a greater threat to our faith in God and His Word.
* What we do know by baptism is a greater security in the shape of the cross that is an answer to uncertainty.
* The writer of Hebrews told us, “And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him” (Hebrews 9:27-28).
* Whether in life or death we belong to the Lord. He meets us at His meal with an unshakable security to give His body and blood. The situation is not so lonely and the future not so empty.

Even Veterans who know so well what fragile nature of life and sacrifice for our system of freedom. Still need to face the better Savior who fights on the frontlines of sin, death, and Devil. The uncertainties of life have an answer of certainty in Jesus who gives all that we need by His faithfulness as Savior.