

# MARK — Free To Give It All

As he taught, Jesus said, “Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. They devour widows’ houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely.”

Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.

Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”

*The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Mk 12:38–44.

## The Scribes

These are people of status, people of authority who stand in opposition to Jesus.

Jesus makes two observations about the teachers of the law:

1. **They walk around in flowing robes** — Why does he make this observation? Because this robe is special and denotes status and majesty. This same word for robe here is used of the prodigal son who is restored as well as the clothing of angels. They’re walking around, drawing attention to themselves because they want people to attribute honor to them. They seem to hunger for approval.  
  
The ways of meeting the hunger for approval have changed over time, but this same hunger for approval is still alive and well today. Was this character flaw enough to warrant a warning from Jesus?
2. **They devour widows’ houses for a show**: The scribes failed to live up to the expectation of the Mosaic law.

Do not take advantage of the widow or the fatherless. If you do and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry. My anger will be aroused, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives will become widows and your children fatherless.

*The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ex 22:22–24.

The way that leadership treats the populations of the vulnerable is God's litmus test for how well a community follows God.



Seeking honor and approval from others is problematic, but when they seek honor for themselves and destroy the marginalized, they have earned a place at the end of God's sword of judgment.

Are you seeking approval from others to esteem your own honor and acceptance while simultaneously kicking the orphans and the widows away?

We don't need to seek approval from others in cyberspace because our approval is secured by the King.

I delight greatly in the Lord;  
my soul rejoices in my God.  
For he has clothed me with garments of salvation  
and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness,  
as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest,  
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

*The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Is 61:10.

## The Widow's Gift

We were already informed that the teachers of the law had already impoverished this widow, yet this widow gave everything she had to the establishment that already ruined her. She didn't shy away from giving what she had.

And Jesus points that out. And what is he teaching us?

A life approved by God is free from striving, and a life free to give everything she had.



To be a widow is a pitiable status, yet she came up and gave everything away, trusting everything she had to God.

Are you living your life free of striving, free of feeding the endless hunger for approval, free to give everything and entrust yourself to Jesus?