

## Scripture Reading:

**Luke 20:39** “39 Then some of the scribes answered and said, "Teacher, You have spoken well."  
**40** But after that they dared not question Him anymore. **41** And [Jesus] said to them, "How can they say that the Christ is the Son of David? **42** Now David himself said in the Book of Psalms: 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, **43** Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" '  
**44** "Therefore David calls Him 'Lord'; how is He then his Son?" **45** Then, in the hearing of all the people, He said to His disciples, **46** "Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, **47** who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation."”

**21:1** “1 And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, **2** and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. **3** So He said, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; **4** for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had."

# *"Of Widows & Hypocrites"*

We are back on our journey through the Gospel of Luke and soon, Lord willing, on to the Book of Acts. I want to thank Mike and Theron for covering well for me last week and especially Theron for spicing up the sermon titles! It will be interesting to see the reaction he gets on sermon audio!

We come today to what appears from all the Gospel writers to be the end of the public teachings of Jesus! We saw in the first nine chapters of Luke the coming of Jesus and His extended ministry in the region of Galilee. Jesus then began His final journey to Jerusalem to be there at His appointed time and Luke's orderly account gave us the various teachings that Jesus presented along the way. After arriving in Jerusalem Jesus re-inspected the Temple and drove out the money changers because the leprosy of works-righteousness had returned and the time for the judgment of Israel had come. Jesus spends several days teaching in the Temple as His final witness and Luke has shown how the various religious leaders had come with a series of questions designed to trap the very Messiah they should have received and worshipped!

In this morning's short passage we see the response of Jesus:

- Jesus asks a question of His own
- Jesus gives His disciples and the people a warning
- Jesus make a simple comparison

-- We must each give our answer to the question that Jesus asks

-- We must each heed His warning

-- AND we must each decide if our lives resemble the proud religious leaders or the humble widow

As we move through our text for this morning, I think we should take note that Luke once again has Jesus interacting with a widow.

Because we have a chapter break in the middle of this text, the account of the widow is often torn out and dealt with separately to teach only lessons about giving, but I think it is VERY important to see it is not a small detail thrown in by Luke, but an important part of what Jesus teaches His disciples and us in this context.

**Jesus accuses these false shepherds of Israel, in part, of being those who devour widows' houses and then He uses this humble widow to contrast them with a faithful Saint.**

- **We must not allow a chapter division added hundreds of years later to obscure an important point that Luke is making!**
- **It should not surprise us that Jesus often talked about and interacted with widows, just as we see Him do with children.**

**In Psalm 68:5 we are told the our God is “A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows”**

**It is Luke that brings out this theme in his orderly account:**

- **Luke gives the account of Anna, the faithful widow praying over the infant Jesus at the Temple**
- **Luke gives the account of Jesus shaming the Jewish leaders by reminding them that Elijah ministered to a Gentile widow**
- **Luke tells us the account of the widow of Nain whose son who raised by Jesus**
- **Only Luke gives the account of the persistent widow who wore down the unjust judge as a lesson for faithful prayer**
- **And now a widow will be at the center of the final public confrontation of Jesus and these religious leaders!**

**After this final encounter, all of the Gospel accounts have Jesus turning to instruct His disciples and move quickly on to the betrayal of Judas.**

- **These religious hypocrites have thrown everything they had at Jesus with a series of tough questions and Jesus has silenced them all!**

**Now Jesus turns the tables and asks them a question: “How can they say that the Christ is the Son of David?” All of the Jews in that day believed that the Messiah would be the Son of David... That is what the Scriptures had promised and that was even what the crowds proclaimed during the Triumphal entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem just a few days earlier. So, most would have thought, well that is what EVERYONE knows, but Jesus is going to make them think about what the Bible REALLY said!**

- **Something we often need to let the Holy Spirit do in our lives !**

**So Jesus continues, “Now David himself said in the Book of Psalms: ‘Jehovah said to my Lord, “sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.” Jesus quotes from Psalm 110, the most quoted Psalm in the New Testament and then asks them to ponder what is really being said: “Therefore David calls Him Lord; how is He then his Son?”**

**The problem up until this point with the religious leaders and many in the crowds who were just along for the show, was NOT that they did not believe that God would send His Messiah... It was that they misunderstood what God meant and rather wanted the Savior to come on their terms, as someone they could understand!**

**A new King David to make them proud, a military leader to throw off the chains of Rome, a nice Messiah who would go along with the religion they had constructed and not upset things by quoting the Bible or turning over the money changers tables!**

- **The most important question we will face in our lives, the most important question to be asked down through all of history, is what do you believe about Jesus?**

**What Jesus does with this quote from Psalm 110 is to show them who He really is: The eternal Son of God who has come as the son of David.**

- **Jesus is fully God & fully man!**

**These proud religious leaders were willing to have the Messiah come as a son of David in the same way they were sons of Abraham so he would be on their level, but they were horrified by the thought of God Himself coming as the Messiah because that would knock them off their thrones!**

**We will come back to this Psalm and this key question when Peter gives his great sermon in Acts chapter two and the Jewish listeners are cut to the heart. For today we must remember that all the cults and heresies down through the ages have erred when they get the answer to this simple but important question wrong:**

- **Not believing that Jesus is both fully God and fully man.**
- **The Savior who has come to save His people from their sins and a savior with the power to save His people from their sins!**

**The second thing that Jesus does in our text this morning is to give a severe warning to His disciples and those who were listening: These proud religious leaders are not going to repent and turn from their wicked ways. Rather they are going to harden their hearts and conspire with Judas to crucify the Lord of Glory! Luke gives a very short account of the warnings that Jesus gives at this time, in part because he wants to use the comparison with the widow to drive home the point that Jesus is making! Your homework this week can be the 23<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Matthew's Gospel where he gives the full account of these warnings as a series of woes for the Scribes and Pharisees."**

**I do want us to take note of two quick points that Luke does include: He tells the disciples that these false shepherds devour widows' houses, doing the opposite of what the Scriptures had commanded about the care of widows and orphans.**

**The other point is the sobering statement at the end of the warning where Jesus says, "These will receive greater condemnation." While we know and believe that our salvation is all of grace, this does not negate the clear Biblical teaching that there will be degrees of blessings in heaven and there will be degrees of punishment in the Lake of Fire. These men were the religious leaders of Israel and they should have known better: Jesus says they carry a great responsibility and will face a greater condemnation! We must remember that this is true with all of us who enjoy the blessings of God's Covenant: Our obedience will bring great blessings, but our rebellion will bring a greater condemnation!**

**Both of these points bring us to the account of the widow in our text...**

- **Again, this is not a small detail thrown into the next chapter so preachers can teach lessons on giving! There are certainly important lessons about giving there, but that is NOT the major point.**

**Just as Jesus often brought little children into the center of some of His discussions to drive home the point He was making, He is now going to use this faithful widow to show the clear contrast with these false shepherds.**

**First, and foremost, we should not miss the contrast that is made:**

- **Jesus first observes rich people placing BIG offerings in the treasury.**
- **Then comes the humble widow with her two pennies.**

If we think back through Luke's orderly account, Jesus has made these types of comparisons all along: On the one hand you have religious leaders who were rich in knowledge and position, as well as with riches and fame...

➤ They were the proud leaders of God's people!

-- On the other hand they were contrasted with Simeon and Anna who faithfully prayed over the baby Jesus.

-- Jesus contrasted them with the faithful Gentile Centurion when He said He had not found such faith in all of Israel.

-- We can think of the woman who washed the feet of Jesus in the presence of the proud Pharisee.

-- Or the redeemed tax collector Zacchaeus who these proud religious leaders would not even have eaten with!

-- Another good example would be the blind man healed by Jesus in John's Gospel who is belittled by these same religious leaders.

➤ In all these cases the proud religious leaders had chosen poorly!

If they had paused this day to observe what Jesus watched at the Temple, they would have once again judged wrongly...

➤ They would have marveled at the great gifts given and pondered how they could advance their work for the Kingdom and they would have given little or no notice to this humble widow.

Yes, they wanted to see the advance of God's Kingdom, but they wanted things done on their terms and primarily for their benefit. This widow on the other hand thought only of God's Kingdom and not about herself... Trusting that God would be able to bless and use even her two pennies for His glory! This is the contrast we must not miss:

➤ They sought to advance the Kingdom for them!

➤ She sought to advance the Kingdom for Jesus!

Jesus has put a face on the warnings He has given to these religious leaders and to His disciples. We do not want to be those rich people who give out of their abundance for the work of the Kingdom. We want to be the humble widow who is willing to give all to Jesus!

➤ So what grade will we be getting on the quiz I mentioned that we should see in today's text?

How do we answer the question about Jesus being the Son of David?

Do we believe that Jesus is the eternal Son of God who came to earth as a man to save His people from their sins?

If we doubt that Jesus came as a real man then we are still in our sins, because He could not have been the sacrifice for sin that was needed.

If we doubt that Jesus is truly the eternal 2<sup>nd</sup> person of the Trinity then we are still in our sins because He would not have had the power to save us from our sins!

We must believe that oft quoted Psalm 110 when it declares,

“Jehovah said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool.’”

**Believing this will not only give us the peace that passes all understanding as we truly believe that our sins have been forgiven...**

- **BUT it will remind us that we serve the risen and reigning Savior and that His Bride, the Church will serve Him until all of His enemies have been subdued!**

**Second, we must ask, have we heeded the warnings that Jesus gave His disciples? Have we become or look up to the Pharisees and Sadducees of our day? Are we proud of our doctrine, our positions, our churches, our programs, our families or anything else to the exclusion of Jesus? Do we follow or look up to those who are?**

- **These are tough questions and ones that we must constantly ask throughout our entire lives!**

**We must even be careful that we are not being PROUD of the fact that we are NOT like those religious leaders!**

**And our final test is to see who we better relate too:**

- **Are we like those rich worshipers who put BIG gifts in the treasury?**
- **Or are we more like that humble widow who gave all she had to give that day, even though it was nothing in man's eyes?**

**We must be sure to learn the right lesson here: It is not about how much is put in the collection basket when it is passed in a few minutes:**

- **God will advance His Kingdom whether we put in two pennies or two million dollars**

**The more important question is whether all that we have is available for God's Kingdom? This again is the importance of tithing: We obey that command not to make sure God gets enough money...**

- **But rather so we remember that ALL that we have is a gift from God and He will take care of us no matter how much we have from a human perspective.**

**Those rich givers probably gave more thought to how they were going to make do without the gifts they just gave out of their abundance, than this humble widow did when she had placed everything she had in the treasury. That is the contrast that Jesus wants us to see:**

- **On the one hand someone willing to help the Kingdom along so long as they are still comfortable and in control.**
- **On the other hand someone like this widow, or the faithful centurion or trusting child who are willing to put all they have in the hands of Jesus and serve Him as their Lord and Savior.**

**Once again, as we always do in the Scriptures we are presented with two paths: God's path and man's path, the path of wisdom and the path of folly... There are NO others!**

**As we consider which path to follow in our lives...**

- **May God grant us an ever increasing knowledge and awareness of who Jesus really is**
- **May God guard our hearts and minds against the sins of those proud Pharisees and Sadducees**
- **And may God help us each and every day to be the humble servants of Jesus who are willing to put everything on the line for the advancement of His Kingdom!**