

What the Lord Sees When We Give

Luke 21.1–4

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • January 22, In the year of our Lord Christ, 2023

Scripture Reader and Reading: Dominic Meyer – Luke 20.45–47

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Larry Amberg – Songs on Giving

Prelude:

I. Along with Jesus in the story,

- A. we have arrived at Jerusalem.
- B. Before his death,
 - 1. he will not travel anywhere else,
 - 2. except to go outside the city walls at night
 - a) that he might spend the night on the Mount of Olives.
 - b) You can tell in these photos that it is part of Jerusalem.

II. After his resurrection,

- A. Matthew and Mark record
- B. that Jesus met his disciples in Galilee.

III. However, for now,

- A. we are in Jerusalem,
- B. anticipating the awful event
 - 1. that we know is coming.
 - 2. Until that time,
 - a) Jesus taught everyday at the temple.
 - b) Since he taught there that insured
 - (1) his enemies would finalize their plans to kill him, and
 - (2) then carry out their diabolical deed.

IV. Jesus taught everyday at the temple, but

- A. he also noticed what people were doing there.
- B. From the other Gospel Accounts,

1. we know that he drove moneychangers out of the temple again.
2. Jesus came for all people, but
 - a) he also noticed individual people,
 - b) noting their goodness or evil.

C. We are about to see him

1. observe a woman, and then
2. use her to illustrate a great truth.

V. No one can accuse me of preaching on giving too much, because

A. I rarely speak on it, but

1. it is a biblical topic and
2. it is what follows next in our journey with Jesus.

B. Let us listen now to what he said.

Persuasion:

I. Luke 21.1–4 • Do We Give Out of Our Abundance or Out of Our Livelihood?

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.”

A. It should not surprise us

1. that Jesus would notice what people give.
 - a) He is the Lord of heaven and earth, Lord of the universe, and
 - b) he is Lord of us.
2. It was him who told Israel and then the church to give money.
 - a) Therefore, he observes what we give, and
 - b) he knows what we are able to give.

B. There are things that Jesus wants to see in our giving.

1. He wants to know what we give.
 - a) He saw what the rich gave and
 - b) he saw what the poor widow gave.
 - (1) He knew that they gave out of their abundance, and
 - (2) that she gave all that she had.
2. He wants to know what motivates us to give.
 - a) He did say that the rich in this case gave to God.
 - b) He did not indicate that they gave with ulterior motives.
 - (1) The same was true with her.
 - (2) She gave to God and
 - (a) there is no indication
 - (b) that she tried to impress others with her sacrifice.
3. He wants to know what our attitude toward giving is.

4 And Jehoash said to the priests, “All the money of the dedicated gifts that are brought into the house of the LORD—each man’s census money, each man’s assessment money—and all the money that a man purposes in his heart to bring into the house of the LORD...”

– 2 Kings 12.4

9 Then the people rejoiced, for they had offered willingly, because with a loyal heart they had offered willingly to the LORD; and King David also rejoiced greatly.

– 1 Chronicles 29.9

7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

– 2 Corinthians 9.7

4. He wants to know whether we trust him or our funds.
 - a) I think the widow trusted the Lord.
 - b) She knew that the Lord would replace what she gave, or
 - (1) that he could give her much more.
 - (2) I believe that she gave with these thoughts in mind:

14 **“But who am I, and who are my people,
That we should be able to offer so willingly as this?
For all things come from You,
And of Your own we have given You.”**

– 1 Chronicles 29.14

9 Then Amaziah said to the man of God, **“But what shall we do about the hundred talents which I have given to the troops of Israel?”** And the man of God answered, **“The LORD is able to give you much more than this.”**

– 2 Chronicles 25.9

5. He wants to know whether we believe he will provide all that we need.
 - a) Although Second Corinthians 9 had not been written in her time,
 - b) undoubtedly, the widow would have been familiar
 - (1) with what Paul told the Corinthians, and
 - (2) she would have agreed with it:

8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. 9 As it is written:

**“He has dispersed abroad,
He has given to the poor;
His righteousness endures forever.”**

10 Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase

the fruits of your righteousness...

– 2 Corinthians 9.8–10

- c) She could have thought to herself,
 - (1) that if the Lord wanted her to have more,
 - (2) he would make a way.
 - (a) If he only wanted to replenish what she gave,
 - (b) she would have accepted it with contentment.
- C. Again on this occasion, what did Jesus see?
 - 1. First, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury.
 - 2. Second, he saw a poor widow put in two mites.
 - a) How much were two mites?
 - b) Does Mark clear it up for you?

42 Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans.

– Mark 12.42

- (1) This was the smallest coin that they had.
- (2) You can find various sources that will give you a value, but
 - (a) the point is,
 - (b) she only had two coins of the lowest value.
- D. When the rich gave,
 - 1. it made a visible impact on the contribution that week.
 - 2. Someone could drop in \$500 and
 - a) it would be reflected in whatever way they posted the total.
 - b) It would seemingly make a difference.

- E. When this poor widow gave,
1. it would hardly register,
 2. no one would even think of it.
 - a) The contribution would go up a couple of cents.
 - b) In the eyes of man,
 - (1) what the rich gave would make a difference in whatever they did.
 - (2) Whereas, what the widow gave many would think
 - (a) that it did not help.
 - (b) However,
 - i) if God can make a man out of dust, and
 - ii) if God can make a woman out of a rib,
 - (1) then God could take and
 - (2) probably did take,
 - (a) that widow's two little pennies and
 - (b) do something beyond our imagination.

20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

– Ephesians 3.20–21

- F. Finally, Jesus gave his commentary.
1. The widow actually gave more than the rich did.
 2. How could that be?
 - a) The rich gave out of their abundance.
 - b) The widow gave all she had.

G. It was good that the rich gave to God.

1. Jesus did not say that they did anything wrong.
2. They were not necessarily giving as sacrificially as it appeared.
3. It was just that the amount they gave,
 - a) which may have seemed like a great amount, truly,
 - b) in comparison to how much they had,
 - (1) was not that much.
 - (2) Jesus did not imply that every time we give,
 - (a) we have to give everything we have.
 - (b) No, he contrasted what the rich gave and what the widow gave.
4. The rich could “afford,” what they gave.

H. However, the widow gave more than she could “afford.”

1. What the rich gave dwarfed what she gave,
2. at least in the amount or the monetary value.
 - a) However, she gave more of what she had.
 - b) She gave of herself.
 - (1) Therefore, what she gave dwarfed what they gave.
 - (2) She reminds us of the churches of Macedonia:

1 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: 2 that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. 3 For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, 4 imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. 5 And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.

– 2 Corinthians 8.1–5

- I. What Paul said of the Macedonian brethren was doubtless present in her.
 1. She and the Macedonians knew the grace of God.
 2. She and the Macedonians had suffered, yet, they had joy.
 - a) We do not know their affliction, but
 - b) hers was
 - (1) that she was a widow, and
 - (2) that she had nothing.
 3. She and the Macedonians did not let their poverty keep them from being liberal givers.
 4. She and the Macedonians gave freely beyond their ability.
 5. You could not have stopped the widow and the Macedonians, because
 - a) she purposely went to the treasury to give and
 - b) the Macedonians implored Paul and his preaching team
 - (1) that they wanted able to give.
 - (2) They wanted to give, because
 - (a) they wanted to have part in
 - (b) the fellowship and ministering to the saints.
 6. Finally, in verse 5,
 - a) Paul revealed the secret
 - (1) to the giving of the Macedonians and
 - (2) again, I have no doubt the secret to the giving of the widow.
 - b) They both gave themselves to the Lord.
 - c) They both gave themselves to the Lord's people.

Exhortation:

I. What happened to the widow afterwards?

II. And what if we give as she did?

III. Let us go back to Luke 12, and

- A. listen to what Jesus taught there, and
- B. perhaps the widow even heard Jesus speak these words, but
 - 1. if she did not,
 - 2. she surely knew them in spirit:

22 Then He said to His disciples, “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. 23 Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing. 24 Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? 25 And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 26 If you then are not able to do the least, why are you anxious for the rest? 27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 28 If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith? 29 And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. 30 For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. 31 But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.”

– Luke 12.22–31

- a) The question is: Do we believe what Jesus promised in this text?
- b) Do we believe all that is written in Scripture?

IV. If you do, have you shown it?

- A. Have you made a commitment to follow the teachings of Scripture,
- B. especially the teachings and commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ?
 - 1. Recall what Jesus asked earlier in Luke:

46 “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?”

– **Luke 6.46**

2. You have heard of baptism.
 - a) When you are baptized into Christ,
 - b) not only does he forgive you of your sins, but
 - (1) you are showing him
 - (2) that you have died to
 - (a) your old self,
 - (b) your old way of thinking,
 - (c) your old way of trusting yourself, and
 - i) that you will now live for him.
 - ii) Are you ready to do that this morning?