

Lesson: WIDOW'S MITE

We are still in the Temple Discourse three days prior to the Jewish Passover and the crucifixion of Jesus (Mark 11:27-12:44).

Following the last debate with the Scribes, Jesus addressed the large crowd gathered from around the world in the temple for the Passover festivities (Mark 12:35-40).

The Temple Discourse was the last recorded public teaching appearance of Jesus.

For the last three Passovers, large crowds have come because of the messianic excitement that John the Baptist and Jesus Christ have brought to Israel. These Passovers were big money makers for the religious leaders of Israel.

Now Jesus moved to the Court of Women in the temple. The treasury was located in the Court of the Women (John 8:20). "Both men and women were allowed in this court, but women could go no farther into the temple buildings. It contained 13 trumpet-shaped receptacles for contributions brought by worshipers." (NIV, Mk 12:41)

Jesus had just charged the religious leaders with devouring widow's houses. Now He challenged His disciples with a spiritual lesson on giving by using the WIDOW'S MITE.

<p>This lesson will study SEVEN aspects of the WIDOW'S MITE.</p>

1. We will study our lesson text by the following three homiletical points.

- Court of Women (12:41) – Temple treasury.
- Coins of the Widow (12:42) – Two lepton (mites) = one farthing (kodrantes) [1/16 of a day's minimum wage].
- Contrasts of Wealth (12:43-44) – Truth of doctrine (plenty verses poverty).

2. The contrasts of wealth that Jesus made was between the rich giving out of plenty and the poor giving out of poverty (Mk 12:43-44; Lk 21:1-4).

Two churches of Revelation are contrasted in the same way (Smyrna/ super grace church/ Rev.2:8-11) and Laodicea/ reversionistic church/ Rev.3:14-22).

Paul has a similar message to the churches of Madedonia (2 Cor.8-9). "That in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality." (8:2) (8:1-5)

"For you know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich." (8:9)

3. Jesus contrasted the size of the giving rather than the size of the gift (12:43-44).

"This poor widow put in **more than all** the contributors to the treasury." (12:43)

It was giving out of plenty (perisseuo) verses giving out of poverty (he ptochos). The rich gave out of surplus and the poor widow gave out of sacrifice. Jesus said that she cast MORE (12:43).

Note that Jesus mentioned the amount of the widow but not the rich! It isn't the amount or means of giving but rather the spirit or attitude of giving (Acts 5).

4. Jesus made the point that one's financial status in life is not the perquisite for giving.

"For they all put in out of their surplus, **but she out of her poverty, put in ALL she owned, ALL** she had to live on." (12:44)

You may have a welfare mentality towards giving and didn't realize it.

- Others should be giving to me and you want me to give to others.
- I'm the poor widow.
- I'm the one suffering hard times.
- I'm the one in great need.
- If I had more, I could give more.

Jesus acknowledged the attitude of grace rather than welfare (Acts 20:35; 2 Cor.8:3-5; 13-15; 9:5-7).

5. In grace orientation giving, the giver is the subject of grace while the receiver is the object of grace.

The gift is the connective link between these two graces. Some believers only give out of surplus or plenty. However the spiritual mature believer gives out of poverty as well as plenty.

How is that this widow could give out of her poverty and necessity (all she had to live on)? Note also that she didn't give to someone worst off than her (money into treasury) (2 Cor.8:7-9).

6. Being grace oriented to her livelihood allowed her to give out of her poverty (2 Cor.9:6-11; Matt.6:32-34).

The widow trusted the Lord to sustain her in life (Phil.4:19/ my is receiver and your is giver).

For the spiritual advancing believer is more about WHO than about WHAT is the source of one's livelihood (1 Tim.6:17-19). She gave out of God's surplus rather than her own because of her grace orientation.

7. She gave out of her spiritual awareness of her riches in Christ Jesus.

The widow's giving was done to shadow Christology associated with the Passover (2 Cor.8:7-9; 9:15; Eph.1:7-8).

"Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?" (Jas.2:5)

She didn't equate giving and plenty or surplus. The believer must be on guard against GREED (Lk.12:13-21/ rich towards God).