

Introduction

1. I like humorous church joke like anyone else. (Show)<sup>1</sup> This is effective cause teaches us.
    - a. There's one way take it w/us, & only one. Send it on ahead. Can't take with after die.
    - b. But can send it on ahead before we die. (Show Matthew 6:20)<sup>2</sup> 3 ways use resources.
    - c. We can spend; we can keep; & we can give. 3 results of those 3 ways. What results?
    - d. ***What I spent, I had; What I kept, I lost; What I gave, I have.***<sup>3</sup> Not saying don't invest.
    - e. So we have to invest to prepare for the future. And we have to spend for life's needs.
    - f. But in God's economy, the way to lay up treasures in heaven is to give.
  2. Now we all know this is true. Yet, why is it so hard for us sometimes to give?
    - a. On average Americans give less than 3% of their income to churches or charity.<sup>4</sup>
    - b. How become cheerful givers? How gladly, freely give to the Lord's work?
    - c. Want see in message today. See a widow who gave an amazing gift.
    - d. Only 1 who recognized it was Jesus. Everyone else overlooked it and ignored it.
    - e. But what Jesus saw in her is the key to every one of us becoming cheerful givers.
  3. **Give Title and Text.** 2 critical questions come from this story that teach us how to give.
- I. **What Does God Evaluate When We Give?--God Evaluates The Giver, Not The Gift (vv. 41-42).**
- A. **The Temple Scene** (Show)<sup>5</sup>
    1. Place where Jesus sat is called *the temple treasury*.
      - a. Were 13 trumpet-shaped receptacles w/round openings at top for depositing money.
      - b. These large containers were placed against the walls in the Court of the Women.
      - c. Designed to receive offerings to help w/considerable upkeep/operation of the Temple.
      - d. Court of Women could hold 15,000 people and this was the Passover season.
      - e. Large crowds would've filled Temple providing plenty of action for Jesus to observe.
  - B. **Mark Mentions 1<sup>st</sup> Rich Who Threw In Large Amounts (v. 41).**
    1. While can't say about all, for some this was a real chance for *Show and Tell*.
      - a. Jesus just indicted scribes for being phonies liked to show off religious piety, v.38-40.
      - b. They enjoyed recognition/adoration of the people. What a chance this was for them.
      - c. As the rich opened up their money bags, they tossed in large sums gold/silver coins.
      - d. Quite racket as coins bounced into mouth, clanged around neck, finally landed belly.<sup>6</sup>
    2. Can just hear *ohs/ahs* as crowds gawked at the amount 1 person give w/such ease.
  - C. **Next Poor Widow Put In Two Small Copper Coins (v. 42).**
    1. That she was a widow may have been indicated by her dress, also showing was poor.
      - a. Term *poor* = lit. *begging* & indicates she was *dependent upon others for support*.
      - b. It shouldn't surprise us that this woman couldn't give much.
    2. According to v. 42 this destitute widow threw in *two small copper coins*, lit. *two mites*.

<sup>1</sup> Hearse pulling U-Haul. <http://www.kluth.org/images/uhaul%20hearse%20-%20color%20-%20web.jpg>. 9/13/17.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.slideshare.net/pdcoc92255/130303-sm-17-money-in-the-bank-matthew-6-1920-abridged>. Slide 14. 9/13/17.

<sup>3</sup> Pastor Henry Ward Beecher. <http://i.quoteaddicts.com/media/q1/822538.png>. 9/13/17.

<sup>4</sup> John Piper, *Don't Waste Your Life*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2007, p. 172.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.lds.org/bible-videos/videos/jesus-teaches-about-the-widows-mites?lang=eng#gallery=img-3>. 9/13/17.

Picture of widow giving in Temple.

<sup>6</sup> Hughes, R. K. (1989). *Mark: Jesus, servant and savior*. Vol. 2, p. 131. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books.

- a. This story is often called ***The Widow's Mite***. Give her credit! It was two mites.
- b. Greek word coin = *lepta*. Lit. = ***husked, peeled and meant fine, thin one, or small.***
- c. It was the smallest copper coin in circulation in Palestine. (**Show**)<sup>7</sup>
  - i. If looks small, wait 'til hear worth! Mark informs us they ***made a penny***, v. 42..
  - ii. 2 mites = a Roman quadrons = 1/64<sup>th</sup> of a Jewish denarius (a day's wages).<sup>8</sup>
  - iii. Take what make 1 day, divide by 64 = 2 mites worth. 7.5 min. worth of daily salary.
3. Why in the world is this even mentioned? Her gift would accomplish almost nothing.
  - a. ***Watched people = lit., He was watching HOW.*** Jesus didn't see just gifts. Saw hearts.
  - b. It wasn't size of the gift mattered most. It was size of the heart that Jesus saw.
  - c. Issue in Scripture is never how big our gift is. It is how big our heart is.
    - i. God is far more concerned w/**HOW** we give rather than **WHAT** we give.
    - ii. He is not looking at what is in our hand, but rather what is in our soul.
    - iii. God is looking for our motives. If motives right, amount will take care of itself.

## II. **What Kind of Giving Does God Approve (vv. 43-44)?**

### A. **God Approves Giving That Shows He Is 1<sup>st</sup> (v. 43).**

1. Of course, Jesus meant proportionately.
  - a. By giving the 2 mites which was clearly all she had she gave all she possibly could.
  - b. By tossing in both mites, her gift was far more costly in personal terms than the rich.
  - c. I've often wondered why she gave both mites rather than one. Why not give just one?
    - i. Rabbis had a rule you couldn't give only one mite.<sup>9</sup> She faced a real dilemma.
    - ii. If she didn't give both, she couldn't give anything. Imagine her struggle.
    - iii. For her, it really was all or nothing at all. If she kept both, God would get nothing.
  - d. She decided that since it came down to God or her, she'd put God before herself.
2. Why is this so important to God? After all, He owns everything and needs nothing.
3. Certainly there are other ways to show that God is first in our lives. Why this?

### B. **God Approves Giving That Shows He Is Loved (v. 44).**

1. Term ***abundance*** suggests the idea of ***overflow or excess***.
  - a. Word used earlier in Mark to refer to ***leftovers, the scraps fr. one's table*** (Mk. 8:8).
  - b. That's what the rich gave—the leftovers, the things they didn't need.
    - i. How would you like to come over to our home for a dinner of leftovers?<sup>10</sup>
    - ii. ***You can give w/o loving, but you can't love w/o giving.***<sup>11</sup> That's the secret here.
2. The widow gave out of her poverty—what she needed for herself out of love for God.

<sup>7</sup> 2 mites. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ironrodart/4158746991> Royce Bair photos. Accessed 9/13/17.

<sup>8</sup> Biblical Studies Press. (2005). *The NET Bible First Edition; Bible. English. NET Bible.; The NET Bible*. Biblical Studies Press, note 83.

<sup>9</sup> *The Gospel according to St. Mark. The Greek text with introduction, notes and indices*. 1898 (H. B. Swete, Ed.) (p. 294). London; New York: MacMillan and co., limited; The MacMillan company.

<sup>10</sup> **We have a rice casserole that's been sitting in the refrigerator for about a week. I said we ought to throw it out, but Ellen said, No. We ought to at least feed it to some of the church people! You know she didn't say that. You don't serve leftovers to guests you love.**

<sup>11</sup> Amy Carmichael. <http://izquotes.com/quote/339892>. Accessed 9/13/17.

- a. It was ***all she had to live on***—food money that day, not the extras, but the essentials.
- b. She would not be able to eat again until earned more. That's why Jesus so amazed.
3. So is Jesus teaching that unless we give all our money we cannot have His approval?
  - a. No. Jesus not teaching method of giving, but a principle about Christian living.
  - b. That principle is that God wants us to love Him so much we put Him 1<sup>st</sup> in our lives.
  - c. How we give to God shows how much we love God.
- C. **Widow's Mite Giving** (This widow shows us the basic principles of Christian giving.)
  1. **Planned Giving (1 Corinthians 16:2)**—*on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week*. Plan our giving.
    - a. *The Detroit News* published study once on giving trends in 125 American churches.<sup>12</sup>
    - b. It uncovered the following pattern across five different denominations:
      - i. Smallest amounts come fr. those who decide on Sunday how much they'll give.
      - ii. Largest amounts come from those who give 10% to their church.
      - iii. 2<sup>nd</sup> largest amounts come fr. those who plan how much to give in a given year.
    - c. *I have a regular time for washing my face, combing my hair, dressing and brushing my teeth. Giving is like that. If it is not done regularly, it doesn't get done.*<sup>13</sup>
  2. **Proportional Giving (1 Corinthians 16:2)**—*as the Lord has blessed you*. Wrong w/rich.
    - a. They did not give as could have. They did not give in proportion to their blessing.
    - b. God wants us to pray/think over our giving in light of how good He has been to us?
    - c. If we get a raise or refund does our giving show that God has blessed us?
  3. **Sacrificial Giving (2 Corinthians 8:1-4)**—*out of their deep poverty they gave*.
    - a. Do we ever give up something ourselves for the sake of giving to the Lord?
    - b. *When push comes to shove & we have to live w/something old rather than buy something new, do we do it so we can maintain or increase our giving to the Lord?*
  4. **Cheerful Giving (2 Corinthians 9:7)**—*God loves a cheerful giver*.
    - a. *God loves a cheerful giver, but He also accepteth from a grouch.*<sup>14</sup>
    - b. Do you think this lady was a grouch that day when she gave? I think not.
    - c. I think she went home full of joy because she had something to give.
    - d. And if she knew what Jesus thought she'd have been even more happy.
    - e. Let's watch. See who had the real joy. *Jesus teaches about the Widow's mites.*<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Leslie Scanlon, "Strong tithes mean bigger buck for conservative churches," *The Detroit News*, p. 3B, 11/3/95.

<sup>13</sup> Green, M. P. (1989). "Giving, Regular," *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching: Over 1500 sermon illustrations arranged by topic and indexed exhaustively*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, p. 162.

<sup>14</sup> Statement in a church bulletin. <http://izquotes.com/author/catherine-hall>. Accessed 9/16/17.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1G-aZlempw>. Accessed 9/16/17.