

Daily Bible Study

“Giving That Pleases Jesus”

Mark 12:41 - 44

March 11 – March 17, 2012

THE LORD’S DAY & MONDAY –We continue this week in our study of the Gospel of Mark and take as our text **Mark 12:41-44**. This story of the widow’s offering brings a calmer yet incredibly instructive end to a somewhat intense and controversial chapter. The connection between the immediately preceding report dealing with the scribes and this one seems logical. It seems reasonable that after Jesus had delivered what has been called, His Fifth Great Discourse or The Seven Woes which are detailed in **Matthew 23** and summarized in **Mark 12:38–40**, he would take a brief rest there where He could observe the people, as **Mark 12:41** indicates. He has just warned the people concerning the leaders who “*devour widows’ houses*” (**12:40**), and now, in contrast watches a widow giving to The Lord and not only teaches concerning her giving but also demonstrates how widows should really be treated. This story is one of the few found only in Mark and Luke. It is interesting and understandable that Luke, the sympathetic and beloved physician (**Colossians 4:14**) doesn’t waste an opportunity to point out and teach Jesus as the true sympathetic caregiver of body and soul. We will see in this story that “The quantity of possessions does not count in the Kingdom’s audits” (Jerome). Jesus in watching the widow giving paid attention to the abundance of her generosity. A woman of poor, limited means gave so sacrificially and faithfully and in the eyes of Jesus *put in more* than all those who out of a greater abundance held back by giving in part and guarded. The responses between the scribe’s selfishness and the widow’s selflessness are clear. This powerful teaching from the Master Himself is essentially about giving one’s all, total trust, and absolute commitment. Read our text for the week, **Mark 12:41-44** “*Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. So He called His disciples to Himself 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; for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood.”*”

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, teach me Your Word and help me learn to be a generous giver.*

TUESDAY – **Mark 12:41-42** “*Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. Then one poor widow came and*

threw in two mites, which make a quadrans". The phrase *opposite the treasury* gives us some geography concerning our story, The Greek word for *treasury* is used 5 times in the New Testament and always speaks of the Temple area and the places of collection there. If you study a Temple map or layout diagram you will notice that between the Court of the Gentiles and the Court of the Women there was the Gate Beautiful which served as the entrance. It appears that Jesus had gone to sit quietly there after the incredibly tense dealing with the scribes. In the Court of the Women there were thirteen collecting boxes called 'The Trumpets'. Alfred Edersheim, an ethnic Jewish Christian and Biblical scholar comments, "These thirteen chests were narrow at the mouth and wide at the bottom, shaped like trumpets, whence their name. Their specific objects were carefully marked on them. Nine were for the receipt of what was legally due by worshippers; the other four for strictly voluntary gifts." So, Jesus was sitting here and watching *how the people put money into the treasury*. We would be wise to understand that in a very real sense, He continued this observation of giving and He is still doing it (**Acts 5:1-11; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7, Hebrews 4:13**). Mark points out and obviously Jesus noticed that *many who were rich put in much*. People with large and great monetary assets should give large sums and we know there is and was nothing wrong with that. Scripture mentions several rich men who had great wealth and yet never records them giving large amounts to anyone or anything apart from themselves (**1 Samuel 25:2- 3, 10-11, Luke 12:16-19, 16:19-21**). Nevertheless, whether one is rich or poor, has plenty or barely enough to get by, as Jesus sees it, it is not the amount of the gift that matters most but the heart of the giver.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me understand that You observe all of my "giving". You are the one who provides for my needs and my giving back to you is a clear indication of how I view Your goodness and generosity toward me and reveals my true heart and motives.

WEDNESDAY – **Mark 12:41-42** "Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans." We have read and saw that *many* people threw in quite considerable contributions to the offering at The Temple. Notice the comparisons Beloved (*many rich, one poor*) as we read ...*Then one poor widow came. She threw in two mites. The mite, was a lepton, which literally means a thin one. It was the smallest bronze Jewish coin in circulation in Palestine equivalent to an eighth of an as or assarius. An assarius was worth only one sixteenth of a denarius. So two lepta were worth a fraction of a Roman denarius, which we know is a day's wage for a laborer (Matthew 18:28, 20:2, 9, 13, 22:19)*. For his Gentile readers Mark states the value of this gift in terms of Roman coinage, saying namely, that her gift was worth a fraction of a penny. As a side note, our English word *leaf* is related to *lepton* which emphasizes the thin nature of the coin. Suffice to say these two mites worth a fraction of a cent were a seemingly insignificant gift. By human calculation, what the widow gave was

insignificant. But Jesus uses a different standard of measurement. He uses a Divine standard and measured by divine standard, the *poor widow's* contribution was priceless, as we will see shortly from **verses 43-44**. Before we move on, be reminded by reading **1 Samuel 16:1-13** (especially **verse 7**), that the Lord sees differently than men see as He views the heart and its motive. He sees all our thoughts and actions and He observes and knows whether or not we are generous givers or selfish takers.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me to recognize it is not primarily the amount of what I give to You but the attitude of my heart. May I not be stingy using this logic as an excuse to be a tightwad but realize that if I truly understand Your grace to me I will in fact also give in generous amounts.

THURSDAY – Mark 12:43-44 “So He called His disciples to Himself 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; for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood.” Before we examine these verses I draw our attention back to a portion of **verse 42**; specifically, *one poor widow came and threw in two mites*. It is of interest the manner in which *the poor widow* gave her *two mites*. The very verb *threw* (ballo - “to throw or let go of a thing without caring where it falls”) describes both her physical action and apparently her inward heart attitude in giving. Now, notice that what this widow did was apparently so important in the eyes of Jesus He summons His disciples to Himself to focus their attention upon it. Jesus often called His men to His side to teach them important truths (**3:13, 6:7, 8:1, 34, 10:42**) and He wants them AND us to get this point and take it to heart. So with His usual solemn introduction (*Assuredly, I say to you*), Jesus says that she had given *more than all those who have given to the treasury*. That is an incredible statement! In terms of value, these two mites may as well have been two huge diamonds which were *invested* and grew and grew in their value as time went on. The reason she *put in more than all those* was gar “for, because” the others gave out of their material wealth at little cost to themselves while the widow gave out of her poverty and therefore gave everything. By proportion, she gave the most— *she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood*. She could have kept back at least one coin for herself but in giving to God sacrificially she completely entrusted herself to Him to provide her needs. Jesus uses her example to teach His disciples the value God places on wholehearted commitment. These men would soon find their own commitment to Jesus tested (**Mark 14:27-31**). Jesus said her tiny contribution was greater than all the others. They gave what they could easily spare having plenty left, but she threw in everything she had.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me learn what is truly important to You. Help me pay attention when You speak from Scripture and realize it is for my good to listen, meditate and comprehend.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY – Mark 12:43-44 “So He called His disciples to Himself 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; for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood.” We learn so much from this story including what the proper attitude is toward widows. Jesus praised the poor widow because of her heart attitude toward God expressed in her trust in God by giving all she had to live on. It is not the amount of the gift but the heart attitude and purpose of the giver which matters most. We also see in here that God provides for the needs of His people including the poor widows. He is “a father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows” (**Psalm 68:5**) and He makes it clear in Scripture that He cares for protects them (**Exodus 22:23, Deuteronomy 10:18, Proverbs 15:25, Psalm 146:9**), He blesses those who help and honor them (**Isaiah 1:17-18, Jeremiah 7:6, 22:3-4**), and they are the objects of Christ’s tender compassion (**Luke 7:11–17, 18:3, 5, 20:47, 21:2-3**). We also see in the early church they were not forgotten as it was the neglect of certain widows which led to the appointment of the first deacons (**Acts 6:1-6**). According to James, one demonstration of a religion that is pure and undefiled is this: “to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction” (**James 1:27**). We also receive teaching concerning widows in **1 Timothy 5:3–8**. What a wonderful and interesting thing that the poor widow that Jesus hands down to history as a pattern of generosity gave a gift of so little value in monetary terms. We can learn a great lesson here. This widow was almost “reckless” in her giving. So often, we are anything but reckless and we hold back portions of our lives from Christ. As sinful people, even believers in Jesus, we seldom consistently give all we have and we must learn to be obedient and follow Christ with reckless abandon. We are so prone to hold back and we must remember the Gospel call to repent and believe. We also may often feel that we don’t have much to give to Christ, but if we put all that we have in His hands and like this widow, place our complete trust and faith in Jesus, He can and will do much with us. We close today and this teaching by our Lord Jesus concerning widows by listening to an early church father, John Chrysostom: “When the widow put in the collection box only two small coins, the Master did not give her recompense worth only two coins. Why was that? Because He paid no attention to the amount of the money. What He did heed was the wealth of her soul. If you calculate by the value of her money, her poverty is great. If you bring her intention into the light, you will see that her store of generosity defies description.”

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, thank You for caring the needy. Help me to seek out and serve those widows and others in need as Jesus would. Help me be like this poor widow, trusting You with all I am and have without holding anything back. Thank You for sending Jesus to live and die for me. I ask in Jesus name, who lives & reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.