

The Widow and Her Money

Mr 12:41-44

Mr 12:41 And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. 42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. 43 And he called *unto him* his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: 44 For all *they* did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living.

Introduction:

1. A little church was having a homecoming service. One of the former members had become a millionaire. When asked to speak, the wealthy man recounted his childhood experience. He had earned his first silver dollar which he had decided to keep forever. "But when a visiting missionary preached about the urgent need for funds in his mission work, and the offering basket was passed, a great struggle took place within me. As a result," the wealthy man said, "I put my treasured silver dollar in the basket. I am convinced that the reason God has blessed me richly is that when I was a boy I gave God everything I possessed." The congregation was spellbound by the multi-millionaire's tremendous statement until an elderly little man seated in the front row rose and said, "Brother, I dare you to do it again."
2. Jesus had dealt with the Scribes and Pharisees when they tried to trick Him about giving to Caesar
3. Jesus dealt with the Sadducees when they tried to trick Jesus about the guy who died with no children and his brother married the widow - whose wife would be she be in heaven
4. Finally Jesus got a chance to sit down and relax and he sat near the area where people gave their gifts for the temple

- a. In the lines were the rich and poor alike carrying with them the offerings that would be presented to the Lord
- b. 13 metal boxes with large horns [trumpets] sticking out of them would receive the offerings of the people as they passed by
- c. As you can imagine, the coins make a clanging noise as they are cast into the receptacles
- d. Several priests stand nearby supervising the money boxes
5. Wealthy citizens passed by and gave their offerings
6. No one pays particular attention to one frail, little lady. Only one person noticed her, He is the One who sees all.
 - a. She stopped and pulled out a small cloth pouch and pulled out two small, insignificant coins and the dropped them into the money case with hardly a sound.
 - b. No one noticed her offering. No heads turned to see what gave that offering.
7. Jesus stood near the offering boxes observing things.
 - a. Jesus was watching not just how they gave, but how much
 - b. Those who wanted to put on a show could do so quite easily.
8. I read about one pastor who came up with an unusual way to promote giving. He said, "Ladies and Gentlemen, Please stand. Now, reach your hand out forward. Grab the wallet of the person in front of you and give like you've always wanted to give."

I. JESUS WATCHING - VS 41-42

41 And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. 42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

A. Jesus was Near the Treasury

1. Mark gives us a picture of Jesus' concern for the treasury of the house of the Lord
2. Of all the places Jesus could have sat, He stationed Himself near the offering boxes

3. He was observing what the people were giving that day
4. "beheld" = observe, to look at something with interest and purpose, usually observing carefully details
5. Dr. John Broadus, on one memorable Sunday, as the ushers were receiving the offering, left the platform and walked down to where the ushers were passing the plates. He went along with them and looked on as every offering envelope, every dollar bill and every coin was thrown in. Some people were upset, even angry. Some were confused, some were ashamed, others were filled with amazement. All were evidently surprised. When the collection was over, Dr. Broadus said, "My people, if you take to heart that I have seen your offerings this day and know just what sacrifices you have made and what sacrifices you have not made, remember that the Son of God your Savior, goes by the aisles with every usher and sees with his sleepless eye every cent put into the collection plate by His people." Broadus then read the story of the "Widow's Mite"
6. One pastor told of his experience in Birmingham in a large black church. When it was time for the offering, they placed a collection plate on the communion table down front and everybody filed past and placed their money in it - in front of the whole congregation. "I'd never seen this kind of offering before, so when the pastor got up and walked by and made his offering, I followed him. I opened my wallet and I had one \$20 bill. Man, that will test your faith right there. So, I put the \$20 in and followed the pastor back up on the platform. After everyone had given, the pastor looked at the offering plate and told them they could do better than that, and we were going to do the offering again. I was stuck because I didn't have any more money! So when we walked by again, I just had to give the Lord a mental IOU! It was a little strange having someone watch me make an offering. But the truth is, someone is watching every time we have an offering - the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. The Rich Cast in Much

1. When the rich threw their coins into the trumpet a lot of noise was

- heard as the coins fell to the bottom of the box
2. The more one gave the greater the noise and the more attention was paid to the giver.
 3. The rich gave a lot because they had a lot and the crowds were probably impressed
 4. But Jesus didn't really act impressed

C. The Poor Widow Gave Her Two Mites

1. Jesus always has an eye for the individual
 - a) *He heard the cry of the blind beggar Bartimaeus when no one else paid attention*
 - b) *Here Jesus saw the generous and sacrificial gift of the poor widow when no one else saw a thing*
2. No doubt she came alone, quietly hoping that no one would notice her
 - a) *She was poor, she was a woman and a widow so she was the least of the least in the cultural context of the day*
 - b) *All she could give was 2 mites (1/64 of a denarius, a day's wage)*
 - c) *When the widow gave her two mites they sounded mighty small compared to the offerings of the rich*
3. Jesus knew supernaturally that she gave all she had that she had.
4. Even though it was little in man's eyes, it was a lot in God's eyes

D. Jesus Saw How the People Gave - vs 41

41 And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.

1. God's plan for giving involves tithing - tithe = tenth
2. Some do not tithe because they have never been taught to tithe
 - a) *Many preachers are reticent to talk about money because of all the shenanigans that TV preachers have pulled*
 - b) *Some believe that tithing is an OT principle and that we are not bound by the OT today so we are not responsible to tithe*
3. Some people do not tithe because they do not understand the importance of tithing

- a) *Go to the doctor for your annual checkup. He will prod, poke and press various places while asking "Does that hurt? How about this?" If you cry out in pain probably one of two things happened. Either the doctor has pushed too hard, without the right sensitivity. Or else there is something wrong, and the doctor will say, "we better run some tests on that. It is not supposed to hurt there."*
 - b) *When the preacher preaches on giving and members cry out in discomfort, criticizing the message and the messenger. Either the pastor has pushed too hard, or perhaps there's something wrong. In that case we're going to have to call in the Great Physician because it is not supposed to hurt there.*
4. Some don't tithe because they have tried to tithe the wrong way
- a) *Many try to tithe off the bottom and not off the top.*
 - b) *"If I have enough left after I have paid all my bills and stuff, then I will tithe" -- This philosophy does not work*
 - c) *To give to God off the top is a step of faith, it trusts Him to provide our needs.*
 - d) *Stop bargaining - "Lord, you get me through this month and I'll give what's left"*
 - e) *Stop bargaining and start trusting - "Lord, here is our love gift. Thanks for taking care of us!"*
 - f) *He should not receive our leftovers*
5. Mrs. Baughman was my 6th grade Sunday School teacher. One morning, she brought a pan of brownies to our class. As the goodies sat over by her chair, she gave each child a slip of paper marked with a household expense: house payment, utility bill, phone bill, entertainment, etc.

My slip had a car payment. Before long, Mrs. Baughman picked up the tray of brownies and began naming the expenses written on the papers. As we gave her our expenses, she redeemed each one for a brownie. "Car payment" she announced. I jumped up to get my brownie from the pan. Finally the last brownie had disappeared. But one boy named Donald still held his unredeemed slip. "God!" called Mrs. Baughman. Donald came forward hoping the teacher had

one more brownie hidden somewhere. With a knife Mrs. Baughman scraped the crumbs from the bottom of the pan into Donald's napkin. He got a pretty raw deal, I thought - just crumbs.

"The brownies represent your money", the teacher explained to us.

"If you don't give God his share first He probably won't get anything except maybe the crumbs."

I never forgot that illustration. The day my friend Donald got only the brownie crumbs, even as a child I learned that God should have the first right to everything I have. In the years since Mrs. Baughman's class I have struggled with giving and priorities, but whenever I recall the "Crummy Sunday School Lesson", I know who should and must always come first in my life.

6. A Christian who does not give one tenth of his income is a disobedient Christian, plain and simple.

II. JESUS TEACHING - VS 43-44

43 And he called *unto him* his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: 44 For all *they* did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living.

A. **Comfortable Giving Honors No One Even if the Amount is Large**

1. Jesus saw the rich people come along and put in large sums of money and He just kept watching
2. Then along came this poor widow woman and dropped in a few cents - it was not the amount, but the proportion
3. "When it comes to our giving, God sees more than the portion, He sees the proportion."
4. The rich gave out of their abundance, but they didn't sacrifice
5. "Men see what is given but God sees what is left and by that he measures the gift and the condition of our hearts." - Wiersbe
6. She gave all that she had and Jesus could be silent no longer

B. The Widow Cast in More Than Everyone Else

1. Did you notice how much Jesus knew about this woman?
2. He knew that she was a widow - and a poor widow at that
3. He knew that she had given all the money that she had
4. He knew everything about her and He knows everything about you and me too
5. Notice that Jesus didn't excuse her because she was poor
 - a) *Some wonder, how struggling single moms and widows on a fixed income can tithe*
 - b) *They are barely making ends meet*
 - c) *If we will honor God with the firstfruits of our income He will honor us*
 - d) *Jesus didn't do anything special for her, other than honoring her in the Scripture*
6. Jesus was so impressed with this woman that He singled her out to the disciples
 - a) *He was impressed because he knew things about her that nobody else knew*
 - (1) Jesus might have known some things based on the appearance of this woman
 - (2) She was likely dressed in frayed robes and worn out sandals
 - (3) She was alone and perhaps she looked lonely
 - (4) Through omniscience Jesus knew that she had given two mites
 - (5) He had supernatural knowledge of this woman
 - (6) Jesus didn't just know her circumstances, He also knew her heart - He knew her love for God in her heart
 - (7) Remember that the Lord knows things about us that no one else knows
 - b) *Jesus was impressed with this widow because of the attitude in which she gave*
 - (1) This widow believed in God's Work
 - (2) She truly wanted to give
 - (3) She didn't have to tithe - how do you tithe on two mites.
 - (4) She did not make a big deal about her sacrifice

- c) *Jesus was impressed because she was willing to place herself in the hands of God*
 - (1) She had no one else to help her in life
 - (2) Her husband was dead and she was destitute
 - (3) She evidently had no other relatives to help her
- d) *Jesus was impressed with this widow because when she gave her two coins, she became totally dependent on God*

c. The Widow Gave Sacrificially

44 For all *they* did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living

- 1. With piercing divine insight Jesus saw both the gift and the heart - the act and the motive behind the act
 - a) *He knew those who gave a lot only because people were watching*
 - b) *He knew those who would give even if no one was watching*
- 2. She was a poor widow - ptochos describes abject poverty, not just a poor peasant, but a beggar
 - a) *She was in imminent danger of starvation*
 - b) *This woman put in two mites - the smallest coin they had*
 - c) *When this little widow gave ALL she had, Jesus could no longer contain Himself, but used her giving as an example to all who were present that day.*
 - d) *Her testimony still stands as one of the greatest examples of sacrifice in all of recorded human history.*
- 3. This woman did not put in more than the rich, but she sacrificed more than the rich
- 4. In this widow we have a marvelous example of one who “loved the Lord her God with all her heart, with all her soul, with all her mind and with all her strength.”
- 5. Rich gave out of their surplus, this woman gave out of her poverty
- 6. Sacrificial giving honors Christ even if the amount is small

Conclusion:

- 1. I would love to know the rest of the story.

- a. Why did Jesus sit there and let her give everything?
 - b. He could have perhaps said: "Lady, keep one of those coins. Give the other to God."
 - c. That still would have been 50% of her total worth!
 - d. Even that kind of giving would have outdistanced anything the Pharisees or Scribes had given that day!
 - e. But Jesus let her give everything!
 - f. Then I thought... Jesus helped ladies whose children were sick. And whose bodies were racked with pain. And even who were facing embarrassment, like running out of wine at a wedding!
 - g. Why did He not stop this lady, send her back home, having miraculously restocked her kitchen shelves?
 - h. Or He who could create fish with coins in their mouths, could He not also have replaced this widow's "mites" with dozens of more valuable coins?
 - i. Of course He could have!
 - j. Maybe Jesus was so "at peace" with this woman giving this sacrificially simply because He knew that His Father in Heaven was going to take care of her!
 - k. She walked away totally dependent on God
Mt 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.
2. Biblical giving is the act of giving one's self and all that one has completely to God by a voluntary act that flows out of a thankful and grateful heart understanding that everything belongs to God and He is the source of every blessing.