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**Proper 3 Year A**  
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*The two brothers were farmers – those who drew their life and their living from the land – as were their parents and grandparents before them. They lived only a short distance from one another, and yet the distance seemed far greater... for the older brother lived on one side of a large mountain, and the younger brother lived on the other side. So, despite their relatively close proximity to one another, they gradually grew further and further apart. The older brother had married, and was the proud father of five children... all of whom shared in the labors on the farm. The younger brother, however, had never married, and so he spent his days working the fields on his side of the mountain all alone.*

*In time, a famine had spread across the land, and the fruits of the farmers' labors grew smaller and smaller. One day, deep in the dark of the night, the elder brother was lying in his bed and thought to himself: "My dear younger brother, who I haven't seen for such a long time now, must be in dire need because of this famine. He has that entire farm to tend all by himself. Surely he must be suffering greatly." So the older brother arose, and went out to his barn, and filled his wagon with grain. Quietly, guided only by the stars, he drove his wagon around the south side of the mountain and, without saying a word, added his grain to his brother's granary. And then he quickly returned home once again.*

*Meanwhile, that same night, the younger brother had been tossing in his sleep as well, worrying about the famine, and how it must be affecting those around him. And soon, his thoughts turned to his older brother. "How must my dear brother be faring in this time of famine," he wondered, "especially with all of those mouths to feed?" And so, he crawled out of bed, and filled his wagon with grain, and headed off to his brother's house, this time taking the road that went around the north side of the mountain. And after depositing his grain in his brother's barn, he too quickly returned home as well. And both slept soundly the rest of the night.*

*The next morning, both brothers got up and began their morning chores. And you can imagine the surprise both of them had when they discovered that they had as much grain in their stores as they had had the previous day. That night both of them were once again lying in their beds, and were thinking to themselves, "Perhaps I was a little stingy. Clearly I have more than enough grain in my possession than I really need. And I can only imagine what life must be like for my poor brother on the other side of the mountain." So, once again, both brothers arose and went out to their barns. Both filled their wagons to overflowing with grain. And both made their respective trips around the mountain – one to the north and one to the south, totally unbeknownst to the other, and deposited their grain in their brother's storehouse, and quietly returned to their own homes.*

*Once again, after a good night's sleep, both brothers got up to begin the new day. And you can only guess how they must have reacted when they discovered that their stores of grain were as full as they had been the day before.*

*And so, on the third night, both brothers once again went out to their barns, and filled their wagons until they creaked under the weight, and even added a few more bags of grain onto the backs of the horses which pulled the wagons, and headed around the mountain. This time, though, the older brother thought to himself, "I always go around the south side. I haven't been on that north road in ages. Maybe I'll go that way, just for a change of scenery." The younger brother, though, always preferred the north road, and so he headed out along his familiar path.*

*Soon, as one brother was coming around a curve in the road, who do you think he met coming toward him along that same path? Immediately, as their eyes met, they knew what the other brother had been doing. And they jumped from their wagons, and rushed to embrace each other, and fell crying into one another's arms. And they decided that, from that moment forward, the mountain on which they stood would be called Moriah, which means "God will provide."*

Yesterday, I spent my day off working with a congregation in a neighboring diocese that is in the middle of some particularly vexing challenges. So they had contacted their diocesan offices, who gave them my and Sylvia's names as folks who might assist them as they work toward a more healthy process for working together and being a community. And between Sylvia and me, I was the one who drew the straw – I'm not sure if it was the short one or the long one. This is a congregation for which there just never seems to be enough to go around... not enough money, not enough concern and respect for one another, not enough leadership, not enough energy, not enough hope, not enough grace, not enough anything. They're the kind of folks who usually see their glass as half empty... and so, it always is.

In today's gospel, Jesus says, "No one can serve two masters. You cannot serve God and wealth." While it's always easy to pick on money as the root of all evil, Jesus could just as easily have said, "You cannot serve God and 'fill in the blank with your favorite substitute'." If you set up your life so that it's God versus wealth, or God versus family, or God versus security, or God versus stability, or God versus comfort, or God versus sex, or God versus food, or God versus your job, or God versus whatever... if you set up your life so that it's God versus anything, if you choose the "versus", there will never be enough. You will always be left wanting more.

But when you choose God... when you choose to place God at the center of your personal cosmos... when you choose to build your life around God rather than trying to fit God into your life... then the world is re-ordered, and relationships are altered, and we come to understand those words from the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of John's gospel which proclaim, "We have all received, grace upon grace." Jesus said, "I came that you might have life, and have it in abundance." And when we build our relationship with God at the center, we come to experience that abundance in all its glory. There are some who choose to see their glass as half empty. But with God at the center of our lives, we see, instead, our glass as overflowing with the bounty of God's goodness.

I often think of Thomas' declaration, after he had missed the encounter the risen Christ on Easter night, when he said, "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, I will not believe." For Thomas, he had to see it to believe it. Of course, Jesus' gift to Thomas a week later was the

insight that he didn't really need to see it to believe it. All he really needed to do was to believe it, so that he might see it.

You know, God has given us everything we need – both personally and as a church community – to do the work that God has set before us. We can choose to believe that, by the grace of God, we have the capacity to change the world. Or, we can choose to believe that we don't. And whatever we choose to believe... that is what we will see.

The invitation of this morning's gospel is that God will provide... enough for today. The words of the scriptures are, "So do not worry about tomorrow." The words of the Lord's Prayer are, "Give us this day our daily bread." For today is all that God has given us. And today is all that we really need anyway.

Do you believe that? If so, you will see it... and others will see it in you. In the dark of night, two brothers met at a bend in the road. And they believed. And believing was seeing. And they named that place Moriah – God will provide.