

Jesus on Sacrificial Giving

WARM-UP

- Who would you consider a selfless person? What makes this person selfless?
- What was the greatest act of service someone did for you? How did this gesture benefit you?
- What is your most prized possession? If you had to give it away, who would you give it to? What made you choose him or her?

WORD

“ . . . 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.” **MARK 12:44**

(Read also **MARK 12:41-43**.)

In this passage, Jesus and His disciples sat near the temple treasury and observed the people putting money into it, including a widow who put in everything she had. A widow in Jesus' time would normally not have a source of income, as it was not common for women to have a job. Yet, in spite of the lack of financial security, she gave not just a portion of what she had, but all she had to live on. Today, we will take a closer look at what Jesus was telling His disciples about what the rich people and the widow gave in the offering.

1 The rich people gave to be noticed.

And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. **MARK 12:41**

In Bible times, the only currency was in coins. These coins made noise as they fell into the offering box, and it would be obvious to others if anyone gave large sums of money. But the rich people gave out of their abundance. Though the amount was high, their giving did not take too much from them. They may have given to comply with the Law or even for the admiration of those watching. We may sometimes perform acts that seem externally good, but without a true devotion to God or love for our fellow man. God, however, looks at the heart and not at external actions. He knows if we are truly committed to Him or are after the applause and praise of men. What are some external good acts that people might perform without the heart for God? What does Matthew 6:1-4 say about giving?

2 The poor widow gave sacrificially.

And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. **MARK 12:42**

Though the widow's offering seemed very small, Jesus showed His disciples that she had actually given more than all the rich people put together. The value of her offering was determined not by the literal value of what she gave, but by what it had cost her to give it. She, out of her poverty, had put in everything she had, all she had to live on. God sees the motives of our hearts and the true value of what we give: whether it is for others, for ourselves, or out of true love and devotion to Him. Like the widow, giving sacrificially also shows how we trust God—so much that we do not hold on to what we have, but confidently give. Has there been a time that God asked you to give not only generously, but sacrificially?

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APPLICATION

- Do you give because you feel like it is your duty or do you give because you trust God to provide all that you need? Do you want to trust God's ability to provide for you today?
- What are the reasons that sometimes stop you from giving sacrificially? What is one thing you can do to overcome it this week?
- How can you give sacrificially to a family member or a friend? Be deliberate in setting a specific day to do it this week.

