

WIDOWS OF THE BIBLE

WIDOW'S MITE: LESSON FOUR

by Sandy Harber

"And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury. For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living." Mark 12:43-44

"And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had." Luke 21:3-4

After watching all the rich people cast their offerings into the treasury Jesus held His peace. He said nothing. Then the poor widow came along with her two copper coins and cast them into one of the trumpet-shaped treasure chests. Jesus called His disciples to His side. The widow's gift provided Him with the opportunity to teach His followers something new. He had already warned them against giving like the rich hypocrites did to be seen of men. He had already taught them that their gift was to be between them and their God. He had already explained that making a public display of their giving would rob them of their godly reward; instead, the admiration of the people was their reward (Mt. 6:1-4).

Jesus told His disciples that they needed to look at the act of giving a different way. See it from God's point of view, not man's. Men saw the amount of money that the rich cast into the treasury and were impressed. The greater the amount of money given, the more men admired the giver. As the Lord explained to Samuel, "man looketh on the outward appearance" (I Sam. 16:7). Samuel took one look at David's eldest brother Eliab and concluded that here was the next king of Israel. Eliab was tall and strong, a seasoned soldier in King Saul's army. His outward appearance was regal. But he was not God's choice.

God looked deeper. He bypassed the "outward" and went for the heart. He found what He was looking for in David, a teenaged shepherd boy, the youngest of eight brothers, who did not "appear" to be a candidate for the position of king. But, God saw into David's heart and said, "this is he (i.e. the one I choose)" (I Sam. 16:12).

Jesus showed His disciples that God was not looking at how much the giver put into the treasury but how much he kept back for himself. The rich men cast "much" into the treasury out of their "abundance." They had plenty left for themselves after their giving. In contrast, the widow did not have much money to give. Two mites, one farthing, one sixty-fourth of a denarius (penny), was all she had. She cast the whole of her money into the Temple treasury and kept back nothing for herself.

What happened after she left the Temple? The Bible doesn't tell us. We only know that she didn't have any other money to fall back on. What sustained her? I can only guess that it was her faith that sustained her. And I'm sure that God provided for her in some way because "you can't out-give God."

The poor widow gave God everything she had. She held nothing back. That is what God wants from all of us. Everything. Hold nothing back for ourselves. Turn over to Him your time, your talents, and your money. He will take them and use them for His glory and you will receive the blessing.

"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." II Corinthians 9:8