



SMALL GROUP NEWSLETTER  
ST. MARY OF THE VISITATION PARISH  
CAMBRIDGE, (H) ONT.

**THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**  
**November 8, 2015**

**Introduction to the Word:**

We began last Lord's Day (All Saints) a Message Series called "More than Just Survive". If you want to know what it is about...well...check out the video link below....and feel free to share it with friends and neighbours:



We all lead and live busy lives. We are constantly rushing from one thing to another - and in the hustle and bustle, at the end of the day - we ask ourselves: "what I am chasing?" So last week we looked at the lives of the saints - who didn't live life in a bubble - they lived real lives and they too had to make choices. Choices about who is first and how they must thrive not just survive- in fact they chose in three ways: **to Rest, to Resist and to Reflect** - so these next three weeks we are looking at each of these and asking ourselves - *what I am rooted in as I seek to more than survive*

**Warm-Up:**

- What do you find attractive about "Discipleship" – being a follower of Jesus?
- What do you find at times challenging about "Discipleship"?
- Group action last week was to try not to chase but rest, resist, and reflect... how did it go?

**CALL TO PRAYER (5 MINUTES)**

LEADER: God calls us to have trust and hope in Him! When we turn to Him in confidence, taking a risk and stepping out in faith, He will be there to lead and guide us, to protect us and save us, to nurture and enrich us.

**Lord Jesus**, you call us to faith in you and in your saving power  
**Christ Jesus**, you renew us, and bless us with time, talents and treasure  
**Lord Jesus**, you give us an abundance when we turn to you

**Lord, have mercy**  
**Christ, have mercy**  
**Lord, have mercy**

**Let us pray together our Heart to Home Prayer:**

*God Our Heavenly Father, we long to make our thoughts your thoughts,*



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*and our ways your ways. As we prepare with attentive mind and open heart  
to hear your Word Lord, we long to be empowered with your Spirit  
so that we may bring your Word to our families, our parish and our communities.  
This, our prayer, we make through the intercession of Our Lady of the Visitation and in name of  
Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*

### **SCRIPTURE REFLECTION TIME** (45 minutes)

(Please select one person –not including the leader – to take a turn at reading the scripture passages below.)

#### **FIRST READING** (1 Kings 17:10-16)

Elijah, the prophet, set out and went to Zarephath. When he came to the gate of the town, a widow was there gathering sticks; he called out to her and said, "Bring me a little water in a vessel, so that I may drink." As she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand."

But she said, "As the Lord your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal in a jar, and a little oil in a jug; I am now gathering a couple of sticks, so that I may go home and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die."

Elijah said to her, "Do not be afraid; go and do as you have said; but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterwards make something for yourself and your son. For thus says the Lord the God of Israel: The jar of meal will not be emptied and the jug of oil will not fail until the day that the Lord sends rain on the earth'."

She went and did as Elijah said, so that she as well as her and her household ate for many days. The jar of meal was not emptied, neither did the jug of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord that he spoke by Elijah.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

#### **SECOND READING** (Hebrews 9:24-28)

Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but he entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer himself again and again, as the high priest enters the Holy Place year after year with the blood that is not his own; for then he would have to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world.

But as it is, Christ has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that comes the judgment, so with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

#### **GOSPEL** (Mark 12:38-44)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus was teaching in the temple, and a large crowd was listening to him. He said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and be greeted with respect in the



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marketplaces, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honour at banquets! They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

Jesus sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

*(Allow a few minutes for quiet and for a brief reflection on a meaningful word or thought)*

### COMMENTARY:

[Your group may wish to listen again to the Audio of the Lord's Day Message](#)

[At this point please use the video Message for this series – Week # 1](#)

Today we find in the First Reading and Gospel two widows who show us what trust in God really means. Each one of them - the widow of Zarephath in the First Reading, the widow in the temple in the Gospel - put all their trust and hope in God, in God's benevolence and generosity. And they were not disappointed! In their own need they became instruments of God in the lives of others, bearing witness to the power of God to do the impossible and improbable in and through them. That is the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ revealing itself! God did the impossible and improbable by raising Jesus from the dead. In the lives of the three widows he continued to give them hope - and confirm their hope - by doing the impossible and the improbable. But this came because they had chosen that their lives were going to be about more than just "surviving."

The Letter to the Hebrews reminds us of the sacrifice of Christ. His death, no matter how humiliating it was on the cross, was not the end of the 'story', but He returned to the Father in glory and victory. Through our Baptism we share in that new life, and benefit daily from the sacrifice of Christ and the salvation from our sins.

The widow in the Gospel mirrors, in many ways, the plight of the widow of Zarephath (1<sup>st</sup> Reading). She, too, was destitute, without protection or resources. Yet, she trusted in the blessing of God and gave all that she had. All that she had! That, indeed, was an act of faith. With humility she came before God, recognizing Him as the source of all grace and blessing, trusting in the providence and benevolence of God. She hoped for *the impossible and the improbable*, that God would provide for her.



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But guaranteed in their lives, there were moments of “groan”. Occasions when the struggle of life seemed insurmountable. When a marriage blows, when you go to hospital and visit people we love, see their suffering and we think “it is just not right.” When we meet someone who has no sense of meaning or purpose in their life or you run into someone when there is loss in their life - and see emptiness in their eyes. Or when we talk to someone about having God in their life and they use the church as venue for a Sacrament and nothing else and walk away saying “I don’t need you.”

In these times, the trial, the test, the turmoil seems more than what we can handle, no matter how must hustle or bustle we take on. If this is where you are at – survival mode – well you are correct it is more than you can handle – it must be what God can handle. The busyness and demands of today are more than we can handle. But when we put all that “needs to be done” in the perspective of “what God needs to do”, we find ourselves relieved of the stress and strain and our lives replaced with the serenity and sanctity of a “Good, Good Father” in our life. But we must trust He will.

Here is where the first element of “more than just surviving” comes in... **to rest**. To rest in the Lord – is to rely upon Him. To rest in the Lord means to live with the knowledge that it is through the **Groan we Find Glory!** The widows in the readings knew and lived that - it was their faith that told them - *this groan will bring me to the Glory of God, because God is handling it – I don’t need to do it all, He will. If I rest in the Lord - find time for Him, rely upon Him, Trust Him - that relying upon the Lord will bring me to Glory.* This takes surrender and trust to accent that God has a plan and He will make the provision, I need only bring my best and He will do the rest.

For here is a truth - **The road to glory is through the groans of the present, but if you forget the glory - you are just left with the groan.** Painfully that is what happens in our life - we are surviving and not thriving because all we have is the groan and we have not made time to rest in and see the glory. We are at it so hard, groaning away, trying to do everything and be everywhere that in the end we are nowhere further and feel like a no body.

So here is what the widows taught us - two things - which bring glory - Give and Know. They gave of their most precious and believed that God would do the impossible and improbable in and through them. For us today, the most precious of to us is our time - give it to Him. Adoration, Daily moments of prayer and especially time on the day that is His Day. Secondly, the widows - they knew His word. Here we have the power of Small Groups who support each other rooted in His word. Not a series of what we want to learn (because that is our agenda and even our groans) but His word – which helps us share and see His glory.



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We can't expect we will understand that God is good all the time if we don't make time for God all the time. Rest in Him, Rely Upon Him. Trust in Him. Don't Live just with the Groan - strive for the Glory by not just surviving but thriving!

**Message this week** – Before concluding – listen once again in meditation to this beautiful song which will be our “theme song” during this series – it is called [“Good, Good Father”](#) by Chris Tomlin. Don't only listen to the tune, but examine the words. In particular listen for the words.....”and I am loved by you...its who I am.” There it is – the secret to being a saint – and not just surviving!

*(Allow about 5 – 10 minutes for the participants to react to the **Commentary** to identify a newly discovered insight or idea.)*

### **Questions for Reflection and Discussion:** (15-20 minutes)

- Where are you groaning, waiting for things to get better?
- Where is our world groaning?
- What can the widows in our readings teach us about hope, suffering, sacrifice and giving?
- How can you “rest” in the Lord so that you can stop “surviving” and begin “thriving”?

### **Closing Prayer** (15-20 minutes)

*(This time is reserved for quiet prayer as well as for an action-response to the communal reflections. The intent is to “outreach” to the larger community.)*

### **GROUP PRAYER COMMITMENT**

- The Red Stocking Campaign and Kindness Counts Campaign will begin later this month – how will your group be involved?

### **Group Action:**

"The impossible and the improbable" With this deeper understanding and experience of the impossible and the improbable of God, make your proposals to do things differently and be a better disciple and steward of Jesus the Lord. Do not limit the power of God!

Spend some time listening again to [“Good, Good Father”](#)

- What parts of the lyrics jump out at you? Why? Are there some this week that you”heard” any different than last week?”

### **Looking for More:**

Consider the following background and resources as follow ups for your group, or individually



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- “The Francis Effect” an evening learning about the inspiration and message of Pope Francis. Our special guests will be from Salt and Light Television – November 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00pm – mark the date and come as a group.

*Let us pray - (together)*

- Begin by calling to mind one “groan in your life” (silently call it to mind).
- Silently ask our Good, Good Father to carry it, hold it and do the impossible and the improbable with it.
  - Read together Romans 8:17-30

With hands and hearts united in gratitude for God’s favors on us today, we pray that all those in our influence be moved to be open to your Word and your Spirit, while we pray united as one,

**OUR FATHER...**

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