

Gaines Congregational United Church of Christ

September 26, 2021

Old Testament Reading; Numbers 11: 4-6,10-16,24-29

Responsive Reading; Psalm 124

Epistle Reading; James 5: 13-20

Gospel Reading; Mark 9: 38-50

Sermon Title: **Everything is Something and Something is Everything**

By Rev. Jim Gardner

Summary: People who live in glass houses should not throw stones and ALL Christians live in glass houses.

There was a story of a burglar that broke into a house to steal anything of value. As he was casing the joint, he heard a voice say, "Jesus is watching you." Then he heard it again and he looked around and saw that the voice he heard was a parrot. So, he asked the parrot what his name was and the parrot said, "Moses". The burglar said, "What idiot would name you Moses?" to which the parrot replied, "The same idiot that named that Doberman Pincher in the corner Jesus." Jesus the

Doberman was watching the burglar and believers in Jesus are being watched by non-believers and believers alike.

More important is the fact that God is watching also. Oh God is not watching for something He can criticise us for. God is trying to catch us doing something right.

In our Old Testament lesson 70 elders were summoned to the tabernacle by Moses and when God gave them some of the power of Moses they started to prophesy, i.e. praise God. Two other elders that had been invited to the tabernacle were still in camp and they too started praising God. Well meaning Joshua wanted Moses to shut them up because they had not joined the group. Moses declared that he would like everyone to praise God and then his job would be so much easier. Easier as opposed to people griping about the menu. Notice that the elders did not become full time evangelists, they only spoke out one time. One time was better than none. They did something and that something was just what the doctor had ordered in that situation.

In our gospel message Jesus mirrors the message of Moses when He tells His disciples not to stop those who were casting out demons in Christ's name but were not His disciples. Jesus said that it would be pretty hard for them to turn on Christ later on if they had professed Him earlier.

I can relate to this. When I drove truck, I wore a clerical collar partly to force myself to act like a Christian even when things were not going my way. Any who.

Our Epistle lesson is from the book of James. James is an activist. He wants actions to go along with the words. James also recognizes that not everyone has the same talents. Sometimes the talent is just knowing what is needed at the time. If you are suffering, pray. If you are cheerful, sing. If someone is sick call for help. Get elders to pray with you and to anoint with oil in the name of the Lord. God will react to earnest prayer and you will be influential in the healing of someone in need. James also wants us to be humble when we help someone. When James asks us to confess, I do not believe that he is asking us to expound upon all of our misdeeds but rather to come across as an equal and not a holier than thou guy. "Hey, God helped me when I screwed up and I believe that He will help you too. Let's pray." James points out that pretty regular people get some pretty major prayers answered as did Elijah. He also points out that bringing someone back to Christ is a pretty big deal. God will notice.

Notice that most of this stuff is not earth shattering. It is everyday regular things that come up all the time. These are the "little, good things" that Jesus is watching so God can give

you credit for being a credit to Him. Everything is something to God and every something is everything to God.

God does not expect everyone to be an Abraham, or Noah, or a King David or a Dr Martin Luther King Jr. No God is looking for a John Doe or a Richard Row or a widow that has two coins that add up to a penny.

In the story of the widow's mite, found in Luke, Jesus was watching the collection box and observed many well to do individuals putting large sums of money in the box and then a widow puts in two small coins that add up to a penny. Christ calls His disciples to Him and says that as far as God is concerned that widow made the greatest contribution of all. Now if the goal of the money box is to feed the poor that donation of the widow does not do a whole lot of good but if is gauging the heart of the giver it means everything.

Everything is Something and Something is Everything!

God is not judging us by the size of our purse but by the size of our heart.

Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones and all Christians live in glass houses.

This is a scary thing to say but I'm afraid it is all to true. People watch us Christians and judge God by what they see us do.

God is a loving God that has given us every good thing that we have and with that privilege He has given us an awesome responsibility.

God has put us out there to be His hands and feet and His voice and like it or not people will judge God by what they see in us. Praise God in everything we say and do and help bring the whole world into His fold. Jesus is the answer and we are entrusted with that message.

Let's do it! Hallelujah and Amen!