

## **She Put In Everything She Had; Mark 12:38-44**

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And in his teaching, he said, beware of the scribes who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces and have the best seats in the synagogues. In the places of honor at feasts, who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers, they will receive the greater condemnation.

And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums and a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins Which make a penny and he called his disciples to him and said to them truly I say to you this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box For they all contributed out of their abundance But she, out of her poverty, has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.

This is a story well known to all of us. It is a story that comes to us with a certain degree of preciousness, the widow's offering. And as we begin the story, let's just ask ourselves, do we really understand what Jesus is teaching us by calling attention to this widow's offering? Let's just walk through the passage.

And after walking through the passage, we'll have a number of applications that will Almost make themselves from the passage. So let's begin from verse 38 and in his teaching, he said, beware of the scribes who like to walk around in long robes. So as Jesus is here teaching in the temple courtyard and the process of teaching, he says this warning, beware of the scribes.

Of course, we cannot forget the immediate context just immediately prior to this was the episode with the scribes. The scribe who came to Jesus and there was that favorable, amiable conversation about the greatest commandment and how the scribe agreed wholeheartedly with Jesus. And Jesus response is you are not far from the kingdom of God.

Immediately after that, we find this same episode, which is once again, placing the scribes in a completely negative light. Jesus says, beware of the scribe. So the first thing that I make note of there is Jesus's specificity. To warn his people against false teachers. He names the scribes. He doesn't say beware of certain religious leaders who tend to lead people astray.

I think we all know who I'm talking about, right? Jesus instead names the ones he's speaking of. It reminds me of how the Apostle John will name names. The Apostle Paul will name names Jesus likewise, doesn't beat around the bush. Even though he just completed this conversation with the scribe, which we'll tie back in a little bit later, he nevertheless says, beware of this category of people, of these people, beware of the scribes.

And then he goes on to list these six vices from the scribes. These vices will all be vices that the people have easily seen with their own eyes. Now we compare this to the parallel passage in Matthew chapter 23. Matthew does not have the story of the widow's offering. Luke has that story. But Matthew has the story that coincides with these three verses, 38, 39, and 40.

which is the warning to beware of the scribes. Only Matthew's rendition of this is quite different than Mark's. Mark concises...Mark, truncates it down to three verses here and Matthew spends an entire chapter, all of chapter 23, is the content of what's found And these three verses in Mark's gospel here.

So in Matthew chapter 23, we may be familiar with Matthew, Matthew chapter 23. That is one of the most frightening and disturbing chapters of any of the gospels, because it's that woe to the scribes and Pharisees. Matthew adds in the Pharisees as well. Woe to the scribes and the Pharisees. Over and over those, those seven woes to the scribes and Pharisees, these, these, terrible woes that Jesus is pronouncing against them.

There's the familiar passage about the whitewashed tombs and all that. And then Jesus ends that long section with these words, Why would you expect to avoid the condemnation of hell? And right after that, Matthew then goes into what's known as the Olivet Discourse, which describes the destruction of the temple because of this, because of all the corruption among the scribes and the Pharisees and the leaders of this temple system.

Therefore, this temple will be destroyed. Mark does the same thing with the one exception that he has in between Jesus's woe to the scribes, beware the scribes. In between that, he has the story of the widow's offering. But right after this in chapter 13 of Mark, Mark will then have this Olivet discourse, which by the way, is the most difficult chapter in all of Mark's gospel.

But that's coming right up at the beginning of chapter 13, which describes the destruction of the temple. Remember, we're in this longer section of Jesus's cursing of the temple, his condemning of the temple system. And all of this concludes in chapter 13 with the destruction of that temple and all of the temple and the sacrificial system.

So this is the section here that is a terrible section to read through in Matthew's gospel, because it is terribly frightening to read these words, knowing these words come from the judge. Who has the authority to condemn them to hell, and the warnings that he gives to them are terribly frightening and straightforward.

In Mark's rendition, Mark truncates it down to three verses, and Mark does not list all of the vices that Jesus talks about in Matthew 23. Instead, what it appears to be in Mark's gospel are two vices. The vices that are easily seen by the people, and I think there's a reason that connects that to the widow's offering.

But Mark seems to focus on the vices, the moral corruption of the scribes that the people can easily see. In Matthew's gospel, Jesus gets to the heart of the matter. Literally, he gets to the heart of the scribes, and he probes into the moral failure of the people. In Mark's gospel, there seems to be really two categories of vices that are easily seen by the people.

So let's look at these vices. First of all, there's this list of six. But first of all, he says this, number one, who like to walk around in long robes. They desire to walk around in these long robes. They like walking around in these long robes. So Jesus here is referring to the long, full length vices.

Prayer shawl. That was the typical attire of the scribes and the Pharisees. This prayer shawl would have been pure white. It would have had enormously large tassels on the corners. It would have had very wide hem around the bottom of the sleeves and the bottom of the robe and the top of the

robe. It was designed to be extremely visible and to be set apart from the people in a very visible sort of way.

This was the garb that the scribes and the pharisees would wear. And when you saw pharisee in the marketplace or on the street, you could recognize them from a football length away because their attire was so much different than those around us. So Jesus says, you can This is the first vice. They like to walk around in long robes.

And when Jesus says walk around, we get the sense here that Jesus is not just referring to their official scribal duties, but instead he's saying, even when they are not performing official functions, they like to dress in this way. and walk around so that people recognize them and see them. And by seeing them wearing this attire, they associate that with the authority of the scribe.

What a contrast that we have here between the scribal authority and Jesus's authority. We remember from Jack from chapter one in verse 17. We remember that we read that the people heard Jesus gladly because he taught them as one having authority. Not as their scribes. So Jesus's authority was rooted in his teaching the scribal authority is rooted in Their clothing what a drastic contrast between the two types of authorities But they enjoyed having people recognize them and recognize the supposed authority that they had By wearing these scribal robes.

I don't know if you're already beginning to make some modern-day connections between those who like to dress themselves and very evident, very bright, very noticeable clothing that is intended to convey a sense of spiritual authority. I don't know if you're making that connection yet, but if you're not making it yet, go ahead and make that connection because that's not the only connection that the passage will make.

But we see this even in our day. Those who wear such clothing and hats and different things in order to convey to people some type of spiritual authority. Jesus condemns that. He condemns those who would put on some type of clothing for the purpose of displaying a spiritual authority. Now don't take that to mean that Everyone who wears a priest collar or everyone who preaches in a preaching robe is one of the ones that Jesus is condemning.

Instead, Jesus, of course, is focusing on the heart, and he's saying this category of people. They wear these clothes because their heart desires that recognition of authority. Jesus condemns that, but then he goes on to say they also like authority. These greetings in the marketplace. They desire these greetings in the marketplace.

Jesus here is not referring to just a normal, polite sort of greeting. Good morning, Rabbi. How are you today, Rabbi? Instead, Jesus is speaking here of these, these spoken affirmations of deference. To the authority of the scribe. In other words, in Jesus Day, historians tell us that as the scribes would walk through the marketplaces or through the streets that everyone was supposed to stand as they passed and then render this greeting.

Rabbi, Rabbi. We recognize you. We stand and we recognize you vocally. We even read that some historians say that there's evidence that many of the people would bow before the scribe and kiss the ring that the scribe was wearing or kiss the hand of the scribe. Are you seeing more connections today to those modern-day religious figures?

who have those others bow before them or stand before them in their presence. Jesus is condemning all of these expressions. Take a look at Matthew chapter 23 in verse 9. In the context of Matthew chapter 23, which is the context, the same passage in which Jesus is condemning the scribes, Jesus says this, and call no man your father on earth.

In other words, Jesus is condemning those who like to have that verbal affirmation of spiritual authority. I will never forget, as long as I am a minister, I'll never forget the first, the very first funeral that I ever did. The very first funeral that I ever did was a learning experience. And part of the learning experience was in communicating with the funeral home about the funeral program.

Now the funeral program is a little bit different than a weekly church bulletin, because the funeral program is kept for keepsake purposes. Families will often keep that for years and years to just remember the person by. And so the funeral home people want to make sure that the directory of the funeral service is absolutely correct.

But I remember as we were going through, as I was going through with the funeral home people, the order of the service and the songs and all that sort of thing. And they came to the question where they asked me, how do you want your name to appear? And I said, Jason Wilkerson, that's my name. Yes. But how do you, how do you want it to appear?

Do you want it to say pastor? Do you want to say reverend? Do you want to say, what, what, how do you want it to, appear. And I said, I really don't care. Just that's my name. Jason. Jason Wilkerson is fine. And they say, and the person on the phone just kept sort of pressing it to make sure she said, I just want to make sure that I get this absolutely correct in the way that you want it to appear.

And finally, I said, why is this such a big deal? And she said to me, she communicated this to me, we have learned by experience. That that is the biggest source of frustration and disappointment and anger is when the officiating minister's name is printed incorrectly in the bulletin and not the way that he wanted it.

It wasn't the Dr. Reverend or Reverend Doctor or whatever the preferred title was. She said, basically not using these same words, but she communicated to me that if you want to hear the wrath of someone, just misspell the officiating minister's title. Or don't. have it appear like he wants it to appear.

And I thought at that moment, I thought of this very passage called no man father, or as Jesus condemns those who like the greetings in the marketplaces. We've all known the, the pastor who gets the doctor on the name and he wants to make sure everybody refers to him by that particular name. Jesus, in a sense, is condemning all of that.

This, this aspect of saying, in order for me to address you, I need to address you. with a recognition, a verbal recognition of your spiritual authority. Jesus says they like that. They like these greetings in the marketplace. Then verse 39, he says, then they have the best seats in the synagogues.

So the best seats in the synagogues are not. The, what you, we might think of is the front row where you get to hear everything very clearly, or, or even, if they were a Baptist synagogue with no such thing, I guess, but a Baptist synagogue, the back row would be the best seat in the synagogue. Instead, the best seats in the synagogue were at the very front, but here's the key.

The very, the very front seats of the synagogue were considered the best seats in the synagogue. Now, synagogue was designed architecturally much like. Our worship room here is designed. There would be either seating room or standing room, and there would be sort of an elevated platform and then a place where someone would open the scrolls and read the scrolls and right in front of this, there would be a case that held the scrolls and right in front of the case that held the scrolls was the best seat in the house.

But here's the key. That seat didn't face the speaker. It faced the people. And that's the whole key, the seat, the best seat faced the people so that it was this visual expression of authority. The one who sits looking out to the people is looking out from a position of authority as though he's looking to make sure that the people are paying attention or closing their eyes when they pray or whatnot.

That sort of thing is what Jesus is condemning. They love that. They love to have that seat of honor, not so they can experience the reading and the commenting on the word of God best, but instead, so they can be seen as the one having authority. You know, those, Churches, we're all familiar with those churches.

They'll have sort of chairs up here. I always every time I ever spoke at a place that had seats up here and I was expected to sit up there. I always would hate that to sit here and look out to the people as though I'm saying. Hey, look at me. I'm sitting up here. I'm up on the podium But that's the exact same things that Jesus is talking about.

They love to sit here Looking out upon the people as though they are the ones that hold the authority and then and connect in Connection with that he says and places of honor at the feasts So the places of honor at the feast would be at the right hand or the left hand Now, what's interesting to me is on all of these, Jesus says for all of these, that these are the very opposite attitudes of the people of his kingdom.

Each one of these, Jesus goes through from example, Mark chapter 9 and verse 35. Jesus sat down and called the 12. He said to them, if anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all. Or you see the other references there you see in Mark chapter 14 verse eight, when Jesus is speaking of going to a feast, he's saying, choose the lowest seat, not the highest seat.

So every one of these attributes. Jesus teaches his people. We are the opposite of that. Our attitudes are the opposite of those attitudes, but all of these attitudes so far, all four of these so far are portraying for us something that's present in the fallen human heart. And that is the human heart's craving for recognition and honor from people.

That's what all four of those are getting at. The craving of recognition and honor. And scripture is always harsh and very clear on the fallen human heart that craves recognition and attention from people. For example, Proverbs 29 and verse 25, the fear of man lays a snare. That's a phrase that the scriptures will often use to describe that sort of sin in one's heart.

who craves the recognition and the adoration of people. Scripture is always very plain, very straightforward, that that is an attitude that is contrary to the attitude of the follower of Christ. Jesus says just as much as well. But now we go on to chapter 40. I'm sorry, not chapter 40, verse 40. We go to verse 40 and he continues with the vices and he says, who devour widows houses.

So now we move from that type of vice that craves attention and craves recognition to now the vice that sees other people as something that you can use for your own benefit. They devour widows' houses. Now the word there, devour, we think, we ask the question, what is Jesus talking about? Because obviously they don't eat people's houses.

What does he mean by devour people's houses? Well, the word here is *katethiontes*, which is just a compound word. It's the word for eat, eat put together with the *kata* prefix. Now *kata* means downward, but we've also talked about this recently. If you remember back in chapter. 10. I think it was in which Jesus was blessing the children.

And right before the word for blessing was also that same prefix *kata*, which meant which meant that it intensified the word. Remember that where it intensified the blessing and it turned it from just a regular blessing to an intense, a sharp, a profound blessing on the part of Jesus. The same prefix shows up here.

So it's the word eat, intensify. So devour is a pretty good translation, devour, consume, fatten themselves upon the widow's houses. So what is Jesus getting at here? We don't know exactly, but what it seems to be getting at is some use of their position, that they utilize that in order to enrich themselves.

By taking from the widows, particularly taking from these widows, property when they could use their position to do such a thing as that. The most obvious example would be a situation in which a widow just became a widow. And then there is property that must be taken care of, right? And so who are the arbiters of the law?

The scribes are the arbiters of the law. And so they would be in a position to arbitrate the property of a newly of a new widow, meaning the property, even the house of the late husband. And so the situation would often occur in which maybe the fees for what they were doing or maybe the Situation that the scribe would arrange for would be such a situation that the widow would lose her house to the scribe I think that's what Jesus is getting at here the abuse of their power The abuse of their position to profit from it, and in particular, they are preying upon the weakest and the most vulnerable of society.

We think of the Old Testament passages that tell us again and again. And again, that there are two statuses of society that God considers to be the most vulnerable to be the ones who are most deserving of special care and special love and attention. And those two positions of society are the widow and the orphan.

We read that over and over in the Old Testament, the widow and the orphan. For example, Exodus 22. We read these words. You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. And God, again and again, will go on to say just how sharp His wrath will be, just how stiff the consequences will be if you do abuse the widow, or if you do abuse the orphan.

God goes on to say such a thing there. We find many such instances from the prophets. We find many such instances in which God speaks plainly about the the vulnerability of the widow and the orphan and how both of those have a special place in his heart and in his protective care. So in this situation we see that the scribes are preying upon not just anyone but they're preying upon those who are most vulnerable in society, the widow's houses.

This story is followed by a widow who we're told is basically destitute. that she has two coins. Could it be that she has recently been relieved of the ownership of her house? And could it be that that's the reason that these two stories are together? I wonder. So they devour widows houses and for a pretense make long prayers.

That word pretense just means A fictitious reason that's concocted in order to conceal the real reason for something you can follow what I'm what pretense is related to pretend it just means this fictitious explanation or fictitious reason that's intended to hide the real reason. So for a fictitious reason, they have these long prayers and the fictitious reason would be.

Plainly, it would be their concern for the widow or the whoever they're praying for, or their concern for the objects of their prayer, the things that the content that they're lifting up to God in prayer. That's the pretense. But the real reason we're back once again to the recognition, recognition from others, adoration from others, because what is prayer?

Prayer is the most direct contact with God. And so those who have the most direct contact with God, who pray these long, flowery, wordy prayers, then they must have the most direct contact with God, right? We probably all have encountered some such as this. I remember as a, being a small child in the church that I grew up in, I was probably seven, eight, nine years old.

And there was a fellow in the church, he had to be 89 years old, if not 95. And every time the preacher would call on him to pray, there would be sort of this collective groan that would you just feel it among the people because you knew that you were in for an 8, 10 or 12 minute prayer that just went on and on and on and on.

Long, wordy prayers are, first of all, something that Scripture condemns. Jesus Himself says, do not pray as the Gentiles do, heaping up words and phrases. Isaiah will say a similar thing. We see the same sort of thing in other parts of Scripture in which God says to us, listen, long, verbose, wordy, public prayers most often are an occasion for hypocrisy.

Long, wordy, verbose private prayers are not so because private prayers are of a totally different category. In private prayer, there's no one listening to you. There's no supposed to be no one listening to or you're observing you, but a public prayer, in which case, for example, I lead us in a prayer. If that prayer becomes this long, verbose kind of prayer, then that is clearly an opportunity for hypocrisy and the desire for.

adoration or recognition from others. And so Jesus is quick to condemn this. He says, so for this false reason, they have these long prayers. And then Jesus wraps it up by saying they will receive the greater condemnation. So why is it that they will receive the greater condemnation for hypocritical prayers, for desiring recognition from people for their holiness?

I mean, these are the same sins that everybody commits, right? They will receive the greater condemnation because of the principle found in scripture that With the greater understanding comes greater condemnation when you disobey that understanding we find that in multiple places in the scripture The place that comes to my mind is in the letter of James where he says not many of you should be teachers Because there will be a stricter judgment with increased understanding with increased light when you disobey that increased understanding or you disobey that light, then that's greater condemnation.

So he says they will receive the greater condemnation. So with that is Mark's shorter treatment. Of Jesus is warning against the scribes now look at verse 41 and he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Here is what you're supposed to think of with that.

You're supposed to have in your mind a vision of judgment day because that's what Mark is painting for us as Jesus. Sits down. There's the sitting down and we think of the judgment seat of Christ on that judgment day. And what's Jesus doing? He's watching what everybody does. And not only is he watching what everyone does, he is commenting on the morality of what everyone does.

This is a foreshadowing. This is a picture of Judgment Day, which, by the way, chapter 13 is all about. But this is a picture of the Judgment Day to come, when the judge of all the earth will sit, having observed everything that's taken place, and he will sit in judgment. This is what Jesus is doing here.

He's sitting in judgment of those who are giving their offerings of what they're giving. Of how they're giving it, of why they're giving it, he's sitting in judgment of that. And so, as he's sitting here, he sat down opposite the treasury. Now, the treasury, we're told, was another word for the court of women.

The temple courtyard was divided into, of course, the court of the gentiles, and then the intersection where the sacrifices took place, and then there were the holy of holies and all that. Well, just outside of that was the court of women. It's called the Court of Women because that was as far as a Jewish woman could go.

They could not go into the inner temple or into, of course, the Holy of Holies. But the Court of Women, Jewish women and, of course, Jewish males could go into the Court of Women. And within that, it was a tremendously large church building. We're told that it was some 200 feet by 200 feet. So to sort of put that in perspective, I believe that our building here, if you were to look from the very front wall to the, not this one, but the very back wall, I believe that's about 80 feet.

So if you think about that plus another 20%, doubled, square, 200 feet by 200 feet, it's a massive, massive building, a massive area. Well, in that area known as the court of women along the walls. There would have been these 13 offering boxes. Now the offering boxes were all labeled for different types of offerings that you could give.

And so the people would come and they would give offerings to whatever box they felt led to give offerings into. There would be a box that that was intended to buy the wood for sacrifices. There would be another box. It was a freewill offering, all kinds of different boxes that were labeled for different purposes.

These boxes would have a trumpet like funnel that was the opening. It was actually shofar shaped. Not "so far," but shofar. You know, the shofar, the ram's horn, that was a, sort of like a trumpet horn kind of thing. It was shaped like a shofar, and made of brass. And that was the opening into the box, and so those who were giving their offering would come, and they would put the offering into the horn of the ram.



The box and they would then of course go down the horn down the funnel into the box and that's how it was collected. And then you couldn't, somebody couldn't stick their hand down in there and get coins and pull them out because the opening that it went to was too small for that. So that was what it was like to give into the temple treasury.

That's how it was done. Jesus is sitting here and he's watching all this. Now, as he's watching this, people are coming in and they're putting their offering in. So let's just all think together that, something that's, that's common sense for us to know. But let's remind ourself of this. There was no paper money.

People of Jesus's day would have been shocked at the idea that a piece of paper It had value to it, like that. So all the money, all the currency was coins. It was precious metals, copper, silver, gold, and it was all minted into coins. And so as all these people come in and they put their offering into the shofar, the brass shofars, imagine the noise of all the coins clanking, clanking, clanking, clanking.

So Jesus is sitting here, clank, clank, clank, clank, clank, clank, clank, clank, clank. All these coins are being dropped in. Now, as you see in the passage here, we read that word, In verse 41, and he watched people putting money. That word shows up seven times in the passage, and it's actually the word for throw.

It's five times translated put, and two times translated contribute, but it's the same word. It's variations of the word throw or below. And so the idea that Mark is emphasizing here again and again is they're not just dropping, they are throwing. Because with the more force that the coin hits the brass, the louder the noise.

You see? And so they're coming again and again, seven times. Throwing, throwing, throwing into the brass funnel, the brass bell, so to speak. Clang, clang, clang. Clang, clang, clang. You ever been to one of those machines at the grocery store, you know what I'm talking about? Where you collect 52 pounds of coins, and 98 percent of them are pennies, and you go there, and you dump them into that big machine, and after a while, You know, for a fee, it'll give you a card to the store or something like that.

You've been in how loud that is, all those coins clanking through the machine. So imagine that that's what it's like. It sounds something like. Oh, I don't know, a casino with the, with the arm up and down, cha ching, cha ching, cha ching, a cash register, cha ching, cha ching, cha ching. That's the noise. That's the atmosphere.

That's the setting of what's going on. And Jesus is sitting here and he's watching people putting money into the offering box. And then we read this, many rich people put in large sum. So large sums would have been many coins and perhaps large coins and heavy coins because the most dense coin would be the cash register.

gold coins. So as they're coming in with these large sums of money, these gold coins,

this sheds a new light, doesn't it? On the passage in Matthew's gospel chapter six in verse two, thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues. Have you ever thought of that passage? And in your mind, you pictured somebody

walking ahead of you, blowing a trumpet and Jesus saying, don't blow a trumpet before you give to the poor.

That's not what he's saying. He's saying don't sound the trumpet, meaning don't clang your coins on the trumpet so everybody hears it. He's saying drop it in quietly. So it doesn't make noise. That's what his point is there So this idea of giving to the needy in such a way that draws attention to myself the same thing that Jesus is getting it Previously in his warnings to the scribes they're clanging in their money verse 42 and a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins Which make a penny and he called his disciples and said to them truly I say to you this poor widow has put in more than all those Who are contributing to the offering box four questions that I have there first of all How did Jesus know she was a widow that might have been obvious Maybe everybody knew that she was a widow.

How did Jesus know she was poor? Also, that might have been obvious, by the way she was dressed. She's there without a husband, so she's probably a widow. She's dressed in rags, so she's probably poor. But then, how did Jesus know what she put in the offering? And most importantly, how did Jesus know that was all she had?

Jesus knows all these things. The point there, brothers and sisters, how did Jesus know that was is Jesus knows what you give.

Jesus knows what you do. Our method of collecting offerings here is just one little box over to the side. And the reason we have the one little box to the side and the reason we don't pass plates up and down the aisle is because we believe this is more biblical because this is more discretionary. This is more private.

And that's biblical because Jesus himself says when you give don't let your right hand know what your left hand is doing That's something that is not to be done for ostentatious purposes and so in order to collect those offerings in a way that That is most discretionary. That also allows lots to give nothing and nobody to notice except Jesus.

Jesus knows what you give and Jesus knows what you don't give. There are those who are a covenant member, part of this fellowship whom I know to give faithfully and even sacrificially. And there are those that are a member of this covenant relation, this covenant fellowship who don't give at all and never have.

As a reminder, two paragraphs from our Member Covenant, to which we all swear before one another and before God, we read this, we will work together for the continuance of a faithful evangelical ministry in this church. As we sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines, we will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of this ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

I may not know what you give and not will give. That's not my business. Jesus knows, and as a Covenanted member of this fellowship, you have promised the other members of this fellowship and you have promised God that you will support it financially. Now, the number one reason why Christians don't give to the church is.

We can't afford it. We'll get to that in a few moments, but even before we get there, can you see how that objection was just going to be blown out of the water? By the widow who gives

everything she had Jesus knows what you give and Jesus knows what you don't give. So he's sitting here. He's observing those who give much.

He's observing those who give little and he knows even as he knows that the widow gives everything she has. He also knows that those who give a lot are giving out of as he says their abundance. We'll get to that in just a moment. As well. So he's watching these rich people put in these large sums, sums of verse 42 and a poor widow came and put in two small copper coin.

King James has that translated as mite. Now mite is an archaic English word that just means the smallest amount possible. We get our modern word minute. from it, but it's a word that's passed out of usage. The word there in the Greek is Lepta. And Lepta is a Greek coin. Actually, leptas are still in circulation.

If you were to go to modern Greece and you were to get change at a store, you would probably get some Lepta back in change. So what a lepta was, was it was the smallest coin within the Greek currency. In fact, historians tell us that the Lepta is almost certainly the smallest valuation of a coin that any nation has ever minted in any part of the world, in any part of history.

And so it remains with that distinction. It's the Lepta of modern days is worth more, but the Lepta of Jesus day, people tell us that was the smallest value coin that was ever minted. So he's, so he puts in two Lepta coins and then notice the perfection of God's word, because Mark then goes on to say, To explain what it is, he says, which make a penny.

Now the word there translated penny is *kodrantēs*, which is the word that we get our word quadrant from. But what that is, is a Roman coin because you see, where is Mark now? He's in Rome. Who is he writing to? He's writing to Roman Christians. Roman Christians living in Rome did not use Greek coins. So Mark knows that many of his readers won't know what a lepta is because they don't use lepta.

So he converts it to Roman coinage, which he uses the word *kodrantēs* there. So which makes a penny. So, so if you want to put up the next slide here, we can actually see a picture of an ancient coinage. Lepta, also known as the mite or the widow's mite. You can kind of see it there. Tiny, tiny little speck of a coin.

But here we see that the poor widow came and she put in these two small copper coins. So imagine now the contrast, the contrast between the clank, clank, clank, clank and the these two tiny little copper coins. And verse 43, and he called his disciples to him. That's the sixth time that we've read that in Mark's gospels that Jesus called his disciples to him.

Whenever we read that phrase, we know that what Jesus is about to say is particularly significant. He called his disciples to him and he said to them, Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. Did you notice that everything about the widow is less?

She's less a husband. She's less clothing. She's less resources. She's less status. But then Jesus calls her more. Her offering is more. You see, Jesus is never swayed by appearances. All the clank, clank, clank of all the coins. Jesus is never swayed by appearances. You can just look down to chapter 13, verses 1 and 2.

What, how does that chapter begin? As the disciples come to Jesus, they say, Jesus, look at this magnificent building. Jesus isn't swayed by the appearance of the building. Neither is he swayed by the sound of the coins. Neither is he swayed by the long flowing robes. Neither is he swayed by the greetings in the marketplaces.

Instead, he says, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box, for they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on. So it's at this point that we have a decision to make, and it is not an easy decision to make.

The decision that we need to make is, what was the heart of the widow who gave this offering? Because, The heart of the widow makes all the difference in the application of the passage. There are two ways to understand what Jesus is getting at here, how Marcus put this together. There's two ways to understand this.

So let's just kind of walk through and let's look carefully at the context because the context is the only thing that's going to help us to really get to the heart of what's being taught here. So the context is this very clear, prominent, plain context of Jesus's condemnation of everything to do with the temple.

Not only the temple itself, but the sacrifices, the leadership of the temple, his condemnation of all of that. Now, in the middle of all that, we have the story of the widow's offering. The only other place that this story occurs is in Luke's gospel. And in Luke's gospel, the context is even stronger. In Luke's con Gospel, the context of Jesus's condemnation of the temple is even more, if anything, even more forceful than Marx.

So in the middle of this, you have the story of the widow giving all she has the context there would lead us to see that. What Jesus is saying here is that he's making this observation. The observation that he's making is the observation of. The abuser and those who are abused the one who takes advantage and the one who's taken advantage of The ones who take advantage.

They're the scribes or the Pharisees They're the priests and they take advantage of the people. What did Jesus just call the temple shortly before this a den of robbers And now we see the robbery actually taking place as this poor woman comes and now she feels like she's got to put everything that she's got into the offering box and that's she's only got these two coins left, but she's got to put those in there.

And so that flows right along with the context of Jesus saying this is system will die. This system that takes the house of God that was intended as a house of prayer and has turned it into a den of robbers. Look, there's a robbery taking place right there. And so that fits the context quite well. Jesus is observing this and is using this as an occasion, as an illustration to say, you see, that's one of the victims of this corrupt system.

But then the widow, let's think about the widow as she puts the coins in. And here's really the crux of the question. What's in her heart? as she puts those two coins in. Is her heart one that's saying, this is all I got, but I mean, how else am I going to have the favor of God? Because this is what these scribes and priests keep telling me that I, and so here I'm trapped.

And so it's a form of legalism. in which she's putting her last two coins into the offering box in order to have God's favor because that's what she's been told. Or is her heart a heart that truly loves the Lord her God with all of her heart? And all of her soul and all of her mind and all of her strength.

And she shows that love by giving everything to him. You see, that fits the context as well. Because what did Jesus just talk about? The greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength. And love your neighbor as yourself. And oh, by the way, let me give you examples of those who don't.

Look at these scribes. Be aware of them. They don't love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength. You can see in the way they dress. In the way they act, in the way they pray. You can see that the one they really love with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength is themselves.

Because they're in love with the praises of people and the recognition of people. Furthermore, they don't love their neighbor as themselves because they steal even from the most destitute among us. The most helpless among us. So you behold the example of those who don't love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and don't love their neighbor as themselves, and that would fit nicely with the contrast of the woman who does love the Lord her God with all of her heart, all of her soul, all of her mind, and strength.

You see? They both fit the context quite well. So I think that the way we're to understand this is that this is a masterful section of Scripture. All of Scripture is, of course, masterful. But this is a particularly masterful section of Scripture in which we are, by the context, shown two different things.

First, we're shown the abuse of the legalistic system that Jesus was here to put a stop to. We're shown what it really did to people. We're shown how it abused the people and how it stole from them everything it could. It fleeced the people of everything it could fleece them for. But in the midst of that, we see one who does love the Lord, her God, enough to give everything.

You see, this is the last instance in Mark's gospel of Jesus public ministry. After this instance, the next chapter is the Olivet Discourse, in which Jesus is giving this discourse to his disciples. After that, chapter 14, begins the Passion. Jesus public ministry is over. We've now had 12 minutes, 12 chapters of Jesus public ministry.

And isn't it Mark's way to bookend things in a particularly significant way? Haven't we seen over and over and over again that that's how he gets his point across is by bookending Specific things. So how did his public ministry begin? Chapter one, leave your nets and follow me, leave your boats and follow me, leave your tax booth and follow me.

In other words, leave everything and follow me. And then about halfway through in chapter eight, we hear the words of Peter, Lord, we've left everything to follow you. And all of that ends with the disciple who did. leave everything or give everything even though it was two lepta. It was all she had. And so in a masterful stroke that the narrative of Jesus's ministry ends on this note to say this is the perfect disciple.

The one who is not respected by society around her, the one who is an outcast and she's ostracized. And yes, she's been victimized. The scribes have probably stolen her house from her,

but yet she loves God so much that she will put her last two coins into the very treasury that supports those

Have you ever thought that her two lepta went to help fund 30 pieces of silver that were paid to Judas,

and yet she loves God so much. It's not like there's four churches in town she can choose from. This is the one. And so if I'm going to give to the Lord, this is, yeah, the system's corrupt. The system is, it's robbed me of, of what I, of what I have is its robbed people I know of what they have yet, it's his house and I love him with all my heart, all my soul, all my mind, and all my strength.

I'll give him my last two pennies. This is a masterful example of both of those things of Jesus's condemnation of the system as well as an example of one who gives all to God. So let's just see that as we sort of wrap all this up as we see Jesus's recognition of the offering that he gives notice what he says.

He says, truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering boxes for they all contributed out of their abundance. But she out of her poverty has put in everything she had to live in that word abundance. That word means wealth and resources that are not needed in order to live.

That's what abundance means. Wealth and resources, possessions that are not needed in in order to live. So they give out of that. They, as they give, they give their large sums, nothing that they give is going to endanger their next meal. Nothing that they give is going to endanger their place to stay or their ability to buy clothing or whatever it may be.

Her gift is just the opposite. Out of her poverty, she gave that which was needed in order to buy literally food or water or clothing. So what Jesus is saying to us here, we can see two things in this. We can see God's approval of a genuine offering. And the first thing that we see is that the currency of the offering that God approves is the currency of sacrifice.

Can you see that sacrifice is the currency? Of a genuine offering that God regards because as she gives into this box, the two leptin that she's putting in, are they going to make any real difference whatsoever in the treasury of the temple? They'll make no difference whatsoever. They will never even know that they're there.

And so God regards this not in terms of the amount given. Jesus plainly says God regards this. by the measurement of the sacrifice it took to give it. And her sacrifice was supreme because that's all she had to live on. Think of the widow of Zarephath. Remember that story? The widow of Zarephath who has just a little bit of oil, a little bit of flour to make one last meal.

Here comes Elijah, the man of God. Make me a cake. And she gives out of the last that she has She gives to him out of faithfulness. And then we see how the story plays out. This is this. This is the New Testament equivalent of the widow of Zarephath. So Jesus is saying here that the sacrifice that's required to give it, that's the measurement of what you give to God.

The currency of a gift to God is the currency of what it costs you. Think of the words of David. And second Samuel when he says, I will not give to the Lord that which costs me nothing or the parable

of the pearl of great price that parable teaches that the value that you place on something is what you're willing to give up for it or to use another word sacrifice.

The value that you place on something is what you're willing to sacrifice for that thing. And so the widow who's willing to sacrifice. All that she has is placing that value on the Lord to say, you are greater than the last amount of funds that I have. And it matters not if they were, a massive amount of money or a tiny amount of money.

What matters is the sacrifice that it took to give it. But the second thing that we see, if the sacrifice is the currency of a genuine sacrifice, then faith is the currency. Is the resource out of which that sacrifice is given, or to put it another way, if sacrifice is the currency. Then the bank account is faith because Jesus is she has given all that she had to live on now What did she have to do in order to give all that she has to live on?

She has to trust that God is going to supply her with what she needs to live on You see the two of those go hand in hand The sacrifice goes hand in hand with the faith that says even though I give everything God's not going to let me starve Even though I give the last two coins that I have, God's not going to let me starve.

We remember the words of Hebrews chapter 11, verse six, that faith is what's required. Without faith, it's impossible to please God. So we can give to God, oh, I don't know, millions of dollars. But if those millions of dollars are given without sacrifice and without faith, God doesn't regard that God doesn't look upon that as a genuine offering given to him.

He looks upon those offerings that are given from sacrifice. What did it cost you? What are you showing me that I'm worth to you by placing that into my offering that in conjunction with faith? Do you really believe that you are going to be impoverished by giving unto the Lord? Do you really believe that your sacrificial gift to the Lord is going to somehow make you poorer?

And by poor, we've talked about this recently by poor, we don't mean you give 1 in the offering and God gives you 2 back. It means those gifts, those precious gifts, which are really important, which are eternal, which are, as Jesus will say, seek first the kingdom of God and his, seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be given unto you in that same sense.

Those gifts and those precious blessings. will always be made abundant. And so what this is, is a cry for the Christian to take up the call of Malachi from Malachi chapter three in verse 10, where God says, bring the full tithe into the storehouse that there may be food in my house and thereby put me to the test.

Prove me, says God, prove me, prove that I will not let you be impoverished. by giving sacrificially and giving in faith. Faith is the current, sacrifice is the currency. Faith is the resource. So some of us here need to be encouraged to pray a prayer like this. Lord, give me the kind of faith that I can sacrificially give to you.

Give me the kind of faith that trusts you to sacrifice. That which I think will impoverish me. By the way, we're not only talking about money. We have this conversation, this spiritual conversation about money because money is the clearest indicator of this faith principle in your heart. But this applies to everything in your life.

Your time, your resources, your energy, your efforts. This applies to everything in your life. All that's given to God that's not given sacrificially, whatever it may be, is not regarded as a genuine offering to Him. That which is given sacrificially is that which He honors, and that which He says, if that's given in faith, that will never impoverish you.

This is, as we said earlier, this is the number one reason why the majority of Christians never give financially to the work of the church because they don't give, not only sacrificially, but they cannot give out of faith. In other words, here's how it works. I need to give to the church this month. So let me look at my bills and let me look at what I got.

And let me add all this up and what's left over. Let me give to God out of that. Does that sound familiar? All of us have done that. All, every one of us have done that. The problem is when you do that, do you know what never happens? You never have anything left over to give, it's always spoken for, but the one who gives out of faith, gives to the Lord first trusting that the other needs will be met.

This is how our family has lived for decades now, and you know what? There's, there's always what's needed is always there. What's needed, whether we're, whether we're talking about finances or whether we're talking about time, whether we're talking about any kind of resource. It's always, somehow, someway, it always seems to be there.

Some of us need to pray that prayer, Lord, grant to me the faith that lets me live my life sacrificially for you and give unto you of both my financial resources and all the resources of my life in a way that shows that I trust you. that you will never impoverish me. Pray that prayer. Study these stories in scripture of those whom the Lord cared for in this way.

Read biographies of those who were known to give in such ways. The George Mueller biography or, the book, God Smuggler by Brother Andrew or so many others in which they example over and over those who give unto the Lord in this way and read the amazing stories of how God always provides. So now with that being said, just let me just follow up by saying this.

Does God need our money? No, he doesn't need our money. What a small god who needs our cash. He doesn't need our cash for anything. Here's what he does desire. He desires that you reap the spiritual benefits of giving sacrificially and out of faith. To his gospel work, look at the words of Paul on the back of your notes, Philippians four verses 15 through 17 and you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me and giving and receiving except you only even in Thessalonica, you sent me my sent me help for my needs once and again, not that I'm not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.

In other words, Paul praises God that you have given that they have given to him sacrificially, not because he needed the money, but because of the spiritual growth and the spiritual benefit. that the Philippians benefited from. God doesn't need our money, but he desires our trust. He desires our sacrificial giving so that that can be a seedbed for spiritual growth in our lives.

Now, lastly, let's just notice two final pictures that we just cannot overlook in the story. We talked about the widow and how the widow is this final picture of this true disciple. We started the gospel, by seeing those who are willing to leave nets and boats and fishing businesses and tax collecting boots and follow Jesus.



But all this culminates in the, shall we say, the ultimate disciple who gives literally, she has two lepta, and she literally gives the two lepta. So she is the true disciple, the true picture of the disciple, but the last picture for us to see and not neglect is this. This is, of course, pointing us to the sacrifice that is to come.

The widow's offering is pointing us to the offering that Christ will give in just about a day and a half, because just as she gives everything, so will Christ give everything. And notice the parallel concepts here from 2nd Corinthians chapter 8 for, you know, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, though he was rich, yet for your sake, he became poor so that you by his poverty might become rich.

You see the parallel concepts there out of her poverty. The widow gave her only two leptin, but out of Jesus is infinite spiritual riches. He gives us the kingdom. He gives us forgiveness. for joining us. He gives us adoption. He gives us election. He gives us an inheritance. He gives us life. From her poverty she gave God two lepta.

From Jesus infinite spiritual riches he too gives it all to purchase all for us. Because the quality of the gift is not measured in the currency. It's not measured in the dollar amount. It's not measured in the quantity. The quality of gift is measured in the sacrifice. And so we just conclude by recognizing Jesus was the man of perfect faith, perfectly trusting his father in all ways and sacrificing all, sacrificing all to be incarnate into a lowly human being, sacrificing it all to live a life of perfection on our behalf.

And of course, sacrificing it all to die in our place. Her sacrifice, meager though it is, given in faith and given sacrificially, points to the sacrifice that is to come.