

Giving from the Heart (Deuteronomy 16:17, Proverbs 3:9-10 & Mark 12:41-44)

8-Feb-2026

Deuteronomy 16:17

Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you.

Proverbs 3:9-10

⁹ Honor the Lord with your wealth,
with the firstfruits of all your crops;
¹⁰ then your barns will be filled to overflowing,
and your vats will brim over with new wine.

Mark 12:41-44

The Widow's Offering

⁴¹ Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. ⁴² But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.

⁴³ Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. ⁴⁴ They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”

There are Bibles in front of you

And a sermon outline

Please have your Bibles opened up at Mark 12 from verse 41.

Let me pray first...

Intro

Remember last week?

Jesus rebuked (told off) the **teachers of the law** because they were **ripping off widows!** (12:40)

This week's story – includes a widow!

It can't possibly be a coincidence!

There is a **general theme** throughout the Bible where **God is concerned about those who are vulnerable** – like the widows, the poor, and little children. And God is not real impressed when the vulnerable are mistreated or not looked after properly (see Exodus 22:22-24; Psalm 41:1-3)

The Giving (vv41-42)

We pick up the story in the Temple in Jerusalem.

[Slide-Temple]

In **William Barclay's Bible commentary** (especially on **Mark 12:41–44**), he explains that in the **Temple Courts where women were allowed**, in the Jerusalem Temple there were **13 trumpet-shaped chests** for offerings. They were called ***shofar or trumpet chests*** because their narrow opening and wide base looked like trumpets.

Jesus deliberately sits opposite this Temple area and observes people putting money into the treasury in the temple courts (v41)

The rich people threw in large amounts of money (v41)

Their Large gifts would have made a **lot of noise** **[like pokies dishing out a jackpot]**

And it's likely these rich people made a bit of a performance – so people noticed them and saw what they were putting in!

[Slide-Widow]

What a contrast between the show-off teachers of the law from last week – ripping off widows – and here comes a poor widow this week - who puts in **two very small copper coins** (v42)

I wonder if she was one of the widows that had been ripped off by the teachers of the law?

The coins = were **leptons** in Greek = the smallest and least valuable bronze/copper coin in circulation in Jesus' time = known as a **mite** in the Old KJV of the Bible. = the smallest coin in circulation = worth about 6 minutes of a daily wage at the time of Jesus.

The widows two tiny coins would have hardly made any noise! **[click click]**

Jesus' Observation (vv43-44)

Jesus observes what's going **[it would be like us sitting in the food court at Lake Haven Shops and watching the world go by]**

Now remember, Jesus is not only **fully human** – He is also **fully God**
 So as He observes – He **knows people's hearts** – He **knows their thoughts** – and
He knows their motives

[Slide-Observation]

Jesus says – v43 - ***“Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others”***

More than **ALL** the others – not just more than one of them – but **ALL** of them put together!

How can Jesus say that?

Well - V44 – Because – *The rich people gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.*

The rich people may well have given a lot of money – but they had plenty of money still to give.

Whereas the widow gave everything she had!

One Sunday morning, the minister of a church went outside to find a group of children who were unable to get inside for Sunday school because the building was too crowded. One of those children was six-year-old Hattie. When the minister saw Hattie, he picked her up and carried her into the Sunday school class where he found her a seat. He told Hattie he hoped that one day the church would be able to build a building large enough for all the children.

Two years later, Hattie died, and the minister preached at her funeral service. After the service, Hattie's mum handed the minister a small purse containing 57 cents. She said Hattie had been saving her pennies to help the church build a new Sunday school building. The minister took the 57 cents to church the next Sunday and told the congregation about Hattie. The people were so inspired by Hattie's gift that they gave faithfully until they built a wonderful, new Sunday School building — big enough for all the children who wanted to attend.

I'm sure Jesus would say that Hattie gave more than anyone to build the new Sunday School building. Hattie's heart was pure and she gave all that she had.

[Source: Sermon for Kids]

In our Old Testament reading from **Deuteronomy 16:17** – God told the people of Israel, through Moses, *Each of you must bring a gift in **proportion** to the way the Lord your God has blessed you.*

The principle is - if God blessed a person with abundance their gift/offering should be in **proportion** to how much they've been blessed. These rich people have been blessed – but it seems they are not giving in proportion to how much they've been blessed! They may have given 10% or maybe less? They were not really giving sacrificially!

Whereas the widow gave 100% - she gave a far greater proportion than what she had been blessed. She sacrificed everything.

In our second OT reading from **Proverbs 3:9-10**

Proverbs 3:9 says *Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the **firstfruits** of all your crops*

Firstfruits here – is the first of the crops or the first of the flocks. The **firstfruits were usually the best. And they were given to God!**

So the principle here was a) to **make God first priority** and b) to **give God your best!**

The question is: Were the rich people making God their first priority or was being rich their first priority? Were the rich people giving God their best or just being skimpy and at the same time looking for accolades?

In contrast – the widow makes God her first priority and she gave her best to Him! And no-one really even noticed! But Jesus did!

Lessons

There are **some lessons** to be learnt from all of this...

[Slide-Lessons]

1. 1st - **God measures the gift** not by what we give but by what we keep back for ourselves
2. 2nd - The value of the gift is not the amount given but the **cost to the giver**
 - a. The rich people wouldn't miss what they gave
 - b. The widow gave everything – she would surely miss that!
3. 3rd - **God measures the gift by the sacrifice** made by the person giving. In 2 Sam 24:21-24 there is an example of this: King David **refused a free gift** of a threshing floor from a man named Araunah and **insisted on paying** for Araunah's threshing floor and oxen, because David believed that an offering to the LORD must **cost him something**. He bought the site at full price and then offered the sacrifice there, **showing that true worship involves personal sacrifice, not convenience or charity at someone else's expense.**
4. 4th - What matters to God – is not what a person has but their **devotion to God in their hearts** – which causes a person to give at great personal cost. **So people should be measured by their faith not their wealth!**
5. 5th - **God loves a cheerful giver**

The Apostle Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 9:6-7:

⁶Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷Each of you should give

what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

6. 6th - the Bottom line is – **Everything belongs to God – we only have anything because God has allowed us to have it! And even though we have it – it's is, not ours!** (Deut 10:14, Psalm 24:1, Psalm 89:11, 1 Cor 10:26).
7. 7th - Some might criticize the widow for being reckless and not providing for her future and becoming dependent on the Jewish welfare system (Deut 24:19-21; 26:12-13)

But Jesus doesn't see it that way

And in fact, when He was on Earth – **Jesus' life teaches us how to live to please and glorify God the Father**

Jesus chose voluntary poverty – He said “**The Son of Man has no place to rest His head!**” (Luke 9:58)

He counselled a rich ruler to “**Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven**” (Luke 18:22)

He taught the disciples to trust in God's providence – **not to worry about what you need – God knows what you need – so instead, Jesus said to seek the Kingdom of God first!** (Matt 6:31-33)

(pause)

Jesus is STILL watching How people give today!

Response

[Slide-Response]

Is this passage – just about money?

Or is it about our heart and giving?

In our simple story today from Mark - The rich people gave a contribution [and probably a large amount] – but the widow gave her all from her heart! God doesn't want our contributions – He wants all of our lives!

Jesus gave His all for us on the Cross at Calvary – because He loves us.

Surely our **response** to His love - is to love others as He has loved us (John 13:34-35)

Jesus loved from the heart

Jesus loved sacrificially

And **He calls us to show that same love of His to others.**

If that sounds familiar – it should - it's exactly **our vision** as a church – **to transform our community with the love of Jesus!**

So, in what ways might we give?

Giving isn't limited to money alone. We give of ourselves in many ways:

- Money
- Time
- Experience
- Expertise
- Wisdom and advice
- Worship
- Devotion
- Prayer

And in every one of these areas, the widow's offering asks us to pause and reflect.

[Slide-Challenge]

Challenge

A Challenge for us...

Three heart-check questions

1. Are we making God our priority when it comes to giving of ourselves?

Do our lives show that God comes first — or do our lives show that God gets our leftovers!

2. Are we giving God our best — or are we holding back?

The widow didn't give what was easy; she gave what cost her.

Real giving always costs us something.

3. Are we giving all we can to the Lord and His people — in the areas of – money, time, experience, expertise, wisdom, worship, devotion and prayer?

[Slide-Final Challenge]

A final challenge

A final challenge

What is one way you can give with a “widow’s heart” this week — fully trusting God and not seeking recognition?

It might be:

- A quiet act of generosity no one else knows about
- Giving time to someone who is difficult

- Giving time that means missing something you enjoy
- Trusting God by giving when it feels risky
- Serving without thanks or acknowledgement – without looking for a pat on the back!

The widow's gift wasn't impressive.

It wasn't noticed by others.

But Jesus saw it — and called her faithful.

Likewise our giving doesn't have to be impressive or noticed – just faithful – and from the heart - and Jesus will see it!

Let's pray...

Heavenly Father, we thank You for teaching us through the example of the widow. Help us to give with faith, trusting You completely, and to serve You with hearts fully devoted, not for show, but from love and dependence on You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.