

# Observations of the Offering

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[ 0 : 00 ] All right, this evening, find in your Bibles the Gospel of Mark, please, Mark chapter 12. Mark chapter 12, yeah, come on over.

And let's look all the way to the end of the chapter, and we'll pick up the reading in verse number 38, kind of in the middle of some things.

We've covered this material in the Gospel of Matthew and in chapter 22, but Mark adds something that only he and Luke add to the end of this. So we'll begin Mark chapter 12, follow along in verse number 38, speaking of Jesus Christ says, and he said unto them in his doctrine, beware the scribes which love to go in long clothing and love salutations in the marketplaces and the chief seats in the synagogues and the uppermost rooms at feasts, which devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers.

These shall receive greater damnation. And Jesus sat over against the treasury and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury, and many that were rich cast in much.

And there came a certain widow, a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites which make a farthing. 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.

[ 1 : 31 ] 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. Let's pray and we'll begin into this passage.

Father, please bless now the time that we read, that we study and dig into the Word of God and make this time profitable for each one and speak to our hearts. And Lord, help this story here that you retained in your book for all these ages.

Help us to have some application and bearing into our own lives. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. I want to call this message tonight, Observations of the Offering. Offering typically is a private thing, typically.

It's something that you don't announce. You give privately. You probably, it's nobody's business what you give in the offering plate or where you give your maybe separate offerings if you support others or other ministries or missionaries or things of that nature.

And Jesus Christ here, though, in what's typically considered a private thing, he makes a public, well, I shouldn't say public, but he does make an example.

[ 2 : 40 ] And it is public in the sense that here we are reading about what this woman gave. And I find this a very interesting scene, really, because we're coming to the close, the very end of the Lord Jesus Christ's ministry.

He's ministered all over from the north to the south of Israel. These 12 disciples have traveled with him. They've cast out devils, healed the sick. I mean, some amazing feats that he's accomplished. He's walked across water. All of these things are coming to the end. And near the end of his ministry, after one final rebuke of the Pharisees, he sits down and takes a look and watches and observes people fulfilling their duty in giving in the treasury.

Now, he rebukes these Pharisees, as we read. And I'll just throw some kind of a little bit of an outline at you, just looking at what he said. He said, beware of the scribes, in verse 38, which love to go in long clothing.

These men, beware of their pomp. Beware of their presentation of self. And beware of their popularity. In the end of the verse, they love salutations in the marketplaces.

[ 3 : 51 ] And in verse 39, he says, beware of these scribes, their Pharisees, because they love the chief seats in the synagogues and the uppermost rooms at the feasts. And so watch out for those men that are full of prestige and that have prominent positions.

And then in verse 39, they're also identified as pitiless. The chief seats, I'm sorry, verse 40, where they devour widows' houses. And here we're about to read of a widow.

And these are kind of the enemy of such a widow. They devour widows' houses, and then finally they're pretenders. Because at the end of the verse, for a pretense, make long prayers.

Sure do sound holy, sure do look holy, and they sure are revered. And now, at the end of this rebuke, this public rebuke of these Pharisees and scribes, the Lord Jesus Christ, in verse 41, he turns his attention away from these hypocrites, and he turns it toward just watching a scene, just watching people coming and going.

He's not specifically looking for a widow. It says in verse 41, he sat over against the treasury and beheld how the people, the people, this is the Jewish people, big and little, rich and poor, just coming and going, one after another, possibly standing in line.

[ 5 : 13 ] I don't know what the setup was exactly, but he just sits down, he sat, it says, over against the treasury and beheld. I find this a very, just remarkable scene, knowing where he's at in his ministry, coming to an end, and the crucifixion very near, and here he just takes a break.

We don't see him doing a whole lot of this at all in the Gospels, but here he stops and just watches people. He watches after rebuking these hypocrites, and he sees in here some of those probably very men.

They're rich, casting in much. And there's big shots present. There's people that you can't miss them if they're around, because they've got their long clothing on, and everybody's giving them their salutation in public.

Everybody's recognizing them. And some of these men, they are celebrities, if you want to call it that, in the Jewish tradition or religion, and just in their life, they're celebrities, they're big shots.

The disciples of Jesus Christ were raised to revere these men, and before they met the Lord Jesus Christ, they were raised to obey them and to follow them and to honor them.

[ 6 : 25 ] And Christ is focusing now on the people of God, just fulfilling their obligation of giving into the treasury. Notice it says at the end of verse 41, many that were rich cast in much.

Many that were rich. So there's many there that are rich. And as they cast in much, certainly this has got to be somewhat impressive to the normal person, to the common people, to see them give perhaps a sack, a heavy filled sack of coins, to hear that clanking as they pour it into the treasury, or just to consider the volume of what they gave or the sound that it makes, knowing that, wow, they gave a lot.

It's certainly got to be impressive in catching attention. Perhaps they're standing in line with their sacks of coins, and everyone can see how much they're about to give or get an idea.

And even the priest, I just imagine a priest standing by there after the one gives such a great volume of coins, he just maybe nods to him in approval of giving such a worthy gift.

And sadly, it's kind of in our nature. I think we're kind of programmed to acknowledge the big shots, the big deals, the big gifts. I mean, it's almost in everything in life.

[ 7 : 50 ] If you're a hunter, you want the biggest buck. If you're a fisherman, who cares if they caught 30 fish that are 12 inches? If you caught one that was 15, you're the winner. It's all about who's got the biggest of this or that.

If it's in sports, it's who ran for the most yards or has the most catches. One year, years ago, somebody caught 80 receptions in a season, and he was the thing, and they reported him, and his face was on everything, and then somebody caught 85, and then somebody caught 90, and then 100.

Now everybody's catching 100 passes, and who cares about that guy? Because it's just the nature of the biggest, the best moving forward, even within the ministry, the biggest congregations, the most conversions, numbers.

And because of this, because we're kind of sensitive toward that, who's best and who's doing more, we could overlook 10 things that are otherwise remarkable feats and just laud the best one and just assign more honor to the biggest and in doing so dismiss what has become insignificant.

Well, there's a woman in this passage that nobody notices. Completely insignificant. She flies under man's radar.

[ 9 : 09 ] I wonder if anyone even noticed her coming and going in all the hustle and bustle of the temple and the activity and the treasury and the many that were rich, casting in much.

This woman's probably just invisible amongst all these rich men in the temple. But I want to get some takeaways tonight from this passage and things that I think we should notice about the characters in this passage.

And the first one I want to draw your attention to is the disciples and say this. Number one, the disciples need to learn some things. The disciples need to learn some things.

After three and a half years of private training, of public preaching, of healing and miracles of their own hands, of traveling on their own two by two, of all the feats in the three and a half years of Christ's ministry.

I mean, three and a half years, it's not a long time in the overview of life, but it's a pretty good period of your life and of your time. These guys spent their years fishing or working for the government, collecting taxes, and all of a sudden they'll walk away from all of that to serve Jesus Christ, to do all of that they've done.

[10:18] Here they are in the temple and they need to learn some things. They still got some things to learn. And look at verse 43. After Christ beholds the people, the rich, and then this poor widow, it says, and he called unto him his disciples.

When the Lord Jesus Christ saw this, after just sitting and watching, sitting and watching, sitting and watching, he got his eye on that widow. And when that widow gave of her two mites, when he perceived and knew what took place, he said, hey, guys, come here.

Come here. Sit down. You need to learn something. There's something that I didn't teach you in all this time. There's something that I think that I just saw and he didn't just let it go.

He didn't say, yeah, they know. No, he said, come here. He called unto him his disciples and saith unto them, and he wanted to make a point. The disciples here in this moment need to learn some things and there's a few I'll point out to you.

Number one, they need to learn to see past the obvious and the outward view. That is, to look a little closer and to observe, maybe to try to observe what God sees because this woman, I don't think they even noticed that she was even there.

[11:37] But according to God, Christ, she gave more than all they which have cast into the treasury. Now, would you agree with that statement? If Jesus Christ said, hey, you see her?

You see that poor widow? She gave more than all they which gave into the treasury and Peter's like, okay. Is Peter going to agree with that?

Is Judas going to say, what is he talking about? Two mites? In our economy, according to my notes in my Bible, that doesn't even equal a cent.

I don't know how accurate that is, but we're talking pennies. Would you agree with what he said there? Isn't that kind of hard to swallow? Him saying, I'm telling you boys, she just gave more than everybody else in this whole place.

The disciples needed to learn something. And herein, what he's saying lies the lesson. When has God ever called or cared, maybe I should say, when has God ever cared who the biggest donor is?

[12:43] When has God ever cared who's been around the longest? When has God ever cared who has the most experience or the most wisdom? When is he ever impressed with a big shot? You know what he cares about?

What God cares about? What's on the inside. How soft that heart is. Back in the Proverbs, he says, My son, give me thine heart. Look back at chapter 12 and verse number 30.

In chapter 12 of Mark and verse number 30, here's the commandment, the first and great commandment. It says, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, with all thy strength.

There's no mention of money. There's no mention of strength and wisdom or outward ability. It's loving God with all your heart. I believe these disciples need to learn a lesson by a woman that they would have never even looked twice at.

Need to learn that they need to see past the obvious. God's not interested in the power. He's not interested in the wealth. He doesn't need it. He's interested in the heart. Something else these men need to learn is not to be impressed by man.

[13:57] Or by material means or by their position or by their status. The Bible says God's no respecter of person. The Bible speaks back in the days of David that man looketh on the outward appearance but the Lord looketh on the heart.

Man needs to learn. His disciples need to learn don't be impressed by these men. Don't be impressed by their riches. God's not impressed with them. You don't need to be either. There is the wealth and the power of men mean nothing to the Lord.

Absolutely nothing to the Lord God. Can you look at James keep your place but go to James chapter 2. James chapter 2. The disciples need to learn some things here.

The first is to be able to look past the obvious and outward view to look closer and observe what God sees and secondly they need to learn not to be impressed by man and material means by the wealth and power of the man.

In James chapter 2 James writes says by brethren verse 1 have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ the Lord of glory with respect of persons for if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring and goodly apparel and there come in also a poor man and vile raiment you have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing and say unto him sit thou here in a good place and say to the poor sit thou there or sit here under my footstool are you not then partial in yourselves and become judges of evil thoughts hearken my beloved brethren hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him but ye have despised the poor do not rich men oppress you and draw you before the judgment seats do not they blaspheme that worthy name by which you are called disciples need to learn and be prepared because it's going to really matter in the future but they need to learn not to be impressed or to honor man because of his wealth or power catering to the rich can really become a problem catering to the rich is going to be trouble in the future and even in the as men are being sent out and trained to minister for the Lord Jesus Christ they're not to be respecters of persons and Christ needed to teach his disciples use this as an opportunity to teach his disciples that it's the poor and the lowly that God says are rich in faith it's the poor man that knows how to pray it's the poor man that is not attached or ensnared by money you go study your bible

[16:34] I don't know if there's like one thing that stands out above everything I'm not sure of that but I know there's one thing that the Lord Jesus Christ points out the apostle Paul points out as well as others to be aware of it's money Paul says that that love and money is the root of all evil he said you go coveting after that you are piercing yourselves through with many sorrows you're going to fall from the faith it's a dangerous thing his disciples need to learn not to be impressed with it not to be a respecter of somebody who has the money look at another example here it's a little different but look at Luke chapter 18 Luke chapter 18 somebody who's poor and lowly knows how to seek the Lord Luke chapter 18 and here's a story I don't want to read the whole thing here I think you know it it's about this Pharisee and the publican that go up to the temple to pray in verse 11 the Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself

God I thank thee that I am not as other men are extortioners unjust adulterers or even as this publican I fast twice in the week I give tithes of all that I possess and the publican standing afar off would not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven but smote upon his breast saying God be merciful to me a sinner I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other for everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted it's a similar picture of the poor widow and the rich men when it's this proud Pharisee and this humble publican God resisteth the proud we read but giveth grace to the humble and there's something else the disciples need to learn here in this story in Mark chapter 12 is that humility and poverty and lowliness those are the things that gets God's attention that's what got

Jesus Christ attention and that's what according to this book according to God himself in Isaiah 66 he said to this man will I look even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at my word in Isaiah 57 verse 15 for thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity whose name is holy I dwell in the high and holy place with the rich man with the powerful man no he says with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit to revive the spirit of the humble and revive the heart of the contrite ones why do you suppose it is that God says I dwell with the humble and with the lowly I think it's as easy as they that have riches trust in riches somebody who doesn't know where their next meal is coming from they're calling on God they're trying to walk with God the humility will drive you to God into a need for him and so

Christian don't overlook the lowly and the insignificant because often they can have much tender heart toward the Lord and toward things of the Lord they're capable of pleasing God and that's what he's looking for God can't do anything with the proud until he brings them low and I think in this church we could do better with a dozen sold out humble servants than we could with a hundred

proud arrogant people who have to pat them on the back every time they walk through the door God's interested and humble and the disciples need to learn that they need to learn to see past what's on the surface and try to look at this from God's point of view and see things differently because they would be tempted to say well of course it's those rich men that are supporting this it's the rich men that are doing all the work and Christ says no not even close God doesn't need their money he said this woman gave more than all of them they also need to learn not to be impressed by those men in power and position because God doesn't respect their person but rather he dwells with the lowly now secondly let's look past the disciples and let's look secondly at what we can take away from this woman and I think number two

I want to say that this woman first the disciples need to learn some things and this woman needs to know something she needs to know something and what would that be well this woman came and went and she cast in two mites but she needs to know that her gift though it's insignificant is acceptable to the Lord her gift men would laugh at it the priest would probably just say what am I going to do with two mites seriously let's consider it this evening or if we pass the plates around on Sunday morning and everybody gave which would be more than two mites everybody gave two pennies and you put your two pennies in and you put your two pennies in and you put your two pennies we take it all Randy goes back and counts the pennies and it barely even makes a dollar what would you do with a dollar what would we do with a dollar in pennies virtually nothing nothing at all how could that possibly be acceptable to God this woman needs to know something though she needs to know that she's a poor widow but her gift is acceptable to God

[ 22 : 12 ] God notices and the Lord Jesus Christ acknowledges her gift and to men it's even to myself it's seemingly just a meaningless offering it's virtually no help at all but because God looks at the heart and not her wealth God was pleased with her gift her gift was acceptable to the Lord take a look at 2nd Corinthians chapter number 8 2nd Corinthians chapter 8 and here's a church that didn't have a whole lot to give this is the churches in Macedonia and Paul uses them as an example toward these Corinthians verse number 1 moreover brethren we do you to wit he wants you to know of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia how that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality he's saying they gave a lot for to their power

I bear record yea and beyond their power they were willing of themselves so they couldn't even give but they wanted to give more they were willing of themselves if they had it they'd give it verse 4 praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints if they were praying us with much entreaty it sounds like Paul is saying you all stop you can't give anymore you don't have it to give so just stop trying to give more keep some of that for yourselves and for your kids but this church is praying is begging Paul no please take this the saints at Jerusalem need this take it and so they did and verse 5 says and this they did not as we hoped but first gave their own selves to the Lord amen and unto us by the will of God before they ever gave money they gave themselves to the Lord come to verse number 12 and here's and here's the statement Paul gives to this church for if there be first a willing mind it is accepted according to that a man hath and not according to that he hath not if there be first a willing mind if you've given yourself to the

Lord the Lord has all of you then God accepts what you're able to give not what you can't give and the woman needs to know that her gift is acceptable to the Lord she needs to know this because she leaves the temple I just imagine just feeling lonely feeling like dirt feeling like I'm useless I'm insignificant I'm worthless this woman has problems to deal with you know she's a widow that means she lost her husband she's living alone I'm going to assume by the amount of her gift she doesn't have anybody that's helping her out in any way she's a poor widow she's got some things going on in her life it looks like secondly being poor she's lost her husband her provider she's on hard times you might say I don't doubt that when her husband was alive things were better but life has changed for this woman and she hasn't quit on God she hasn't stopped obeying and serving God with all her living

I'm not here tonight to try to get you to give and to put more into the treasury I could care less about that tonight I'm trying to make a point that this woman gave everything she had and the principle the teaching from this new testament is to give yourself to the Lord first and when God has your heart he'll have everything else and I don't even care about your money God cares about your money some just because he cares about your heart that this woman needs to know that her offering was

acceptable and Christian you need to believe it in your heart that God is and always will be judging you not according to what you do not have but what you do have and God will hold you accountable for you and that's all every one of us shall give account of himself to God for unto whomsoever much is given of him shall much be required but you better believe and understand what God gives into your hand he's going to require of you and he's not going to put you up against anybody else in the room and this woman needs to know that her gift as dirt as it seems to be to us was acceptable to God and then thirdly notice this about the rich this woman needs to know something the disciples needed to learn something and the rich need to change something the rich need to change something they could learn a lesson from this widow they'd never believe it they'd never consider her for a moment in their life that the Lord

Jesus Christ just got commending her why I bet if they passed all that money into the treasury they thought they ought to be the ones getting commended they're getting the nod from the priest they're going to get the shake hands and get recognized in places but no these rich need to change something they need to learn from this widow these are they that love the praise of men more than the praise of God these are they that are prime candidates for hell whether you believe it or not look at chapter 10 mark chapter 10 the rich need to change something and they need to do it fast in mark chapter 10 there's a young ruler who's very wealthy and he comes to Jesus Christ he's running to him in verse 17 and kneeled to him and asked him good master what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life and he goes through some things when it comes down to it when Christ in verse 21 tells him to sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven and come take up thy cross and follow me he was sad at that saying and went away grieved why before he had great possessions that rich man needed to change something and verse number 23

[ 28 : 45 ] Jesus looked round about and saith unto his disciples how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God his disciples were astonished at his word so then he clarifies it and Jesus answered again verse 24 and saith unto them children how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God they'll miss out on what God is offering them because they're trusting in their riches their riches has gotten them this far in life their riches is what gets them their prestige and prominence among others the salutations in the market places their riches have gotten them somewhere in life it's awful hard for them to let go of that they're used to getting attention they're used to getting their own way they're used to being prominent to being named among the crowd standing out and it can be awful hard for somebody that's been groomed in that way to take a step back to be a lowly servant and get out of the way so

Jesus Christ can have the preeminence the rich need to change something here the rich suppose that gain is godliness they cast much into the treasury but reject eternal life through the Lord Jesus Christ rich need to beware of the dangers and of we call them snares that accompany wealth money can make you meet people money can take you places and money can cause your heart to be lifted up to believe that you just a wicked sinful wretch that you are somebody special because you have more of something than other people have look back at Mark chapter 13 in Proverbs chapter 30 the writer of chapter 30 didn't want to be poor and didn't want to be rich he said if I'm rich he said lest I be fool and deny thee and say who is the Lord he was afraid of riches what it would do to the rich need to change something the woman needs to know something the disciples need to learn something now back in

Mark chapter 13 look at verse 41 it says and Jesus sat over against the treasury and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury and many that were rich cast in much Christ beheld many that were rich he beheld them casting in much but you know it did not even grab his attention the rich came and went and still Jesus Christ just sat there watching and watching and watching until one poor widow with two stinking worthless mites throws them in and walks away and that that got his attention that poor widow Jesus Christ had cast in all her living caused his heart to rejoice and to acknowledge her surrender her obedience to God she had every excuse in the world not to give anything she didn't have anything we say you don't have two nickels to rub together she didn't and she still found something to give to

God this observation at the place of the offering this observation inflated his interest this caused him to say hey you you twelve come over here real quick I want you to see something I want you to see someone I want you to understand some things may we learn these same lessons these disciples needed to learn may we care and see a little bit beyond the surface like we are so programmed to

do may we not respect a man's person or a man's position or power but rather look on him the way God looks on him may we learn from the widow may we learn from the rich may we learn what the disciples themselves needed to learn it's an interesting story isn't it that Christ at the end sat down and just watched and I wonder if the Lord Jesus Christ were sitting and watching you not what you put in the plate but what you give back to him in your life if he watched you would he see would he call anybody and say hey

I hate to say this but it's just common hey Gabriel hey Michael look at that you see what they gave you see them surrender their heart to me did you see that one stand up against sin it's insignificant to everybody else nobody notices nobody cares but Jesus Christ pays attention when you give your heart to him I love to see the kids grow up in church I love to see them around the truth it's such a different dynamic somebody who doesn't grow up in church versus somebody who does the dynamic is unrelatable the two the one grows up so lost so clueless the other grows up with so much they don't even understand how real and true it is could never appreciate it until they get older and start to understand and see the world I wonder I love that the kids have a chance to grow up in church that they have a chance to give their hearts to Jesus

[ 34 : 23 ] Christ but do they even understand how important that is because it just seems insignificant some little kid what can they do but God's interested God sees the heart God sees the potential God doesn't look for the big shot he's not looking at you and seeing how much money you gave if a kid will turn their heart to the Lord Jesus Christ and say I'm yours amen observations of the offering I got intrigued with this passage I got sucked into it this week a few days ago and I couldn't get away from it and I wanted to try to bring something tonight that maybe just could help us think on these things and look past maybe maybe what we tend to do is to look in the outward appearance and allow God to teach us some things about what's on the inside because that's where he's been looking the whole time let's be dismissed father thank you for this story this truth and how it's lasted through the ages and has been retained for us to consider tonight father I pray

I pray that everybody that all of us here tonight would be on board with these thoughts and these statements Lord that our hearts would be yours 100% that we'd give ourselves to you in the smallest matter that you would have us Lord that you'd be pleased with us that you'd look down and say yeah I acknowledge all that they're doing that they love me that they're serving me and Lord help us in these last days to stand strong and not to worry about the numbers around us and worry about the direction the church is heading and falling away so fast it's insane and Lord help us to be faithful and to stand strong and to do that thing that pleases you most Lord we love you tonight we thank you for our King James Bible and for the opportunity to come together again we pray that you'll bless our time and help us to do what's right until we can get back here and meet again and edify one another we pray these things in Jesus name amen amen you are dismissed you are Thank you.