

Have We Given Our All

Mark 12:38 - 13:1 ⁸ Then He said to them in His teaching, "Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, *love* greetings in the marketplaces, ³⁹ "the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, ⁴⁰ "who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation." ⁴¹ Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many *who were* rich put in much. ⁴² Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. ⁴³ So He called His disciples to *Himself* and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; ⁴⁴ "for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood."

Hebrews 9:24-28 ²⁴ For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, *which are* copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; ²⁵ not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another -- ²⁶ He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. ²⁷ And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, ²⁸ so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

Introduction: Thank God for veterans. You can tell a veteran by they way they act, and they way they are constantly looking for ways to serve others. They aren't looking for recognition although they certainly deserve it. True veteran's don't flaunt

their medals—in fact they would rather people not know about them because it embarrasses them. They are proud to serve and feel that they have only done their duty.

1. a person who has had long service or experience in an occupation, office, or the like: *a veteran of the police force; a veteran of many sports competitions.*
2. a person who has served in a military force, esp. one who has fought in a war: *a Vietnam veteran.*

-adjective

3. (of soldiers) having had service or experience in warfare: *veteran troops.*
4. experienced through long service or practice; having served for a long period: *a veteran member of Congress.*

Who are the veterans among us? Please stand.

The term veteran is not limited to military. We have other types of veterans. We call them: Grandparents, Senior Citizens, The Greatest Generation—They are the members of our congregation who served this church in various roles from holding office to teaching to volunteering. We value them too for their experience and leadership. There are also veterans on sports teams, the police department, firemen, basically anyone who has “has had long service or experience in an occupation, office, or the like”

Veterans serve—There are some who call themselves veterans just because they wore or may still wear a uniform, but any experience they have had they don't apply to the aid of others,

they only claim their veteran status when it suits them to gain an advantage or for selfish gain...they are like the scribes in the gospel message today. We should check ourselves to make sure that no one lumps us into the same category with them.

The widow in story is a veteran who gave everything...not just her money, her family, her husband

The widow in the gospel message could have been like the scribes—flaunting her widowhood to gain emotional sympathy so that people would feel sorry for her and give her things, she could have been at the temple trying to attract a new husband, and may have had children at home she was ignoring...In fact the bible does describe two types of widows...There are widows who are widows only because their husband is dead, and there is the special widow or true widow who is at least 60 years old, has been married only once (and thus committed to remaining single) they have raised their children well and are known for their dedicated service to the church both in prayer and volunteering for the dirty work (such as washing the apostle's feet) and they are well known in the community for helping those in need...this widow was very likely one of those special widows... The money that she gave at the temple was very likely the last of whatever help she had received from a special third tithe fund that was set up to take care of people like her and orphans. The fact that Jesus singles her out for special recognition shows that she was dedicating more than just her money to the temple, she was dedicating her life. She was a highly valued veteran in that community.

I think it is interesting to note that Jesus who was about to give everything that he had on this earth, would say that she was the

one worthy of recognition. And now we come to Jesus. He was God and gave up his divinity to gain experience. He is our greatest veteran because he is the only human being who has died and been raised to eternal life ---so far. He has had the ultimate experience that he is willing to share with us, his followers. He is willing to use his experience to serve us. Jesus is the ultimate veteran of human life. And as Hebrews shows us, Jesus is coming again and he will be looking for veterans to serve with him again—he will looking for us.

Conclusion: Veterans are a special group of people because they have valuable experience that they use to serve others. Veteran Christians are what God calls us into his church to be. The experience that we gain as children of God will serve us for all eternity as we share that experience with others. As we learn how to love God and love our neighbors we gain the valuable experience that makes us highly prized veterans of service to God.