

## **An Abundant Gift**

Mark 12: 41-44

This had been an eventful day for Jesus and the disciples. Having returned to the Temple in Jerusalem for the third time, Jesus had dealt with several confrontations. He was challenged regarding His authority; the Pharisees and Herodians sought to trap Him with a question about paying taxes; this attack was followed immediately by the Sadducees raising a question concerning His teaching on resurrection; and finally, one of the scribes asked Jesus about the greatest commandment. Having dealt with this barrage of questions, Jesus asked those present in the Temple what they thought of Him and who they considered Him to be.

Surely you would agree that Jesus must have been tired and a bit frustrated with the attitudes and accusations of many He encountered within the Temple. Finding a moment of reprieve from His accusers, we find Jesus seated within the Temple complex near the treasury. This too will prove to be an eventful moment for the disciples, as Jesus will use the events that transpire to teach a valuable lesson to them.

As we consider the [principles](#) Jesus revealed within the text, I want to discuss: [An Abundant Gift](#). The outcome of this encounter is not what the world would expect.

**I. The Observation of Jesus** (41-42) – While seated within the Temple in the area of the treasury, Jesus made several observations. Consider:

**A. The Situation** (41a) – [And Jesus sat over against the treasury](#). This may seem an insignificant detail, but it is quite interesting when considered in the context of the events of that day. The treasury was not located within the main Temple area. He would have walked up a set of stairs that led away from the terrace in front of the Temple, into the area known as the Court of the Women. The treasury was located within this area of the Temple complex.

- While the text does not specifically say, it does appear that Jesus had grown weary of the many confrontations and sought a place of solitude within the Temple complex. Apparently, He desired a moment of rest, with no one else but the disciples. Again, we get a glimpse of the humanity of our Lord. He too grew tired and weary, seeking a place to rest and clear His mind. We experience such moments as well, needing a place to get away from the distractions of life and rest for a while.

**B. The Perception** (41a) – *And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury.* As Jesus sat within the treasury area of the Temple, He watched as those who came cast their money into the treasury. These offerings were not taken in the same manner most American churches receive offerings. According to John Phillip’s commentary, there would have been thirteen, trumpet shaped boxes along the wall of the treasury area. Each of these boxes would have had an inscription that revealed the purpose of the gift and where it was to designated within the offerings. Nine of the boxes were for legal dues, such as the temple taxes, and four of them were for voluntary offerings.

- Jesus sat there, purposely observing those who placed their money within the boxes. I have read accounts of some who believe these were likely made of brass. As the coins were cast into the trumpet shaped boxes, they would clang against the sides as they slid down the side of the trumpets. Quite possibly, those who sought to be recognized for their giving would have thrown their offering into the trumpets with force, in order to make enough noise to be recognized for their giving. No doubt Jesus is aware of their gifts and the motivation behind their giving.

- The principles we see in this setting remains today. While we don’t give our offerings in brass boxes, and most give checks or paper currency, the Lord knows the motivation behind our giving. No doubt some that day gave happily, while others gave grudgingly. We are expected to give with a pure heart, happy to support the Kingdom work, and do so without fanfare of man’s recognition. *2 Cor.9:7 – Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.* *Matt.6:2-4 – Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. [3] But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: [4] That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.*

**C. The Contribution** (41b-42) – *and many that were rich cast in much.* [42] *And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.* As Jesus sat in the treasury, He observed those who cast their offerings in the trumpet shaped boxes. There was quite a difference in what He saw that day. First, He noticed:

- **The Wealthy** (41b) – *and many that were rich cast in much.* We have no information regarding the amount the wealthy gave but it must have been a substantial amount. Many who were rich offered much. This was to be expected, especially at the time of the Passover.

➤ **The Widow (42)** – *And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.* As Jesus continued to watch those who cast their money into the trumpets, something unique caught His eye. A poor widow came into the treasury, throwing in two mites, which amounted to a farthing. She was actually a pauper, one who was destitute, living in extreme poverty. While He had noticed many rich people cast in their offerings, this poor widow caught the attention of Jesus. It is difficult to properly discern how much she had given, but it was not much in monetary value. The mites she gave were the smallest of Jewish currency, and of very little value. Some estimate the farthing would have amounted to one-eighth of a Roman *assarion*.

**II. The Affirmation of Jesus (43-44)** – Seeing the poor widow throw in her two mites, Jesus called the disciples unto Him and began to teach them. He spoke of:

**A. Her Abundance (43)** – *And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury.* Jesus had observed many gifts being cast into the treasury, but none exceeded the gift she gave. There had been no mention of the amount the others gave, only that they cast in much. Jesus knew she had given two mites, a very meager amount monetarily, but He was also aware of the great significance and sacrifice of her gift. This may not have been much in monetary value, but it was great in the percentage of her giving. She had not given a small percentage of her riches to the Lord – she had given everything she had. They had given of their wealth, and she gave all she had, even in her poverty. Jesus viewed her gift, although small in man's eyes, as greater than all the other contributions combined.

- Our gifts and service unto the Lord are not measured by man's standard. There are those who have much, and actually give very little of their abundance. There are others who have very little, and yet are willing to give liberally of what they do possess. The Lord doesn't look at the dollar amount given, but the intent of the heart. He will bless what we do for Him, even if the world doesn't recognize the value of our gift.

**B. Her Dependence (44)** – *For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.* Jesus noticed a compelling fact about this poor widow. As she threw her meager two mites into the treasury, she actually gave every bit of money she possessed. She didn't have much when she came, and yet she was willing to give everything she had unto the Lord. There can be no doubt she was a woman of faith. She had determined to live her life depending on the Lord to provide. There is nothing in the text to reveal any anxiety on her part. She gave freely, trusting the Lord to provide for her needs.

- The text does not imply that we should be foolish managing our money. It is also foolish to try and bargain with God. We can't give five dollars today while expecting God to provide ten for us tomorrow. However, if we give unto the Lord from a pure heart, He will provide. If we are walking in fellowship with Him, and give because of our love and devotion to Him, He will provide for us. That is not to say we will become wealthy just because we are believers, but God will provide for those who seek Him. We need faith like this widow to trust the Lord with our lives. He provides the opportunities, the strength, and the wisdom we need to work and earn wages anyway. Every blessing we receive comes from the gracious hand of God.

**C. Her Confidence** (44) – For all *they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.* We cannot consider the abundance of the widow's gift and miss her confidence in the Lord. She felt compelled to give all she had without worry. She lived her life depending on the Lord and was fully confident that He would provide. Such faith caught the attention of Jesus.

- We talk a lot about faith, but do we possess that type of confidence? Are we fully trusting the Lord to meet our needs, knowing He is able and willing to provide? I know it is difficult when we face adversities in life, especially financial hardship, but we must learn to trust in the Lord, being confident that He will provide. The Lord will honor your faithfulness. We must learn to faithfully serve Him while trusting Him with every aspect of our lives. This poor widow serves as a challenge for all regarding commitment and service for the Lord.

**Conclusion:** While this passage focused on the sacrificial giving of a poor widow, we cannot overlook the attitude she possessed. The Lord knows our hearts and the motivation of our actions. He knows why we serve and why we give. We must not seek the praise and recognition of men but seek to honor the Lord and please Him. He gave His all as He took our place on the cross. He gave His life so we could be forgiven of sin and reconciled to God. The least we can do is give of that which He has blessed us with. We need to give of our time, our talents, and our financial gain. He is worthy of all we can offer.

Are there needs in your life? Are you living fully submitted to Christ and His will for your life? If you have yet to respond to the gift of salvation by grace, come and be saved as He leads!