

THE WIDOW GAVE HER TWO MITES

TEXT: LUKE 21:1-4

Introduction:

1. As our Lord watched the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury of the temple, He was struck by the contrast between the rich men and “a certain poor widow” (Luke 21:1, 2).
2. They gave what cost them little or nothing; she gave all that she had.
3. As we look at the context here in Luke 21, we are reminded that this interesting story immediately follows our Lord’s warning concerning the greedy and covetous scribes (cf. Luke 20:46, 47). Note the continuity: “And...” (21:1).
4. Furthermore, the story is followed by Luke 21:5, “And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts...”
5. It is easy to pass by Luke 21:5 and not pay much attention to what is being said. Who adorned the beautiful temple? Who gave these costly gifts? (cf. II Samuel 24:21-24; I Chron. 22:14-16; 29:6-9).
6. In order to build this beautiful temple, “adorned with goodly stones and gifts” (Luke 21:5), people had to give generously. First Chronicles 29:6 says, they “offered willingly.”
7. First Chronicles 29:9 say, “Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the LORD: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy.”
8. How wonderful! A great Thanksgiving message indeed!
9. Our Lord was teaching in the outer court, called “the court of the Gentiles” (cf. 20:1), and from there He passed through into the treasury area which stood before the sanctuary. In this court were 13 golden chests shaped like trumpets, with a large opening at the top to receive the coins.
10. Each chest bore an inscription indicating the use to which its contents would be put. This is similar to many Baptist churches where we designate our tithes and our special offerings – building fund, faith promise missions, etc.

I. OUR LORD KEEPS HIS EYE UPON THE TREASURY (21:1, 2)

1. If our Lord was watching closely back then, we can be sure that He is watching us just as closely today (21:1, 2).

2. Our Lord is omniscient, and therefore He knew that this poor widow out of her penury (poverty) put in all that she had to live on (21:4).
3. G. Campbell Morgan said, "Upon all giving, there rests the light of a Divine scrutiny and appraisalment."
4. Jesus knows every coin and every bill and every check that is cast into the offering basket. He knows how they come in and how they go out.
5. I heard a story about some dollar bills that were having a conversation. The \$20 bill was bragging that he was in some of the best restaurants in town. He was at Yankee Stadium, and he was given by the mayor as a tip to a cab driver. The \$10 bill said he was at Carnegie Hall, the Bronx Zoo, and Coney Island all in the same day. Finally, they said to the \$1 bill, "Where have you been?" The discouraged little \$1 bill hung his head down and said, "Church, church, church..."
6. Well, our Lord knows where the \$20 bills are and the \$1 bills, the big checks and the little checks. Are you concerned with what He thinks? He gave His life for you, and are you now robbing Him?
7. Malachi 3:8-10 says, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." What a promise!
8. I remember talking one time to a Mexican pastor, and he told me that many Spanish-speaking people (perhaps because of their Roman Catholic background) throw only a few dollars into the offering and they call this *limosna*. God does not say to give *limosna*, He says to bring your tithes and offerings.
9. Proverbs 3:9, 10 says, "Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."
10. Always remember that our Lord is watching and observing what people give just like He was back in the temple (21:1, 2).
11. Our Lord is concerned with what you give and He has a lot to say about giving. "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

II. IT IS NOT SO MUCH WHAT YOU PUT IN THAT MATTERS – IT IS WHAT YOU KEEP FOR YOURSELF THAT REALLY MATTERS

1. Referring to the widow and her two mites, Harry Ironside said, “We learn from this passage that heaven’s arithmetic – heaven’s method of bookkeeping – is altogether different from ours. We generally judge people by the amount of money they give. If a rich man gives a large sum we say he has given much; but if one brings in little we may pay scant attention to it. God’s way of reckoning is quite otherwise. He takes note, not so much of the amount given, as of what is left.”
2. In value a mite was less than a cent. These two mites represented her living, not her surplus (21:2-4).
3. Our Lord says that the others were all giving out “of their abundance” (21:4); but it is the poor widow that He commends because she gave sacrificially – “but she of her penury (want or poverty) hath cast in all the living that she had” (21:4).
4. Do you have this kind of faith? Do you have this kind of devotion? It has been said, and I am inclined to believe it, that there is no more vital index to one’s character than the way he gives to the Lord’s work.
5. The Lord estimates our giving, not by how much we give – it is how much we keep for ourselves. He judges our motives and He knows what is in our hearts.
6. The Lord knows what is in the heart of man (cf. Matt. 6:19-21).
7. The Bible is an immensely practical book. Therefore, it has a lot to say about money and how God expects us to use it.
8. On occasion people ask me about giving, how much to give, should they tithe their gross income or net income, etc. Remember the widow and her two mites. Our Lord said she “did cast in all that she had” (Mark 12:44).
9. Her two mites might have been her day’s salary. Perhaps she went hungry that day because of her sacrificial giving.
10. Remember what David said, “Neither will I offer burnt-offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing” (II Sam. 24:24).
11. A Baptist church was holding a business meeting. They needed to raise a large amount of cash in order to purchase a bigger building to accommodate their growing congregation.
12. Several church members took their turn speaking and then the pastor called on one of his members and said, “Well, brother, what do you think?”
13. The man answered, “You can count on me to put in my two mites just like the poor widow.”
14. The pastor shouted out, “Hallelujah! Now I know we can buy that building!” The man said, “Preacher, I don’t understand – I said I’m going to put in my two mites – how will that help?”

15. The pastor said, “Brother, the Lord said that the widow had cast more in than all the rest put together because she gave “all that she had.” If you give all that you have we can definitely buy the building!”
16. Sacrificial giving does not mean that we give God every penny we have. We need to buy food, put gasoline in our cars, etc. But it is obvious that many Christians are holding out, and can give a lot more than they’re giving.
17. I read an article by Larry Burkette (a Christian financial counselor), and he showed statistics demonstrating that previous generations of Christians (in America) worked longer hours, made much less money, and yet gave much more to the Lord’s work.
18. Most of you have probably never heard of the evangelist and songwriter Charles Weigle, but many of you have probably heard his famous song, “No One Ever Cared For Me Like Jesus.” He used to tell the true story about a man named W.L. Douglas, who went on to become a successful shoe manufacturer. Mr. Douglas had been unemployed for some time and was down to his last dollar. Sunday morning he put 50 cents into the offering plate at church. The next day, Monday morning, he heard about a job opportunity in a neighboring town. So he got on the train but the fare was a dollar. So he could only ride halfway. Mr. Douglas got off half-way and was getting ready to walk the rest of the way. He only walked one block when he learned of a factory near at hand that needed help. Within thirty minutes he had a job, closer to home, with a wage of \$5 more a week than he would have received had he gone to the other town.
19. His first week’s paycheck brought back his 50 cents tenfold. Which brings me to my next point.

III. GOD CAN MARVELLOUSLY MULTIPLY OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS TO FURTHER THE GOSPEL

1. Luke tells us that the people casting their gifts into the treasury were rich (Luke 21:1), and yet our Lord says, “Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all” (Luke 21:3; cf. Mark 12:43).
2. You might think that your tithes and offerings cannot make much of a difference but they do. Some small children give 50 cents or \$1 to faith promise, and the Lord uses that and multiplies it just like He did with the loaves and the fishes.
3. I wish I could spend time with this but I cannot right now. I heard a preacher explain this principle (he was not talking specifically about money) one time (cf. Lev. 26:3-13).

4. Please look at Lev. 26:8. If 5 men could chase 100; you would suppose that 100 men could chase 2,000 (5 times 20 = 100; and 100 times 20 = 2,000). But God says 10,000! This is what Harry Ironside calls “heaven’s arithmetic.”
5. If all our members do what God wants them to do, the blessings of God will multiply over and over (cf. Exodus 36:5-7; Luke 6:38).
6. The windows of heaven would open (Malachi 3:8-10).
7. Years ago there was a preacher named McCabe who was attempting to raise \$1 million for missions. One day while going through his mail, he found a letter from a young boy and in the envelope there was a nickel. The letter read:

Dear Bro. McCabe:

I’m sure you’re going to get a million dollars for missions. And I’m going to help you get it too. So here’s a nickel toward it. It’s all I’ve got right now, but if you need any more, you just call on me.

8. Bro. McCabe was thrilled with this letter, and it became one of his most effective stories in his campaign to raise the money for missions. By that little boy’s letter (and nickel), Bro. McCabe was eventually able to reach his goal of \$1 million for missions! God used that young boy’s nickel and He multiplied it.
9. When you consider what it cost to build that great temple in Jerusalem, and how much it cost to sustain it, and how much it cost to support the priests and their families, and all of the other free-will offerings and charities – there were 13 chests for offerings in the temple; and yet our Lord considered the poor widow’s two mites more generous, more important, more significant than all of the other gifts that were given!
10. He called His disciples together to teach them about giving, using her as a great example of godly, sacrificial giving (Luke 21:3, 4).

CONCLUSION:

1. A young man was planning on going to Africa as a missionary but at the last minute was unable to go because of his wife’s health. He was very disappointed but after praying about it, he told the Lord, “If you will help me, I’ll make a lot of money and give it out to support missions.”

2. His father was a dentist who had started to make his own unfermented wine for churches to use for the Lord's Supper. The young man took over his father's business and made a fortune manufacturing Welch's grape juice. He gave hundreds of thousands of dollars away to the work of missions.
3. Are you giving this way or are you holding back? Can you sing with a sincere heart, "Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold"?
4. Frances Havergal wrote that famous "Consecration Hymn." In August, 1878, she wrote to a friend: "The Lord has shown me (that), 'Take my silver and my gold,' now means shipping off all my ornaments to the Church Missionary House (including a jewel cabinet that is really fit for a countess), where all will be accepted and disposed of for me... Nearly fifty articles are being packed up. I don't think I ever packed a box with such pleasure."
5. Frances Havergal had copies printed of "Take My Life and Let It Be" which she gave out sometimes at the end of a meeting, asking those who really meant it to get on their knees before God and sign their names on the blank line at the bottom of the paper. I think that is a wonderful idea.
6. Someone said that in some churches, instead of singing "I Surrender All," they ought to sing, "I Surrender Some."
7. And if some of our members were honest before God they would have to change some of the words to our hymns.
 - Take My Life and Let Me Be
 - There Shall Be Sprinkles of Blessings
 - Fill My Spoon, Lord
 - Oh, How I Like Jesus
 - Where He Leads Me, I Will Consider Following
 - Just As I Pretend to Be
 - Have Mine Own Way Lord, Have Mine Own Way
 - Turn Your Eyes Upon Money
 - My Jesus I Love Me
 - Seek Ye First the Kingdom of Self
 - I'll Tell the World That I'm a Good Guy
8. Frances Havergal also wrote many other beautiful hymns and Gospel songs. While visiting a pastor and his family, she saw a painting of Calvary hanging on the wall of the library, and underneath the painting were these words: "I did this for thee; what hast thou done for Me?"
9. As Frances Havergal sat down and read those words, the lines of her hymn, "I Gave My Life for Thee" flashed upon her.

10. She wrote the words in pencil on a scrap of paper.

*I gave My life for thee, My precious blood I shed,
That thou might ransomed be, and raised up from the dead
I gave, I gave My life for thee, what hast thou given for Me?
I gave, I gave My life for thee, what hast thou given for Me?*

*My Father's house of light, My glory circled throne
I left for earthly night, for wanderings sad and lone;
I left, I left it all for thee, hast thou left aught for Me?
I left, I left it all for thee, hast thou left aught for Me?*

*I suffered much for thee, more than thy tongue can tell,
Of bitterest agony, to rescue thee from hell.
I've borne, I've borne it all for thee, what hast thou borne for Me?
I've borne, I've borne it all for thee, what hast thou borne for Me?*

*And I have brought to thee, down from My home above,
Salvation full and free, My pardon and My love;
I bring, I bring rich gifts to thee, what hast thou brought to Me?
I bring, I bring rich gifts to thee, what hast thou brought to Me?*