

# Phony Scribes And A Widow's Mite

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[ 0 : 00 ] Things are not always as they seem. It was a lesson that I learned in a hard way many years ago. Julie and I were in college. She'd been chasing me around for a little while.

And finally I said, you know, I guess we can go out on a date or so. But we had been dating actually for a little while. You may remember this. We had gone every year. We went on a student leadership trip.

If you were in some form of leadership on the campus, we would go on these trips to New York City. We had to report to campus a week early from all the other students. And they would drive us up to New York City, really for no other reason but to enjoy a trip away from North Carolina.

And while we were there, we would have different leadership lessons and things like that as we would go. Well, we enjoyed some time with some of our friends from college going to different places around the city as we always do.

One of Julie's favorite places to go in New York City is Chinatown. And if you've ever been there, you probably will understand why she likes it so much.

[ 1 : 01 ] It really is a fascinating area of the city. For one moment, you're walking through a portion of lower Manhattan that is really just like any other big city in the United States.

And then suddenly you kind of take a turn, depending on which direction you're coming, you take a turn around the block. And it's like you've suddenly been transported to a downtown area of a major city in China. And in China, everything changes.

The majority ethnic is Asian at that point. Just the people everywhere are very different. There are signs that are not in English anymore. They're in Chinese. There's vendors everywhere, which is the reason that Julie loves it so much.

We go and there's all of these vendors that are offering consumer goods at really extreme discounts. And if you've been there, you know how this works. Julie loves it because she loves to go and shop with all these vendors and all these little tiny shops there in Chinatown.

And if you're really lucky, this is what Julie likes. If you're really lucky, you get invited to a secret room in the back of the shop. And there's usually a false wall and they will let you in.

[ 2 : 08 ] We went into one. One time that was in a cellar. There was a walkie-talkie. I don't know what was going on there. But there was a walkie-talkie situation. And once they got the clear, they opened up the doors to the cellars that go down underneath the city.

And we went down and we were ushered quickly into this area. Julie loves to go and do that kind of shopping. And on this particular trip, we were trying to figure out who was going to get the better deal.

And so, of course, I eventually found a vendor. And that was selling men's cologne at just ridiculously cheap prices. And my scent at that particular time in my life was Acqua Di Gio by Giorgio Armani.

That was a step up from the brute that I had grown up wearing. And I found this vendor. And he was offering me a \$55 bottle of Acqua Di Gio for like \$20.

And which seems too good to be true. But I'm like 21 years old. That just seems like a good deal to me. And so I'm looking at it. And I inspect it. It looks like anything else that I would have bought at a department store back home.

[ 3 : 14 ] It even had the tag on the back. Like the Macy's tag that says \$55 or \$65, whatever it is. And he's saying, I'll sell it to you for \$20. And I was like, you got a deal.

\$20. I stick it in my bag. And I go on. And of like any good man, I'm bragging about I'm the one that got the better deal of everybody that was shopping here that day. And then later on, I opened up the package.

And I pulled out the bottle, which is an Acqua Di Gio bottle. Looks exactly like it's supposed to look. And I go to spray it on for some cologne. And I quickly realized that what was in the bottle was not Acqua Di Gio.

It was more like Acqua Di Windex is what was in there. It was just some kind of cleaner that had been replaced in this bottle and resold. And I learned very quickly that things are not always as they seem.

Sometimes even people are not always as they seem. And that's what we find in these verses that we just read in Mark chapter 12.

[ 4 : 13 ] Two classic examples of people who we make assumptions about based on the way that they carry themselves or perhaps the way that they look and the trappings that they have worn and the behavior that they have demonstrated.

And then come to find out the reality is they are very different than what you might have originally assumed. On the one hand is the scribes who maintained every appearance of faithfulness to God, but were in actual fact religious hypocrites.

On the other hand, Jesus marks a woman who though considered utterly insignificant and probably outcast by most of the people of her day, was the one with the truest devotion.

And Jesus makes note of her publicly to the people around. So as this long day in the temple begins to wane, Jesus contrasted the inauthentic, pretentious scribes with the bona fide devotion and worship of the faithful widow.

And Luke's account reveals to us when he writes about this, that though there were many people within earshot of Jesus in the temple at this moment, his teaching here was directed specifically toward his disciples.

[ 5 : 43 ] So when we step back and we consider that fact, we begin to think about what is actually the purpose of this passage, of all the things Mark and Matthew and Luke could have included in their gospels, why did they include these two stories?

And of all the places to put them, why did Mark decide to put them here? And maybe you've realized that these two stories in Mark's gospel actually fit perfectly in this place.

The lesson is another one from the Lord about the nature of true discipleship. In making these comparisons between the scribes and this woman, Jesus tells the disciples two things.

Beware of the scribes and be aware of the faithfulness of this lady. And his point is that discipleship, true discipleship, does not result in a life that looks like the scribes.

It actually results in a life that looks like the poor widow. And our aim this morning as we come through these verses should be to heed Jesus' warning first.

[ 7 : 04 ] We want to take notice of the lesson that he's teaching us. And then in conclusion, we want to evaluate our hearts and see where we line up as far as this text is concerned.

Really just two points to go through. The first one is this. I want you to see a warning against religious hypocrisy. A warning against religious hypocrisy. Look with me at verse 38.

In his teaching, he said, Beware the scribes who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces and have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feast.

They devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayer. They will receive the greater condemnation, Jesus says. Beware of the scribes.

Beware of them. There are six elements to this warning that Jesus gives specifically describing the scribes. If you want Jesus' full treatment of this, you're going to have to go to Matthew 23.

[ 8 : 09 ] And I would encourage you maybe to do that if you have some downtime this afternoon. There is just the entire chapter is Jesus going through this condemnation of the scribes. Mark condenses it down here to three verses.

But Matthew chapter 23 goes into much greater detail. Let's look at the six elements that Mark mentions. The first thing he says is, Beware of the scribes. They like to wear long robes. But that just seemed like a big deal, right?

What's he getting at here? These were full length white prayer shawls. They were meant to be seen. They had tassels that was according to the Old Testament law.

There were particular ways that they would go about this, but they had tassels that would be sewn into the four corners of the robe. They would be full length. In fact, when the ESV says long robes here, the idea in Greek is flowing, that there is motion that is associated with these.

So they're not tight to the body. They're very wide. They're very motion driven. They're meant to catch your attention. The common garments of that day were colorful tunics, and these were always this starch white.

[ 9 : 20 ] And they were specifically designed to stand out in the crowd. So that if you're walking through the marketplace, and there's a few hundred people there, and they're all wearing the colorful garments of the day, the tunics of the day, you would be able to notice, even from a distance, when a scribe was around, they would stick out in the crowd.

The garments were often ornate, and they communicated a measure of wealth and superiority over common people. It was essentially the first century version of the modern power suit.

That's what these men were wearing. And they loved to wear them, Jesus says, because they wanted to be seen. But he says it's not only about the long robes, they love greetings in the marketplaces, he says.

They demanded a measure of deference from the people that they felt was worthy of their status. They wanted to be called rabbi or father.

In fact, that's something that Jesus addresses specifically in Matthew chapter 23. He says, do not call anybody rabbi or father. But that's what they wanted to be called.

[ 10 : 27 ] And so as they would make their way through the city, they would wear their bright, white, long, flowy prayer shawls that what everyone would notice, this person is a scribe. And this, unless someone was involved immediately in their work in the marketplace, what was expected was that they would stop what they're doing, stop the conversations that they're having, make way for the scribe to come through, and in deference, greet them.

Good morning, rabbi. Good morning, father. How are you today? So nice to see you. The world stops when the scribes show up. That's what Jesus is pointing out here.

They love to wear the robes. They love to get the greetings. So Sinclair Ferguson says, they not only craved the trappings of power, but the adulation of man.

That's what they lived for. Then we see that they liked the best seats in the synagogue. This is a description of a platform.

Essentially, there were benches that would be situated in the synagogue, and those seated on those benches would face the congregation. If you've ever seen a picture, or perhaps you've been in a place that has created a replica of a first century synagogue, you'll notice that there were risers along the walls that people would sit on these risers, and then people would sit on the floor.

[ 11 : 50 ] Then there would be benches up toward the front. Those seats were reserved for people of rank. That's where the scribes, they wanted to sit. And they wanted to sit there for two reasons. One, they wanted to observe the people below them, right?

They're on the bench at the front. They want to observe the people below them. This was a status symbol. They also wanted the people below them to see them situated in the place of status.

They wanted to see, and they wanted to be seen in the church, in the congregation of the people. Now, we're not far removed from that idea now.

I can remember in college, and in the early years of ministry even, in serving in churches, going to conferences, or going to large churches, and at the beginning of the service, right when things are beginning to happen, the significant people in the church, or in the school, or in the circumstance that we're in, are paraded onto the stage.

In some places, the people stand and applaud as they come out, but they're paraded onto the stage, and then there are the seats of honor that are on the platform. And just to be transparent, here's what I would think.

[ 13 : 07 ] I would see them come out, and I would think, I want to sit in that seat one day. How awesome to be the part of the it group, the group that gets paraded on the platform in front of the church, that everybody stands and applauds when you come out, that you get to sit on the seat, and you get to look at everybody else's there, and then they get to look at you, and maybe they will look at you, and say, I hope I get to sit in Jared's seat one day.

How he must be awesome. I never got to sit in one of those seats. It's a good thing. We all have a little bit of this in us, don't we?

That's the picture of the scribes here. They love the seats in the synagogue, the best ones. They want to be seen. And then he says, it carries on not only in the assembly of God's people, but Jesus said it's also, they like the places of honor at feast.

So in the cultural city celebrations that would take place, they were the VIPs of society. And they settled for nothing less than the honor that accompanies celebrity and status symbols. But then it takes a turn in the description here. It's not just about these things that they desired. Now Jesus gets into the problem of their actions. He says that they devour widows' houses.

[ 14 : 30 ] Literally eat their houses. And of course, we don't want to over-literalize that. They weren't literally eating houses. They were devouring the belongings of vulnerable people.

You say, well, how does that even happen? Well, you might even recognize it today. These scribes were forbidden to receive compensation for their work in the temple.

So either they had to get a common job to compensate financially, or many of them survived on the donations of individuals. Now here's what they would do.

In the process of raising money for themselves, they would go to the poor widows, or maybe the wealthy widows, the widows who had no one else to care for them, and they would pray on these people.

They would become their pastor. They would pray with them. They would then ask them to support their ministry as they continued to serve. And what they would do is they'd begin to steal the belongings of these widows.

[ 15 : 33 ] But there's a second way. Josephus said there was a measure of embezzlement that went on with this. They'd go to the widows, and they'd say, tell you what, I'm gonna take care, Christian, I'm gonna take care of your contributions to the church for you.

All you gotta do is give it to me. I'm gonna take it down to the temple for you, and I'll deposit it on your behalf. And so they'd get the lump sum from Christian, and they'd go to the temple, and they'd take their portion first, and they'd put the rest in the donation boxes.

Literally, they're devouring the belongings of the vulnerable. Using their spiritual status, they quite literally robbed them, robbed the people who had no one else to care for them.

And that's just as prevalent today. The scammers love to prey on the vulnerable. They love to prey on widows. So do those who claim the name of Christ.

One of the issues with the people who champion the prosperity gospel is that they have amassed an incredible amount of wealth by doing precisely what these scribes were doing and that Jesus was condemning them for.

[ 16 : 44 ] They make careers out of manipulating people by telling them that they will use their spiritual power that has been uniquely gifted to them by God.

And they're gonna use that spiritual power on your behalf if you send some money to their specific ministry. And of course, there's the extreme examples of the TV preachers where if you will just send in 20 bucks, they're gonna send a prayer cloth that they've sneezed on, and you get to receive the power that comes along from that particular thing.

But there's much more subtle ways that this happens all the time. This kind of abuse isn't just for those and proponents of the prosperity gospel.

You'll find this kind of spiritual abuse and manipulation in every circle of religion. The powerful using their status, using God as their banner, as an opportunity to prey on the vulnerable.

Spiritual abusers rather than spiritual leaders. That's what the scribes were doing. Using their status to hurt people.

[ 17 : 51 ] Using their power to hurt people. And then Jesus finishes up and he says, they also, out of pretense, make long prayers.

Jesus doesn't have a problem with long prayer. Jesus doesn't have a problem with flowery language in prayer, if you like to do that. The issue here is that this wasn't real prayer.

They were spiritual monologues meant to be seen by men and heard by men and recognized by men. They weren't actually communing with God in this. That's not where their heart was. Jesus saw through that and he said, there is religious hypocrisy here.

In fact, that's what he's pointing out with the scribes. Things, men, are not always what they seem, Jesus tells his disciples. Just look at the scribes and beware of them because they look like they've got all of it together and they look like they're the pinnacle when it comes to spirituality.

But the truth is you need to watch out for them because they're a bunch of hypocrites. We need to understand that term hypocrisy. Sometimes we misuse it. Hypocrisy is not a person who takes a particular stand or professes a particular belief and then falls short of that in their life.

[ 19 : 08 ] That's just called being an imperfect human. A hypocrite is not someone who fails. The word comes from a Greek word. It means to wear a mask.

It quite literally is the picture of an actor who portrays a character on stage or on screen, but in reality is a totally different person. That's what spiritual hypocrisy is.

That's what's happening with the scribes. They're portraying in public to believe something and to be something that they are not truly in their heart and Jesus sees through it.

They pretended to be devoted to God, but in reality, they were only devoted to themselves. And Jesus says two things about them. Beware of them, he says.

And I think he means two things by this. One, beware lest you be fooled by them, I think Jesus means. Beware. This was not permission from Jesus for us to constantly be critical and suspicious of every person that we encounter in our lives.

[ 20 : 20 ] Some of us are experts at finding something wrong with every person in every circumstance that we meet. That's not what Jesus is saying here. Not giving us permission to be suspicious or have a disposition and critical nature all the time.

He's just saying, pay attention. Pay attention to the warning signs of spiritual hypocrisy. Pay attention to the warning signs of spiritual abuse, lest you become one that is fooled by these men. Beware of them. And then I think there's a second part to this that Jesus is saying. Beware of becoming like them. Beware of becoming like them.

Because the truth is we all have a little scribe in us who doesn't enjoy honor and recognition and status.

All of us in some way have a tendency toward prideful ambition. And Jesus exposed these men so that we might watch out and beware of being like them.

[ 21 : 30 ] And it's highlighted in Jesus' final statement. They will incur the greater judgment. Now most people would look at the scribes and judgment would never come to their mind.

Jesus is acknowledging that not only will they be judged, but he's saying in some way they will receive an even greater judgment than others. Because God has no tolerance for someone who uses his name and his glory and his work to benefit themselves and abuse others.

So beware, Jesus says. Now if you lived in the days of Jesus, you would have probably recognized the scribes as the disciples likely did.

As shoe-ins for the kingdom of God. Jesus saw this very different. He looked beyond their robes. He looked beyond their places of honor.

And he saw the truth in their hearts. And he can see the truth in your heart too. It doesn't matter what kind of showmanship you bring on a Sunday morning. It doesn't matter what your persona is on Instagram or Facebook or TikTok or the newspaper or whatever it is that you like to use.

[ 22 : 45 ] It doesn't matter. He sees your heart. He sees who you really are. And he's the one ultimately that we stand before. So beware. Beware lest you become like these men.

So we see this warning against spiritual hypocrisy. Secondly, we see an example of authentic worship. An example of authentic worship.

And so Mark transitions the scene here. He's moving away from exposing hypocrisy to acknowledging the devotion of this widow woman that we read about.

We're gonna divide it into three sections, okay? Just to help us work through these verses. First, I want you to see where Jesus sat. Where Jesus sat. Look at verse 41.

He sat down opposite of the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. So Jesus, no doubt tired from a full day of teaching and interacting with people in the temple, dismisses himself from the crowd and goes and finds a place to sit and rest for a moment.

[ 23 : 52 ] And I love these little snippets that we get of Jesus that just remind us that he's also man. He's not just God. He's also man. He got tired. He needed a break. He needed to sit down.

He needed to rest. And I love what he's doing. He's people watching. You ever like to people watch? I love it. I love to go into places where the weather's nice.

Julie and I have done this. We went on an anniversary trip one time to Disney World and we spent an entire day basically sitting on park benches watching people and laughing and enjoying and learning and talking.

It's fun to people watch. That's essentially what Jesus is doing. He finds a place to sit and he's people watching. He's resting his mind and his body. And the place that he sat was near the temple treasury which was located in the court of women.

The treasury had 13 offering boxes situated nearby. They were wooden boxes, big wooden boxes that sat on the ground and then attached to the top of the box was a trumpet-like shape, trumpet-like shape that was made of brass.

[ 25 : 02 ] Sometimes they might have been made out of gold or silver. We think in this particular time it was made of brass and there was a more narrow funnel at the top and that's where people would put in their deposit.

And they would deposit their money into the funnel. It would cling down through the trumpet shape and then it would find its place in the secure wooden box at the bottom. And there were 13 of these in the temple treasury in the court of women.

They were all labeled as well. So some of them were labeled for the temple taxes. You could only put certain types of currency in some of those offering boxes. You had to use the shekels that related specifically to the temple and there would be people there to acknowledge you and acknowledge what you've given and keep record of all of those kinds of things.

Six of these boxes in the temple treasury were marked as freewill offerings, meaning there's no requirement. You don't have to give that. It's just when you want to give something and you want to in some form of worship give to the Lord.

You determine what it is that you're going to give and you would go and you would put it in those particular boxes. That's where Jesus is sitting. And he and his disciples are taking a rest.

[ 26 : 14 ] And the Lord observed as many people came and made their contributions in worship to God and obedience to the law. Now American Christians wouldn't appreciate that very much.

But biblically, in the Old Testament and the New Testament, giving was always a very public matter, not a private one like we often treat it. And Jesus is sitting over and he's just watching.

He's watching people give. He's hearing the noise. He's listening to the attendants as they make their records and they write down their data. And he's just watching what's happening in the treasury.

Now we see what Jesus saw. You see where he sat. Now let's see what he saw. Verse 41, again, many rich people put in large sums and a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny.

So Jesus observes two things. First, he observed that the rich gave much. They gave much. By the way, that's good.

[ 27 : 24 ] We need to be careful not to vilify them just because they're rich. The Bible doesn't condemn wealth. It only condemns the attitude that very often can accompany wealth.

And Jesus makes no specific judgment here about the motivation. But as we're looking at the context of this particular chapter, we can discern that there were probably many people coming into the temple that day that the motivation behind their gift was to be seen.

After all, as goes the leaders, generally, so goes the people. And we've already seen in this passage, the scribes lived for attention. They lived for credit and recognition.

They wanted to be seen for the things that they were doing. Jesus in other places said they give their alms in order that they may be seen of men. We know this was common in Jesus's day.

Now take that and think about what they were giving. They didn't have bank checks and paper bills. They had gold and silver and these brass coins, copper coins, all things that make a lot of noise when you pour it into a brass funnel.

[ 28 : 32 ] And you can just imagine the rich that maybe wanted to be seen bringing in their barrels. Perhaps they've got a servant carrying the money for them, and they walk over to their freewill offering box and they begin to pour the bucket of coins down into this brass funnel.

Everybody can hear the great amounts of wealth that they're pouring in and they're receiving this credit and acknowledgement as they do so. Jesus is noticing that.

Now, it's important to notice Jesus isn't saying he's not passing judgment on this. At the end of the day, his observation doesn't actually relate to their motivation. It's just merely that they gave a lot, which is a good thing.

So the rich people gave a lot. Then he makes another observation, one that likely only he made. Because there was no reason in the world for anyone to notice this poor widow.

There's no reason for anybody to notice her. In fact, they probably didn't. Jesus' eyes were fixed on her. He's locked on her as she enters the court of women and she goes over to one of these probably freewill offering boxes and she brings her two small copper coins and the person next to

her is pouring in their bucket of coins, maybe with pure motivation.

[ 29 : 55 ] We don't want to judge that necessarily, but they're pouring in their bucket of coins. And then here comes the lady with two small copper coins that barely makes a sound as she puts it in. And she puts it in and she begins to walk away.

The two coins she gave, they were called leptas. Two of them together made a single coin, but she's bringing two of these leptas, which were equal to one 64th of a denarius.

You'll remember the denarius from a few weeks ago. A denarius was a day's wage for a common laborer. This is one 64th, these two coins together, one 64th of a day's wage.

And I'm gonna put that in modern terms. Let's say Andy decides, I'm done with reds, I'm tired of pruning trees, and I'm gonna go to Walgreens instead and work the cash register. And let's say he goes in and they hire him for 10 bucks an hour is what they're gonna pay Andy to run their cash register.

His daily wage, his denarius is gonna be 80 bucks. In that scenario, the equivalent of what this lady gave was a buck 25.

[ 31 : 05 ] It's all she had. And she comes into the court of women and it's probable that the box that she gives in is this free will box, which means that there was no requirement on her gift.

She's not paying a temple tax. She couldn't use those coins for that tax. That's why we know it's not that. No one's pushing her to do this as far as we can tell in the text.

She gave these two leptas because it was in her heart to give those two leptas. And Jesus says it's all she had. She might have easily taken one of them and gone to the marketplace to buy a small piece of bread so she could have dinner for the evening.

But she didn't do that. She kept nothing for herself. And seeing that her offering was basically nothing in the grand scheme of things, she couldn't have been motivated by adulation as the scribes might have been motivated.

In fact, she might have even been embarrassed by this, by the public nature of giving. Here she comes and here's the people bringing large sums of money that Jesus is noticing. And here's this poor widow that would really probably love to give a massive amount of money to the work of the Lord in worship to her God.

[ 32 : 27 ] But all she has is these two little leptas, a buck 25, and she goes in and probably embarrassed, hoping that nobody notices. She goes and she gives these two coins. Why would she sacrifice like that?

Why? It doesn't make sense. Is it not love that motivates us to do such things? That's what Kent Hughes discerned.

He said her humble motivation could be nothing but love. She was living out the Shema, loving God with all she had.

So Jesus observed the rich give much and then he observed the widow give everything. Do you see that? Do you see the difference? He sees the rich give much, a lot of money.

He sees the widow give everything that she has. Do you know what the difference is between a person who is counting on their works for salvation and a person who is trusting Christ for salvation? One gives a lot.

[ 33 : 32 ] They give a lot of their money. They give a lot of their time. They give a lot of their effort. The other gives everything they have. Everything they have goes to pleasing their Savior.

That's the difference. That's the picture Jesus is drawing here in this observation. So we see where he sat. We see what he saw. Finally, we see what Jesus said. What he said.

Verse 43. And 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.

I love so much about Jesus' reaction here. He immediately calls his disciples over. I want you to picture this for me if you would. Things are busy.

Remember, this is probably day before Passover, day before the day of preparation at least. This is busy in the temple. All these people are coming in. They're giving of their money in the offering box and Jesus locks his eyes in on this woman and he sees what she does and he immediately calls the twelve around him.

[ 34 : 39 ] He says, Guys, come here. And what is it that he says? He says, Look at her. Look at her. Look at what she just did. Because we know that their tendency like our tendency was probably to have their eyes drawn to all the rich folks who were given a lot of money because that's

impressive.

That catches our attention. Their eyes were drawn to the scribes and Jesus is saying here, No, no, no, no, no. Don't look at those men. Don't look at them. Don't look at the phony, hypocritical scribes. Look at this woman. Look at her. Look what she gave. Look what she just did. And can I just remind you today that Jesus sees you?

He sees you? Many times we'll say that. We'll quote, and rightfully so, we'll quote the proverb, The eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good.

I had that verse quoted to me so many times growing up. My dad would always tell me. He would say, Jared, I may not know what you're doing, but God sees you and he'd quote the verse and he'd say, And he's going to tell me what you're doing, is what dad would say.

[ 35 : 50 ] And usually he did. And I don't mean it that way in this case. That's true. But I don't mean it as a warning. I mean it as an encouragement.

Jesus sees you. Because no doubt there's some of us here this morning, you feel utterly insignificant when it comes to the big picture of things. Maybe when it comes to the big picture of your family or the big picture of the church or the big picture of the gospel work around the world and you start thinking about and comparing yourself to the things that other people may be gifted in or the other things that they can do and you may think that you have no significance in this life.

That you have nothing of real value to bring to the Lord and his work. And the truth is you may not have a lot of money you can give. You may not have a tremendous amount of talent that you can use but when you give what you have to God Jesus always sees that and he is filled with joy over your worship.

Whether it's a bucket full of coins or it's a couple of leptas when you give everything to God he notices that. He sees that.

He is glorified by that. He sees you. We don't know what the result of this scenario was.

[ 37 : 20 ] We might easily make an application that may not have necessarily been true of this woman. We may say well I bet when she got home there was like one of those hallelujah handshake kind of moments where there's just like a basket full of all this food waiting for at her house.

But the scripture doesn't tell us that that happened. She may have spent the night hungry that night. But Jesus saw her.

The truth is she may have never known Jesus was even watching. She may have never known the impact of her worship on others throughout Christian history as they've come to Mark's gospel and they've read this story time and again.

But look at how the Lord used her gift. Look at how he has been glorified for 2,000 years now because of the worship of this woman. And you may never know the impact of your devotion on others either but you can be sure that God is always working.

He's working in you and he's working through you to glorify his son and uplift his gospel. And that's exactly what Jesus did with this poor woman. I like how James Edwards said it.

[ 38 : 32 ] How powerfully ironic is the word more in Mark's description because everything about this woman has been described in terms of less particularly in comparison to the scribes and wealthy crowd.

And yet the contrast between her genuine piety and faith and the pretense of the wealthy is beyond compare. And by Jesus' account she gave more than all of the other people who contributed that day.

And we know there's some mathematicians among the disciples. Matthew was a tax collector prior to coming to Christ. We know he knew how to count. Judas we're told in John's gospel was skimming money off the top so we know that he knew how to count as well.

And perhaps they're sitting there and they're counting up on their fingers there's no way Jesus how do you get that she gave more than anybody else. So he explains in verse 44. For they all contributed out of the abundance she out of her poverty has put in everything she had all she had to live on.

So we find out at the end of the day in the accounting process Jesus is not concerned about the sum of your gift but the proportion of it. He's not concerned about the amount of currency you give but the amount of sacrifice that you make.

[ 39 : 53 ] Why? Because God doesn't need our money. God doesn't need our money. Giving to God is like at Christmas this year the girls will save money throughout the year and as soon as we go to Target they'll hit that \$3 section and they'll blow all their money on stamps and papers and markers and things like that.

And then Christmas will roll around and Ashlyn's going to say dad I really want to get mom a Christmas gift can you give me some money so I can go get you and mom a Christmas gift and I will gladly give Ashlyn some money and she'll go and she'll buy a Christmas gift and then on Christmas day I'm going to open the gift and I'm going to be so happy to receive that gift but it was a gift that I bought.

That's what giving to God is like isn't it? It all belongs to him. It's all controlled by him. He can take it away as soon as he gives it. It's all from him.

He owns the cat on a thousand hills the psalm says. He doesn't need our money but just like I will be just as pleased with that Christmas gift that Ashlyn and Harper give me though it even comes from my bank account so is Jesus so pleased when we give to him though he's the one that has blessed us to give to begin with.

God doesn't need our money. He's not concerned about the sum here. He's not biting his nails every Sunday hoping that our church will meet budget this week.

[ 41 : 12 ] God doesn't do that. He's not impressed by vast sums that we may give. He owns it all and he provides it all. But what God is undoubtedly concerned about is the measure of sacrifice and worship demonstrated in what we give.

And by the way the point of this story lest you misunderstand me the point of this story is Jesus is not telling us and commanding us to give all of our money to the church. That's not what he's saying here.

He's not even passing a judgment on whether or not this woman should have given in the way that she did. He's acknowledging what she did. The lesson here is that Jesus is teaching that we are to give not all of our money but to give all of ourselves to him.

All of ourselves. Can't you say God doesn't want your money. He wants you. But you can't give him all of yourself apart from your money because that's a part of it.

And this is what motivated Paul to write of the Macedonians in 2 Corinthians 8. He said we want you to know brothers about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia.

[ 42 : 17 ] For in a severe test of affliction their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.

For they gave according to their means as I can testify and beyond their means of their own accord begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints.

And here's what he says. And this not as we expected. We didn't put the pressure on them to do this. He said but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.

They gave themselves first and then when there was a need in another church it wasn't a problem for them to sacrifice out of their poverty to give because they'd already given it all to the Lord anyways.

They'd already said Lord I'm yours. Everything I have is yours. My family is yours. My money is yours. My job is yours. My church is yours.

[ 43 : 16 ] Use it however you want. Of course this doesn't apply only to our money. It's about our time. We give our time to the work of God.

It's about our talent, our gifts. We use them for the glory of God. It's about our affection. giving it not to ourselves, not to meet the cravings and lust of our life, but setting our affections on the things of God.

When we give all of ourselves to him, it's no surprise when we're willing to sacrifice tremendous resources in time for his glory and work. That's the point of what Jesus is pointing out.

He's not saying you got to give your whole paycheck to the church. He's saying you got to give your whole paycheck to him, which means glorifying him with it may be paying the bills this week, and it may be helping your kids this week, and it may be doing other things to help others, and it may be giving to the church and giving to the Lord.

He's just saying it's all his. It's all his. The lesson Jesus was teaching in the temple wasn't new. It's the same lesson when we step back and view these passages together.

[ 44 : 33 ] It's the same lesson on true discipleship that we've seen over and over in Mark's gospel, right? Remember in chapter one, Jesus is walking by the Sea of Galilee, and he sees four fishermen, and he says, hey guys, come and follow me.

I'll make you fishers of men. And Peter and Andrew and James and John, it says they left everything. They left their nets. They left their boats. They left their livelihood. They left their business to follow Christ.

And we see it time and again in Mark's gospel. We get to chapter eight, and Jesus actually explicitly says it. He says, if you're going to come after me, deny yourself and take up your cross and follow me. For whoever seeks to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for my sake in the gospels, the same will save it, Jesus says.

And he says, what does it matter if you gain the whole world and at the end of this life you lose your own soul? And he says, if you want to follow me, if you really want to be my disciple, you have to give everything, leave everything behind and follow me with your heart and with your affection with 100%.

We're leaving everything behind. And then we get to this woman here and what do we see in her? In contrast to the scribes, we see true discipleship. A woman who has been willing to put everything behind, everything behind in order to be devoted to her God.

[ 45 : 48 ] And once again, we see this beautiful picture of what it means to actually be a disciple of Christ. true discipleship is when we forsake everything, all sin, all ambition, all relationships, all ideologies to believe in Jesus and follow him as Lord.

It doesn't look like the pretentious scribes. It looks like the faithful widow. And the question for us is which one of those people do we most resemble? Are we in this for ourselves using God's name and using God's work to build ourselves up and put other people down?

Or are we actually devoted to Christ in reality? And of course, there's a gospel parallel here, isn't there? It's easy to see it. The woman gave everything out of love for God.

Jesus gave everything out of love for us. He takes the wrath of God against our sin as he dies on the cross. But he offers eternal life and forgiveness to whoever will come to him in faith and repentance to be a true disciple.

Will you come to him? Will you receive him? Is he the treasure in the field? Is he the pearl of great price?

[ 47 : 11 ] Yes. Follow him. Thank you.