

Two Small Coins Making One Big Contribution

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Preacher: Rev James Maciver

- [0 : 0 0] We're going to begin our worship today. We're singing firstly in Psalm 116, Psalm 116 in the Scottish Psalter to the tune Spore. That's on page 395.
- We're singing verses 1 to 8. Wonderful words that assure us of the Lord's hearing of our prayer, not just the hearing of our prayers, but also that he answers and responds to prayer in his own way.
- And the psalmist is giving thanks to God and the wonderful words of the psalm that he has heard him and delivered his soul. As verse 8 puts it, my distressed soul from death delivered was by thee.
- So Psalm 116, I love the Lord because my voice and prayers heeded here. I, while I live, will call on him who bowed to me his ear. Verses 1 to 8 to his praise.
- I love the Lord because my voice and prayers heeded here. I, while I live, will call on him who bowed to me his ear.
- [1 : 2 6] Of death the courts and sorrows stood, about me compass round. The pains of hell to call on me, I grieve and trouble find.
- Upon the name of God the Lord.
- God mercy full of righteousness, He gracious is our Lord. God saves the meek. I was brought low. He did me help.
- God saves the meek. I am the Lord. He was brought to you by the Lord. He is brought to you by the Lord. God saves the meek. O Thou, my soul, to Thou, my soul, to Thou return.
- Unto thy quiet rest For largely lo the Lord to thee This bounty hath expressed For my distresses all from death Delivered was by thee Lightest my morning Eyes from tears My feet from falling Free Let's now briefly call on the Lord in prayer and focusing especially on the Sunday school and the other children.
- [4 : 0 9] Our gracious God, we give thanks that we can once again gather together in this way of all ages and all backgrounds, of all experiences, everything, Lord, that distinguishes us from each other, and yet we come together, O Lord, in a common desire to worship you and to praise your glorious name.
- We thank you today for our children. We thank you for their presence with us. We give thanks, Lord, that they're brought by parents and relatives to attend upon the church services, but also to come to learn in Sunday school and at tweenies of the things pertaining to Jesus and his love.
- And we pray for them today and ask that your blessing will be bestowed upon them. Help them, Lord, as they become accustomed to attending church and to being where the worship of God is held, that they may value this for themselves and grow up to be a people who will indeed honour the Lord and who will come to be known as his people in this world.
- So bless them today, we pray, and bless those who teach them and those leaders who care for them during tweenies. We give thanks for all who help, and we give thanks, Lord, for their dedication, for their willingness to be involved in such a way.

Bless them, we pray, all our concerns today in our worship and in our lives on this holy day, a day that you have marked as holy to yourself. Receive our thanks now and cleanse us from all our sin.

[5 : 39] For Jesus' sake. Amen. Okay, children, it's good to see you all today, as always. You probably might not see that from where I am.

Does anybody know what it is? Can you tell from a distance? It's my driving license. I wouldn't be able to drive a car or any other vehicle legally if I didn't have a driving license.

So a driving license is very important. It means that I've been accepted, having passed a test many, many years ago now, having passed a test that qualifies me to drive safely, I hope, on the roads.

So this is really a mark of my qualification that I can actually drive a car legally on the road. So if somebody asks me, are you allowed to drive this vehicle?

You can produce, if I have it, this car. I always keep it with me. So you never know when you're going to be asked for it. And I can say, yes, there it is. It shows that I'm qualified to drive this vehicle.

[6 : 44] And I've had it for a number of years. Now, the Lord also gives us qualifications. And he makes us qualified to belong to his family because he gives us in our hearts that knowledge of himself, that love for himself, and especially faith by which we come to trust in him.

And we find in the Bible that we're taught about adoption, which is a big word, to do with making someone part of your family. And God makes us his family when he adopts us.

When we are related to Jesus by having accepted him, God then says, you're qualified now to be one of my children, to belong to my family.

Now, there's another thing about this. You can't see it from there, but this card has my photograph on it. It's not, I don't think, a very good photograph because to pose for photographs, you have to be pretty stern and pretty boring looking.

You're not allowed to smile. You're not allowed to do anything like that in case it distorts the image. But it is me. It is my photograph. And so anybody looking at that can say, as long as I haven't changed too much since the photo was taken, yes, that's you.

[8 : 01] Now, God, when he accepts us as his children, God knows exactly who we are. God knows everything about us and he has our ID in his own heart, in his own mind.

So nobody can say that somebody else is me as far as God is concerned. He's saying, no, I know who you are. I know everything about you. And I know, especially in the way the Bible speaks about knowing, I know you in such a way as has loved you.

And I love you in a way that knows you and knows your heart. Something else about this license, this driving license, is nobody else can actually use this license and pretend that it's me.

I can't give it to somebody and say, you're okay, you can use this license, just pretend you're me and you'll be okay. I can't do that. I wouldn't want to do that anyway because that would be wrong.

But nobody can actually use this license apart from myself. Donna has her own license. She can't go and drive any of the cars or vehicles.

[9 : 13] But she wants to drive and say, yes, but my husband is qualified. And it's the same with us spiritually as well. We can't go to God and say, I'm a Christian because my mom or dad is a Christian.

We can't say to God, you have to receive me and take me to heaven because my mom loves you or my gran loves you. It has to be ourselves.

That's true for all of us whatever age we're at. And one other thing about this license I want to mention today, as well as giving me acceptance to drive, qualification to drive, and having a photo ID, and also that it can't be used by anyone but myself, I also have to look after it.

I need to look after it carefully because if I can't produce it, well, I've got a problem. If I was stopped next week by a traffic check or something like that, or if I did something wrong and sadly hit something or somebody in another car or whatever, a policeman would come along and say, have you got your driving license on you?

And if I didn't have it, well, I could produce it afterwards if it was at home, but if I'd lost it, it would be a problem, wouldn't it? So you have to look after your relationship with the Lord.

[10 : 36] How do we look after our relationship with the Lord? How do we look after it? Well, we do so by coming to church like we're doing today to worship Him. We look after it by privately, personally, worshiping Him and praying to Him and asking the Lord to help us each and every day.

So you look after your relationship with Jesus. You treat it carefully. You don't want to do anything that would actually bring shame upon your relationship with Jesus Himself or yourself.

So these are important things about my driving license. Much more important, though, about yourself and your relationship with God. So remember that God accepts you as you come to Jesus.

You know that He makes you one of His family. You need to do that for yourself. Nobody else can do it for you. You can't travel to heaven on anybody else's license.

And you must look after it as well, as all our older folks must as well. And that's so important for us in life, isn't it? Well, let's say the Lord's Prayer then together.

[11 : 51] Amen. Amen. Amen. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

Amen. Amen. We're going to sing verses again, this time Psalm 119, page 166. And the verses marked 145 to 152.

The tune this time is Eventide. I call with all my heart, Lord, answer me. And then all your decrees I will obey. I cry aloud to you, Lord, save my life, and I will keep your statutes every day.

We'll sing these four stanzas, verses 145 to 152. I call with all my heart. Lord, answer me. Amen. Amen.

[13 : 00] Amen. Amen. I call with all my heart, Lord, answer me.

And then all your decrees I will obey. I cry aloud to you, Lord, save my life, and I will keep your statutes every day.

I rise before the dawn of God for help. God, I have set my hope upon your word.

I stay awake throughout the earth of night, reflecting on your promises, O Lord.

Lord, in your loving kindness, hear my voice, and in your justice save and keep my life.

[14 : 32] For those who disregard your holy law, approach with schemes of wickedness and sight.

Yet you are near to those who seek you, Lord. All your commands are true and ever should.

Rest from your statutes, long ago I learned, that you have made them always to endure.

Now we're going to read from God's Word. Our reading this morning is from the Gospel of Mark, and chapter 12.

Gospel according to Mark, and chapter 12. And we're going to read from verse 28.

[15 : 50] I know the bulletin has from verse 18, but we'll begin at verse 28, where Jesus, having been disputing with the Sadducees, we read in the earlier verses, the Sadducees who didn't believe in the resurrection, and were testing Jesus by the way in which they asked him that question.

And Jesus answered them in the way you find there down to verse 27. God, as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he's not the God of the dead, but of the living.

Then at verse 28, one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, which commandment is the most important of all?

Jesus answered, the most important is, hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.

The second is this, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said to him, you are right, teacher.

[16 : 54] You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. And to love him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, you are not far from the kingdom of God. And after that, no one dared to ask him any more questions.

And as Jesus taught in the temple, he said, how can the scribes say that Christ is the son of David? David himself in the Holy Spirit declared, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.

David himself calls him Lord. So how is he his son? And the great throng heard him gladly. 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 and 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.

[18 : 17] 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.

Amen. May the Lord bless to us that reading of his word today. Let's again call upon his name in prayer. O Lord, our gracious God, we thank you for this opportunity today to give our minds anew to the teaching of your word and to call upon you in prayer to sing your praises, to know fellowship one with another and to seek fellowship with you as our God.

We give thanks today, Lord, for the many privileges we have in life, for the many things that you have given us and your providence that you continue to bestow upon us in your kindness.

Lord, we acknowledge that kindness today. We look around us in our own society, especially in different parts of the world where we find people in desperate need.

[19 : 41] We bless you that while we are always in need to some extent, while as your word tells us, the poor are always with us. Nevertheless, Lord, you have blessed us in such a way that we can say that we today have meant much by way of material blessings that so many other people in the world lack.

We thank you for all aspects of your kindness. We give thanks especially, Lord, in your kindness that you have brought us the gospel that many generations ago you brought to this place we live in, the gospel of Jesus Christ, the message of salvation.

We pray, Lord, as it has been with us as a community for all of these years, that you would enable us to prize it all the more, that you enable us, O Lord, to hold forth its teaching, not only by the word of our mouth, but the manner of our life.

We thank you today, Lord, that you give us the opportunity to show to the world what it means to belong to God and to his kingdom. We pray that our relationship with you will be more than one that is outward in show, like the scribes we read of in this passage.

Lord, help us, we pray inwardly and in our inmost soul to love you with all our heart, as we have also read, with all our mind, with all our understanding. Enable us, Lord, we pray to be thankful that you give us another opportunity today to extend our knowledge of you, to exercise our faith and love, and to show, Lord, that to the community around us that we indeed prize this day and prize this time of worship.

[21 : 26] We give thanks, Lord, for your word, this word that directs us in all aspects of life. We thank you that you have given us the conviction that it is your word, that you have given us, Lord, the knowledge that, whether we read of commands or promises or prophecies, some fulfilled, some yet to be fulfilled.

In all aspects of it, Lord, you still continue to speak to us. And we pray today that we may hear that voice, that your word may be a living word to us, that we will receive it by your grace and to our hearts, that we will treasure it there and seek to live by it as each day goes by.

And we thank you, Lord, for every way in which we have the help of others and are able to help others. We pray that our lives may be all the more useful as time goes on, that you would give us, Lord, by the grace of your Spirit to truly be living witnesses to you, holding forth that word of life so that others may come and see something of the beauty of the Lord and be drawn to him for themselves.

Remember those today, we pray, who still do not know you. We think especially of those in our community around us who today have no desire to be in a place of worship and who today may worship other ideologies and who may come to follow other ideas rather than the gospel of what it means to live a fulfilled life.

Remember us, Lord, as a community, we pray. Pour out upon us your blessing. We ask that you would return us to yourself and give us the blessing of your Spirit to guide us, to quicken us and to be in every aspect of our lives as your people, that strength and that stay that we require.

[23 : 21] Remember all those who, Lord, today have difficulties in their lives, different types of trial to contend with. we know that there are some, Lord, who belong to us as a congregation, some in our community that we know about, along with those who mourn the passing of loved ones.

Bless them all, we pray, and bless us all in our times of need as they are known to us. Help us to draw near to you, to draw our strength from you, that we too, Lord, will be able to sing more meaningfully these words that we have been singing.

I love the Lord because my voice and prayers heeded here. I, while I live, will call upon me, will call upon him who bowed to me his ear.

Grant us, Lord, thankfulness that you hear our prayers, that you read the thoughts and the concerns of our hearts. We pray today for the world in which we live.

We pray, Lord, for all places in the world, so many of them, Lord, where there is trouble, where there is terrorism, where there is war, where there is famine, where there is deprivation, where there is persecution, where there is, Lord, so much of those issues that we know are contrary to your will and are but the workings of human beings in their sinfulness and in their hatred for one another.

[24 : 45] Lord, remember today, we pray, the people of Moscow, the people of Russia, we know how much, Lord, they themselves have been involved in aggression and war against Ukraine in recent years and we pray today that you bless them as they have received such an event as has happened with the loss of so many lives in Moscow itself.

we pray that you would bless the regime over them. We pray that you would break in upon the hardness and darkness of heart as you have done many times with others.

Lord, we pray that the power of the gospel especially might come to prevail in their midst. We pray for those who are faithful to you throughout that great nation.

we ask that you would continue, Lord, to uphold them and strengthen them against aggression, against imprisonment, against threats and many other ways in which they are dealt with for their faithfulness to you.

Remember, too, the situation in the Middle East. We pray for the conflict in Gaza with Israel and with Hamas. Lord, we pray for all who are so affected by the tragedy of these things.

[26 : 01] and we ask that you would bless the situation in such a way as to bring peace. We pray, O gracious one, that you would bring glory to yourself and may your kingdom advance despite how difficult it is, Lord, for us to believe how can it advance in these circumstances.

Yet we know that it has in the past and we pray that it will be so in our day as well. And we ask that you would continue, Lord, to bless our own nation. Bless those who are over us in government.

We pray that you would grant to them, Lord, the wisdom, wisdom that is from on high, the wisdom that comes through a knowledge of yourself and of your truth. And, Lord, we pray that you would graciously bless our rulers.

We pray for them in Scotland and in Westminster who preside over us in government and in devolved administrations. We pray that you would grant, Lord, to turn us more and more into your own ways and to bless those who stand for your gospel, for your values in our parliament.

We pray that you would continue, Lord, to uphold them and to grant that they may be encouraged to keep on witnessing to you. Remember the royal family during these difficult days for them.

[27 : 18] Remember our king during his own illness and treatment. We commit him to you. We ask that you would bless him and bless Camilla as well. We pray that you'd bless them as a family.

We pray especially in these days, O Lord, that you would grant your blessing to Catherine as she has come to publicly declare her treatment for cancer.

We pray that that may be an encouragement to many others, O Lord. You would grant that there be a lessening of the interest in her and grant them some privacy so that they may, O Lord, find time together and together as a family to attend to these matters free from harassment.

We ask, Lord, that your blessing will be with all others today who are receiving treatment or anticipating such, who have gone through surgery, who are in hospital or in care homes or in the hospitals locally.

Bless them and bless those who tend to their needs. We ask that you would graciously hear us as we pray for them. We pray all these things confessing our own sins, confessing our need of cleansing and of your forgiveness.

[28 : 28] We ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Now, before we turn to Mark chapter 12, we're going to sing some more verses in Psalm 37.

Psalm number 37. That's on page 254. Singing verses 16 to 21. The tune is Grafenberg. A little that a just man hath is more and better far than is the wealth of many such as lewd and wicked are.

For sinners' arms shall broken be, but God the just sustains. God knows the just man's days and still their heritage remains. So that's verses 16 to 21.

A little that a just man hath. A little that a just man hath is more and better far, than is the wealth of many such as lewd and wicked are.

For sinners' arms shall broken be, but God the just sustains.

[29 : 59] God knows the just man's days and still their heritage remains.

They shall not be ashamed when they the evil time do see.

And when the days of famine are, they satisfied shall be.

But wicked men and foes of God as fat of lambs decay, they shall consume yea, and to school they shall fortune away.

The wicked borrows but the same again be done the pain.

[31 : 20] Whereas the righteous mercy shows and gives his own away.

Let's turn for a short time this morning now to Mark chapter 12. Mark 12 at verse 41. We'll look at this short passage.

Jesus 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 them 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. Well, we're all very much aware each day goes by that much revolves around money in our society and in our own lives personally as well.

[32 : 39] It's hardly a news bulletin without some reference or other to the economy or to inflation or to bank interest rates. So much of that is current news and has been news all down through the generations.

We regularly hear about those who have massive bonuses, whether it's in industry or in banking, where again money is central to the detail that's given us there.

We hear about the massive wages of certain footballers who are at the top of their profession and who earn hundreds of thousands of pounds a week, amounting to millions a year.

Huge sums of money. We hear about lottery gains. So many other things you hear from day to day that center around money or riches or the use of money or something or other to do with that.

And the Bible has much to say to us about money and about the use of money, about our own use of money, about how to regard money, about what our attitude should be to money, to the possession of it, or to seeing its use elsewhere.

[33 : 53] And Jesus also included it as here in his teachings. And that should actually make us conscious that because it's given that sort of place in the Bible, it's not by any means the most important topic the Bible deals with, but it does deal with it to such an extent that we shouldn't just dismiss it as unimportant among our thoughts of things which are morally or spiritually important.

And Jesus here is really driving home a very important lesson on what sort of perspective we should have, not only in our money, but also on our support of God's cause with money, on what we give to the upholding of the gospel, and how we use our money in that way to be useful, we trust, for the gospel itself and for the things of God.

Well, the Lord, as he, as we brought, as is brought out in this passage here, the Lord in this context sat opposite the treasury in the temple where the money box was located, where people put their offerings into the box for the upholding of the things of the temple.

And there are two things we can take from it. First of all, the Lord's observance of the offerings. The Lord's observance. He was deliberately saying to us, he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box.

He watched the people. It's not a mere observance. It's an observance with a certain amount of assessment in it.

[35 : 32] Jesus didn't just watch this as it was going on casually or just happened to notice out of the corner of his eye. He deliberately studied what was going on. And any time you see in the Bible that Jesus is observing keenly something that's going on, whatever it is, you and I have to take note of that and say, well, Jesus is interested in that.

This is something that he himself observes keenly. That's what he was doing here. He sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. We might think that that's really quite unimportant or relatively unimportant, but to Jesus it mattered.

And because it mattered to Jesus, he observed it. He was looking at it. He was studying it. And of course, that follows through into what we do ourselves.

It was important enough for Jesus to observe it carefully and actually to bring out the teaching you find in the following verses from it so that those who were listening could gain from that if they were really keen to listen properly to what he was saying.

It wasn't enough for Jesus to actually note it and comment on it. He brought out this teaching that you find in the verses which follow. And it's important for us, of course, sounds a fairly straightforward point to make, but it's one we very often forget, isn't it, that everything we do is observed by the Lord.

[37 : 00] Even the most common actions of life, they're observed by the Lord. Not just observed by the Lord, but measured by the Lord, weighed up by the Lord. Even the money we put in the plate or the offering we have online or wherever it is.

It's observed by the Lord. The Lord is taking note of that. The Lord is measuring that. The Lord is seeing the attitude of the heart in that. It's not the amount we put in.

It's not the amount of our time that we give to His service. Not the amount of money we use to support the gospel. It's primarily the attitude behind it. It's the direction of our mind.

It's the thoughts of our hearts as we go about all our actions in life. Well, the Lord observes keenly what we're doing. That's what you find in verses 41 to 42 here, that He observed them, and He observed how rich people, many rich people, or they put in large sums.

And then there came along this poor widow, and she put in two small copper coins. Now, Jesus is making an assessment. When you read these words, it shows us that in Jesus' mind, He's measuring this.

[38 : 14] He's weighing this. He's weighing it up. He's comparing the offerings. And He's comparing the offerings and taking note of the people who are involved and what their position in life is in relation to their offerings.

They have many rich, He says, and there was this one poor widow. Now, there's nothing here about condemning those rich people for having the riches. The Bible never does that.

Abraham was a very rich man. Job was a very rich man. There are many rich people down through the years that have come to serve the Lord in a way that's acceptable and commendable, and they're never criticized for having the riches.

It's not having money that's the problem. It's not having an abundance of money that's the problem. That's not being millionaires. If we're millionaires, that's not the problem. What Jesus is measuring is not just what we do with it, but what the thought of our heart is as we do whatever we do with it.

That's what He's doing here. He's assessing. He's carrying out a comparison, not condemning the rich for being rich, not condemning the poor widow for being poor.

[39 : 21] You see, for Jesus, it's all a matter of the heart, isn't it? It's all a matter of what's internal, and what is internal ought to match what is external as well in our lives.

The attitudes, the mindset, the heart, the motives. And then we find the same thing in the previous verses that we read together from verse 38 in the teaching.

He said, Beware of the scribes who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces, have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers.

They will receive the greater condemnation. You can see at once there's a very close connection between that and the passage we're looking at that follows on from that because that's a passage regarding the scribes.

It's to do with externals, to do with making a big show of themselves. It's a matter of drawing attention to themselves so that people will say, Aren't they really generous? Aren't they really good?

[40 : 25] For a pretense. They make long prayers. Jesus today is not interested in how long you pray for. He's not interested really in what kind of clothes you wear.

It's what's in your heart and what's in my heart. The thoughts of your mind, the attitude, the motives you have, the unseen things of the soul.

That's what Jesus really is measuring most of all, more so than the outside and the externals. You have the same in chapter 7, a famous passage you find in the Gospels here, Matthew and Mark and Luke.

You find chapter 7 there. I don't want to go through it just now. It took time. But it's to do with traditions and commandments which the Pharisees especially were laying such great store by.

And of course, Jesus went on to say, well, this is what defiles a person not to eat with hands that are unwashed, but what defiles them is what actually comes from inside and then is seen outwardly.

[41 : 30] Evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness.

All these evil things come from within and they defile the person. That's what defilement is, Jesus. It's rooted in the heart. It emerges from the soul.

And that's especially what his mind was set upon, what his teaching really set forth as important. So you see, we don't measure things by outward things, outward show.

We actually measure as far as we're able to by genuinely seeing what is it that comes out of people's hearts. Are they kind or are they not? Are they loving or are they not?

And so on, as Jesus himself sets before us. Well, the Lord's observance of the offerings. But secondly, let's look at the Lord's verdict of the offerings. And you know the phrase nowadays that's often mentioned, less is more.

[42 : 33] Well, you could apply that in some sense to what you find here in the difference between the widow and these rich people. How is it that he says she has put in more than all of those rich people put in?

Now, obviously, literally, she had these two pennies, two copper coins amounted to a penny, it says here. It's really a very small item of money in those days.

We're told, in fact, that it was about one hundredth of a day's wage, an average wage for a day. This is one hundredth. This is what she had to live upon, one hundredth of a day's wage.

What did she do with it? She put it all into the treasury. She gave it to the temple. She gave it to the Lord. She gave it to God. But you see, the difference is the reason that he can say she put more in than all these other ones, the difference really is summed up, if you like, by these words, out of.

You see, as you go through it, she gave out of her poverty. They gave out of their abundance. That's what makes the difference.

[43 : 46] That's what Jesus measured. They gave out of their abundance. She was poor. She was very poor, but she gave all that she had there to God. This was all she had to live on. That's how Mark puts it.

She has put everything in. This is what Jesus said. All that she had to live on. And yet she put it all into the treasury because she said that really rightly belongs to God. I owe it to Him. I love Him.

Therefore, that's where the money is going. And the rich, well, after they had put in whatever money they put in, it was an abundance. Out of their abundance they put in whatever it was, but it was out of their abundance, not out of their poverty.

And they would have much left. Whatever sums they put in, Jesus knew, they would have much left over after that. And so you see, when the Lord measures our contributions, as we said earlier, He actually weighs these contributions in His own mind, morally, spiritually, He weighs them.

Not just talking about the money we put on the plate, or that's not left out of it. It's not how we, the only thing that we apply this to. It's the measure of our time.

[44 : 56] How much time do we give to the Lord? How much time do we give to prayer? How much time do we give to reading a Bible? How much time do we give to speaking about the Lord to others?

I'm just guilty of this as anybody else in measuring the time that I give to all of these things because I find so often that all too easily I'm distracted and I've given so much time, whether it's emails or my phone or whatever else it is, social media.

It's a huge eater up of our time, especially social media, isn't it? Huge amounts of our time if we're not very controlled about it. And when the Lord measures our time and our money and our use of our facilities, our use of our resources as we have talking about personally here as well as congregationally, well, he's weighing that up and he's studying it and he's asking, how does that compare with the time that you're giving to me?

How does it compare to the time you're giving to just sitting down with your Bible and praying and asking me to bless that? Well, there's the weighing up by Jesus of the issues of life and he doesn't measure your contribution or mine, whether it's financial or in terms of time or service or whatever else, he doesn't measure our contribution by comparing it with what others do.

As I know, he's comparing here the poor widow with those who put of their abundance these rich people into the treasury. But when he comes to you and to me and asks ourselves how we are in relation to supporting his cause, giving of our time and so on, he doesn't say, well, consider so and so and see what they're doing.

[46 : 50] He's just saying, how much of your time, how much of your finance, how much of your resources out of the total are you giving to me? And it's important as well, isn't it, that we see this widow, you see, we could say that she might have decided when she came to put her offering in the treasury, she might have decided, well, I've only got those two tiny coins left, it's hardly worth much at all.

I'll put one into the treasury and at least I'll have the other one left for myself. She didn't do that. She put both into the treasury, leaving herself without any.

Why was that? Because her mindset was that she valued God. She valued God and loved God. Obviously, she wouldn't have done it otherwise.

And she said to herself, well, I'll give these to God and God will give me back as he sees fit. I'm sure that would be her way of looking at it. And isn't that how it is really with ourselves as well?

Because ultimately, we're not actually in the ultimate sense giving of our time or of our money to the church. Yes, I know it's perfectly proper to think of the money that you put in the collection plate or that you put in the envelope or that you offer by standing order or whatever.

[48 : 17] Of course, that's given to the church in that sense of it. It's given to the church so that it's looked after by those who are in charge of these things and used and allocated, given to central funds or distributed locally or whatever it is.

Of course, it is given to the church, but not in the ultimate sense. Because when you do that, organizing your funds online by standing order or putting your envelope on the plate, what you're really saying in your mind is, Lord, this is for you.

This is for you. It is you who deserves this. You are the one that I have in mind as I give this. As I give of my time to prayer, to bind with study, to attending church, to putting my money in the plate.

Lord, this is for you. You are the one who deserves it. You are the one I acknowledge has been so good to me. It's the least I can do in return to give you of my time, of my resources, accordingly.

And that's because you want his cause to grow, isn't it? You want him to be glorified. You want him to be praised. You want his cause in a wider sense as well as in the congregation sense to grow and to flourish.

[49 : 37] And what you give by way of your time or by way of your finance is designed in your heart and your mindset to contribute towards that increase.

You know, that's the basis for voluntary service. Not everybody who serves in this congregation by any means is paid for it. It's a privilege for us as ministers of the gospel to be paid centrally by the church through the funds that you put into the collection plate or in your standing order or whatever and that comes by way of our stipend or a proportion of it at least.

There goes to mission and other works as well that the church is involved with. But voluntary service is such a blessed thing, isn't it? Because this congregation, for example, as you think of, as you look at that bulletin sheet today and you think of all of those meetings that are involved in this coming week, God willing, you think of the number of hours of voluntary service that go towards the upholding of these meetings, of these services, of these activities.

You're a blessed congregation. You're a privileged congregation to have people giving of their time so willingly, whether it's looking after tweenies or teaching in Sunday school or Bible class or whatever other activities require voluntary service and there are many others.

You can see them listed as I've said. But what a privileged congregation you are to have people who are willing to give of their time to the cause of the Lord, not for what they can get out of it themselves, but what they hope will contribute towards an increase in the followers of the Lord, in those who serve the Lord, in those who love the Lord.

[51 : 25] And if you can, if you're not presently involved voluntarily in some of the things that are going on, whether it's Fridays at the Free or any of these more practical type meetings, just please consider, can I actually contribute more to this?

Or can I do something more than I'm doing? Can I actually offer myself for this other activity that I see are in need of volunteers?

Because all of that really is part of a contribution to the Lord. All of that belongs to a willing service for the Lord. All of that should be based on the pattern of this poor widow who had all too little.

And maybe you're saying of yourself, and I'm saying of myself today, well, all that I can contribute to the Lord is not very much, really. Perhaps I can make a cup of tea during some of the fellowships or whatever, or perhaps I can be involved in a practical sense with WFM meetings or whatever.

It all counts. It's all weighed by the Lord. It's all observed by Him. For all of that, we're thankful and He takes note, friends, of all that you're doing.

[52 : 44] And He takes note in a way that commends for it, as He did this poor widow. And that brings us finally, the final point is the Bible's own or God's definition of what it is to be rich.

Here are all these rich people and they're putting all of this into the treasury, whatever amount they had and they still had much left over. Who in this passage is truly rich?

Who is rich in the highest sense? It's not these people. It's this poor widow. She's put in everything she's got. But is she rich in her soul? Is she rich in her thinking?

Is she rich in her mindset? Is she rich in her relationship of God? Yes, she is. She's not doing it for show. She's doing it because she loves the Lord.

She's doing it because she values what she has in the temple by way of God's ordinances. And how much that's part of the teaching of Jesus elsewhere is obvious when you go through the Gospels, when you follow through into the Epistles as well, and indeed when you go to the Old Testament as well.

[53 : 52] Think, for example, of Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew chapter 6, you have verses 19 to 21. We often read these.

Verses 19 to 21, Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys, where thieves do not break in and steal.

Not any punches home these points by saying, For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. If we're set on the things of this world, that's where your heart's going to be.

If your mindset is gaining how much we can from the things of this life, that's where our heart's going to be. If our mind is set on the Lord, on the praises of God, on the worship of God, on the service of God, on the things of heaven, that's where our heart is.

And serving the Lord is really the same as laying up for ourselves treasures in heaven. That's the way the Lord actually presents it to us.

[55 : 03] You could go to Luke chapter 12, that passage where, weird of the person who had so much in the produce of his land, the man, parable of the rich fool, it's usually called, and he says, take, Jesus said, take care, be on your guard against covetousness, all covetousness, but one's life does not consist in the abundance of one's possession.

Then he told them a parable saying, the land of a rich man produced plentifully. And he thought to himself, what shall I do? I have nowhere to store my crops. He said, I will do this. I will tear down my barns and build larger ones.

And there I will store all my grains and my goods and my goods. And I will say to my soul, soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years. Relax, eat, drink, be merry.

God said to him, fool, this night your soul is required of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be? So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich towards God.

Rich towards God. That's the key to a happy life. Rich towards God. You see that passage, this man who had this land was just planning for himself how to increase, how to grow richer, how to get more.

[56 : 29] And all the time the Lord was measuring his life and saying, he doesn't realize tonight he's going to die. And all the things he's promised himself, they'll be gone. They won't be in his grasp anymore.

Whose will they be? Well, what does it matter? If we're no longer here in this world, does it matter really whose they will be? What matters is where we end up, isn't it? And then 1 Timothy, just to show that the apostles built on the teaching of the Lord as well.

1 Timothy chapter 6 and verses 6 to 10. This is Timothy being advised by Paul with regard to his ministry. And Paul regarding Timothy's ministry, giving all this advice to him.

Teach, he says, and urge these things. Amongst them, he says in verse 6, Now there is great gain and godliness with contentment, for we brought nothing into the world and we cannot take anything out of it.

But if we have food and clothing, and with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

[57 : 40] for the love of money is the root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

You see, that was a problem that the apostles and Timothy had to deal with. People who had been part of the church or were part of the church and were under the teaching of the gospel, but had given more time and more concern for how much money they would build up, how much they would have of material things, and so they wandered away from the faith.

That's what it's saying. That's why it's saying, beware of these things. And that passage goes on in verse 17. As for the rich in this present age, now just listen to the number of times the word riches or treasure is used by Paul in these few verses.

As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty nor to set their hopes on uncertain riches, but on God who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure, riches for themselves as a good foundation for the future so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

[59 : 06] Let me ask myself today, what's my most valuable asset in this life? Different ways in which you can reply to that for yourselves as well.

What's my most valuable asset in this life? You might say, it's my wife, my partner, my loved ones and of course that very much comes into the picture.

But of course the Bible tells us what it has to be God, doesn't it? It has to be the Lord. It has to be His salvation. It has to be eternal life as He provides that for us.

In Matthew chapter 13, that chapter that deals with so many parables that Jesus actually taught. Chapter 13 of Matthew, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which a man found and covered up.

Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. And then there's the parable of the pearl following. Treasure hidden in a field, buried in a field which a man found and covered up.

[60 : 13] He discovered it for himself. Just read the other day of a large nugget of gold found in England. Shropshire by a man who was out along with others with a metal detector and the man actually said that the metal detector wasn't actually working properly even.

But it pinged and as he dug down about six or so inches he discovered this large nugget of gold about a bit bigger than a 50 pence piece which is large for a nugget of gold.

It's reckoned to be the largest nugget of gold ever found in England. And it's going on the market it's estimated to be worth between 30 and 40 thousand pounds.

What's it worth? It's worth between 30 and 40 thousand. How much is our soul worth? How much is Jesus worth? How much is he valuable to us?

Well surely in the words of the old gospel song it's for us the way it was for this writer. I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold.

[61 : 22] I'd rather be his than have riches untold. I'd rather have Jesus than houses or land. I'd rather be led by his nail-pierced hand. I'd rather have Jesus than worldly applause.

I'd rather be faithful to his dear cause. I'd rather have Jesus than worldwide fame. Yes, I'd rather be true to his holy name than to be the king of a vast domain.

And be held in sin's dread sway. I'd rather have Jesus than anything this world affords today.

May God bless these thoughts on his word to us. Let's pray. Our gracious God, we thank you for the riches of eternal life. We bless you that you have brought these freely to us.

We give thanks, Lord, that your word teaches us so often of the cost of our redemption to the Lord Jesus Christ himself. And therefore, Lord, as we consider the kind of death you died, that it was a death in which the bearing of the sin of your people brought you such condemnation and such suffering and death, help us, Lord, we pray, to value all that has been achieved for us by it.

[62 : 41] Give us today to have a mindset on the riches that are spiritual and eternal. Nevertheless, Lord, help us not to despise whatever earthly riches you give us to enjoy, but help us to use them wisely and to be concerned that they be used for your glory and for your praise.

Receive our thanks, now we pray, pardoning our sin for Jesus' sake. Amen. We're going to conclude our worship this morning singing in Psalm 62.

That's on page 80 of Psalm 62. Tune this before the throne and verses 7 to 12. My honor and salvation rest on God, my rock and mighty fort.

O people, trust in him always. To him alone pour out your heart. The low-born man is but a breath. The high-born man is but a lie. Weighed in a balance side by side, they come to nothing but a sigh.

Do not seek after wealth by force or triumph in ill-gotten gain. And even though your goods increase, set not your heart on what is vain.

[63 : 52] Verses 7 to 12 of Psalm 62. My honor and salvation rest on God, O people, my rock and mighty fort.

O people, trust in him always. To him alone pour out your heart.

The low-born man is but a breath. The high-born man is but a lie.

Within a balance side by side, they come to nothing but a sigh.

They come to nothing but a sigh. Do not seek after wealth by force, for triumph in ill-gotten gain.

[65 : 07] And even though your goods increase, set not your heart on what is vain.

My God has spoken, I have heard, that you are strong and loving, Lord, each one according to his deeds.

You will assuredly reward. You will assuredly reward.

After the benediction, please allow me to get to the main door. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and evermore.

Amen. Amen.

[66 : 48] Amen.