

11/8/20

The Poor Widow's Two Mites
Mk. 12:41-44

Alexander the Great, we are told, being upon his deathbed, commanded that, when he was carried out forth to the grave, his hands should not be wrapped, as was usual, in the grave cloths, but should be left outside the bier, so that they were empty; that there was nothing in them; He was born to one empire, and the conqueror of another; the possessor while he lived, of two worlds, of the East, and the West, and of the treasures of both, yet now when he was dead could retain not even the smallest portion of these treasures. The poorest beggar and he were at length upon equal term. #7033

* We can take nothing with us!

We want to examine the poor widow that cast her two mites into the treasury, which is characterized by three things. 12:41-44

I. The secret observer. vs. 41

II. The sincere giver. vs. 42

III. The spiritual insight. vs. 43-44

I. The secret observer. vs. 41

A. The location is declared, it is still the temple, but at a different location, “Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury.” vs. 41a

1. The day is Tuesday of Passion Week.
 - a. Jesus went into the temple right after His Triumphal entry to Jerusalem looked around and went to Bethany since it was late in the evening on Sunday. Mk. 11:11
 - b. Jesus on the next day, Monday returned to the temple from Bethany and cleansed the temple, driving out those gouging the people by the sale of animals for sacrifices and those exchanging money for great profit and taught the people. Mk. 11:15-19
 - c. Jesus again returned to the temple on Tuesday of Passion Week and as He was walking in the temple was confronted by the chief Priest, scribes and elders questioned His authority. Mk. 11:20, 27-33
 - d. Jesus then taught the Parable of the Vinyard exposing and accusing the religious leaders of their evil stewardship over the nation of Israel, knowing Jesus sople of them they attempted to lay hand on Him. Mk. 12:1-12
 - e. Jesus still in the temple on Tuesday was questioned if it waslawful to pay taxes to Caesar by the Pharisees and Heroidans sent by the religious leaders. Mk. 12:13-17
 - f. Jesus then was questioned by the Sadducees about the resurrection of a

woman who had been married to seven brothers under the levirate marriage law, as to whose wife would she be in the resurrection. Mk. 12:18-27

- g. **Jesus then was questioned by a scribe** about the most important commandment. Mk. 12:28-34
 - h. Jesus then corrected the teaching of the Sadducees that the Christ was only the Son of David, but in fact He God also through the Incarnate. Mk. 12:35-37
 - i. Jesus finished by warning against the scribes pretentious righteousness looking to be honored in public, the feast and synagogues, while they devoured widow's houses. Mk. 12:38-40
2. The position of Jesus was that He, "sat opposite the treasury."
- a. Sitting was the position of a teacher.
 - 1) Students stood and the teacher sat.
 - 2) Somehow we got this thing turned around.
 - b. Jesus was not teaching at this moment.
 - 1) He had been teaching throughout the day, Tuesday.
 - 2) He might have just been resting?
 - c. Jesus sat opposite the treasury,
 - 1) This was between the court of gentiles and women's court.

- 2) This was where the Gate beautiful stood with a vine on it, a symbol of fruitfulness.
- 3) Perhaps Jesus was by it?
- 4) In the court of the women there were 13 collection boxes called "trumpets" because of their trumpet-shape, designating various funds.
- 5) Each was marked with the specific use, nine were what was legally due by worshippers, the other four for strictly voluntary gifts. Vincent quotes Edersheims

- B.** The observation by Jesus is described, "and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many *who were* rich put in much." vs. 41a-b
- 1. The examination of Jesus regarded the various individual depositing their financial gift into the treasury.
 - a. The word saw "rheoreo", means to be a spectator viewing attentively.
 - 1) The tense of the word is in the indicative imperfect active, indicating Jesus observed for a long time.
 - 2) The length of time is not indicated.
 - b. The attentive observation of Jesus marked how the people were depositing their money into the treasury.

- 1) The word how “pos”, indicates the manner the people put money in.
 - 2) This indicates the motive and attitude, not the mere amount!
2. The examinatin of Jesus focused on the wealthy givers, “And many *who were* rich put in much.” vs. 41b
- a. The rich “plousios”, were those abounding in material resources.
 - 1) They had the best clothes.
 - 2) They had the luxurious houses.
 - 3) They had the best food and plenty of it.
 - 4) They probably had servants to do things for them.
 - b. The number of wealthy is stated as many.
 - 1) The word many, “polus”, means a large or great number.
 - 2) The wealthy givers, at least some without doubt knew each other, due to their economic status in society
 - 3) The Sadducees were the materialist and wealthy aristocrats that were priests.
 - c. The amount of their giving is also stated, the rich “put in much”.
 - 1) The word for much is the same as the word many “polus” a large or great amount.

- 2) The many were very wealthy and placed large amounts in the receptacles.
- 3) The rich Sadducees without doubt gave their gifts in such a way to bring attention to themselves by others, as Jesus accused them of doing, to be seen of men.
 - * Luke says the rich cast their gifts. Lk. 21:1
- 4) All the people around them could see how much as well as the place they were giving it to.

Illustration

So often television ministries and churches pressure people to give and also paraded or announce those who give, so as to be acknowledged by man and to be seen.

Application

1. Jesus saw how the people put money into the treasury.
 - a. Not how much, but the motive and attitude behind the gift!
 - b. God has always declared the importance of how we do things, the reason which deals with our hearts and the intent.
 - * The offerings for the tabernacle was to be of a willing heart. Ex. 25:1-2

2. Jesus teaches us that we are not to do it to be seen of man but in secret. Matt. 6:1-4

* “Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. “Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. “But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, “that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.”

3. Paul gives to the Corinthians the principle of sowing sparingly and reaping based on hearts attitude. 2Cor. 9:6-7

* “But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. and not according to what he does not have.”

The secret observer to giving was Jesus!

II. The sincere giver. vs. 42

A. The observation of Jesus was placed on a woman, “Then one poor widow came.”

1. The woman is described first by her economic standing, poor.
 - a. The word poor “ptochos”, designates the pauper, not a mere peasant.
 - 1) One reduced to begging or asking for alms.
 - 2) One destitute not only of wealth, but influence, position or honor.
 - 3) Helpless and powerless.
 - b. The woman being poor was a sharp contrast to rich.
 - 1) She did not have the best clothes.
 - 2) She did not have a luxurious house.
 - 3) She did not have the best food or plenty of it.
 - 4) She did not have servants to do things for them.
2. The woman is described second by her social standing, a widow.
 - a. The word widow “chera”, simple means a woman whose husband has died.
 - 1) We are not told how long she had been a widow.
 - 2) We are not told if she had children or extended family, but if she did not, she was completely destitute having no help or resources provided for her.
 - b. The widow was a priority to God in the law.

- 1) God warned about abusing widows, “You shall not afflict any **widow** or fatherless child.” Ex. 22:22
 - 2) God protected the widow, “For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. He administers justice for the fatherless and the **widow**, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing.” Deut. 10:17-18
 - 3) Special tithe for stranger, father-less and widows, “At the end of every third year you shall bring out the tithe of your produce of that year and store it up within your gates. And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the stranger and the fatherless and the **widow** who are within your gates, may come and eat and be satisfied, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.” Deut. 14:28-29
- c. The New Testament is the same.
- 1) Jesus pronounced “woes” on the Scribes and Pharisees who devour widows’ house. Matt.23

- 2) Paul gives to Timothy how to deal with widows and widows indeed. 1Tim. 5:3-16

- B.** The observation of Jesus regarded her giving, “and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans.”
1. The action of the widow is described the same as that of the rich, “she threw”
 - a. The word threw “ballo”, means to cast or deposite.
 - 1) There was no difference between the woman and the rich by the casual observer.
 - 2) The truth is none of the rich were concerned about her.
 - 3) The rich might have even looked down on her.
 - 4) The word is the indicative aorist active tense., indicating the fact.
 - b. The poor widow probably did not have many other poor around her giving.
 - 1) She was not trying to impress anyone.
 - 2) She certainly did not thing she would be admired by the rich around her.
 - 3) She was very conscious that what she was doing, she was doing unto the Lord, not one else.
 2. The provision the poor widow was “two mites, which make a qadrans.”

- a. The word mites “lepta” was a very small coin, literally a thin one, about 1/4 of a cent.
- 1) An insignificant amount in comparison to the riches of the others.
 - 2) The observers of the woman were not many, she was insignificant to them, if one did observe the little amount she put in he might have looked down on her, in comparisons to the wealthy givers.
- b. The comparison is given, “which makes a quadrans.”
- 1) A quadrans is of Latin origin.
 - 2) A quadrans is equal to a fourth part of a cent, like the two mites.
 - 3) A quadrans is also equal to one half the Attic chalcus worth about 3/8 of a cent.

Illustration

I think of those ministers and ministries that rip off the poor widow and elderly of their Social Security money by great pretense.

Application

1. Paul commended the churches of Macedonia for their given out of their poverty. 2Cor. 8:1-4

* “Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their

joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely **willing**, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.”

The simple giver gives from what he or she has not from what they have not. 2Cor. 8:12

2. Paul was reproving the Corinthians for their procrastination to help the poor at Jerusalem, which they themselves had initiated. 2Cor. 8:8-9

* “I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.”

3. Paul taught every believer is included in giving 2Cor. 8:13-14

* “For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened; but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may supply their lack, that their abundance also may supply your lack--that there may be equality.”

4. The sincere giver is one who gives without pretense regardless of the smallness, God sees it. 2Cor. 9:6-7

* “But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes

in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”

* Literally a hilarious giver!

5. Paul declared God is faithful to provide. 2Cor. 9:8

* “And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.”

The sincere giver was a widow!

III. The spiritual insight. vs. 43-44

A. The proclamation of Jesus to His disciples about giving to God. vs. 43

way God view our giving,

1. The summoning of the twelve, “So He called His disciples to *Himself*.”

a. The disciples had been with Jesus for about three and a half years.

1) They had made a decision to follow Jesus.

2) They had left all to follow Him.

b. The disciples were on their last week of training.

1) They had believed Jesus was about to set up the Kingdom.

2) They were only a few days from the betrayal and arrest of Jesus.

2. The valuable words to the twelve, “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.” vs. 43

a. The word assuredly “amen” can mean two things depending where it is placed grammatically.

1) If the word assuredly is placed at the beginning of the sentence, then it indicates what is going to be stated is of important value, reliable and trustworthy.

2) If the word assuredly is placed at the end of the sentence, then it indicates the affirming confirmation agreeing with what has been stated.

b. The phrase “I say” indicates the highest authority, Jesus.

1) Jesus never quoted any Rabbi or other person..

2) Jesus placed Himself as the ultimate authority, “You have **heard** that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ “But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” Matt. 5:27-28

c. The astonishing truth, “that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury.”

1) I am sure the disciples were dumbfounded.

2) They could not figure it out.

B. The explanation of Jesus to His disciples. vs. 43

1. The reason regarding the rich is stated, “for they all put in out of their abundance.” vs. 43a
 - a. The rich men gave only a portion of all they possessed.
 - b. The rich men still retained a great amount of their wealth.
 - c. The rich men kept more than they gave.
2. The reason regarding the poor widow is also stated, “but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood “bios” what it took to live on. vs. 44
 - a. The poor widow, even though she only had two mites, the little she had she cast in all she had.
 - b. The poor widow gave more in proportion than the rich men “all”
 - 1) The word livelihood “bios” means what it took to live that day.
 - 2) **The comparison is** quality not quantity.

Illustration

Ornan wanted to give David the sacrifice and the threshing floor free, “Then King David said to Ornan, “No, but I will surely buy it for the full price, for I will not take what is yours for the LORD, nor offer burnt offerings with that which costs me nothing.” 1Chron. 21:24

Application

1. Giving will be a debtor to no man.
* “Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, **pressed down**, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.” Lk. 6:38
2. Paul gives the customary practice, “On the first day of week as God has proposed”. 1Cor. 16:1-2
3. Paul says our giving is the personal voluntary prompting and proportion. 2Cor. 8:12
* “For if there is first a willing mind and according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have.”

The spiritual insight on giving was for the disciples!

Conclusion

The Lord observed how people put money into the treasury, characterized by three truths.

- I. The secret observer to giving was Jesus!
- II. The sincere giver was a widow!
- III. The spiritual insight on giving was for the disciples!