

The Widow's Mites.

Mark 12:41-44.

Sunday morning, September 21, 2008.

A. One poor widow. Vs. 41, 42.

A. Jesus sat opposite the treasury.

This last day of Jesus public ministry in the temple was coming to a close. A lot had happened in this day, and so we find the Lord sitting in the Woman's Court of the temple where the treasury was located.

Thirteen chests with trumpet shaped receptacles were located here; each one was designated towards a certain aspect of the temple ministry and maintenance.

B. "He saw how the people put money into the treasury; and many who were rich put in much."

1. It would have been the hour of the evening sacrifice which started at 3.00 pm. The widow came with her offering to worship the Lord in the woman's court which was as near to the temple structure as she was allowed to get.
2. The Lord not only saw what people put into the treasury (seeing that many who were rich put in much, and the widow put in two mites), He also saw how they put the money into the treasury, meaning what their hearts were like.
3. How did the Lord know how people put the money into the treasury? The Spirit of God searches not only the deep things of God 1 Cor. 2:10, but also the depths of the human heart. Rom 8:27, Hebr. 4:12,13. The Lord Jesus had the Spirit of God resting upon Him "not in measure," John 3:34, meaning that the fullness of the Spirit of God rested on the Lord during His days on earth, whereas we are the recipients of "the earnest of the Spirit," that is a provisional measure of the Spirit.

Application:

Jesus still sits in his temple today. In the Person of His Spirit He is pleased to meet with His people in the temple of His church, and is seated among us. As it was in the days of his earthly ministry so He is still concerned about the what and the how of our giving.

C. "Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans."

The average daily wage for a laborer was a denarius. It would provide food for a family for one day. The denarius was subdivided into smaller coins, the assarius. Sixteen of them made a denarius. The assarius was further subdivided into quadrans. Four quadrans to an assarius. Finally the quadrans was subdivided into two mites. The copper mite was smaller than our dime and as thin as a leaf. Its worth was considerably less than our penny.

II. A final teaching opportunity in the temple.

"He called His disciples together and said to them..."

A. This is the final recorded teaching time in the temple of Jesus' earthly ministry.

B. So significant does the Lord think what He witnessed that He called His disciples together over it and instructs them about the significance of the widow's actions.

- C. The Lord rivets their attention to the widow's actions with His characteristic "verily" or "assuredly I say to you..."
- He does not want them to miss the significance of this woman's faith and love which drove her to give both mites when she could have given just one. Her faith and love drove her to do so in the face of her great poverty.
- "Has not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith?" James 2:5.

Application:

There is a comfort and a warning in our Lord's reaction to the widow's actions.

We should be comforted that the Lord does not overlook the smallest of our devotions when they flow from a heart of faith and love.

We should be warned that mere outward actions, no matter how large and elaborate, are not regarded highly by the Lord.

III. And lessons from generosity out of poverty.

This poor widow in the temple was not alone in perfecting generosity out of poverty.

- A. The widow to whom Elijah was sent in Zarephath manifested the same spirit.
1. She was asked for her final two mites in the form of a little flour and a little oil so that God's servant might have something to eat.
 2. In faith she entrusts herself and the little oil and flour she had to the Lord, and sacrifices her "two mites" to feed his servant Elijah.
 3. The Lord proved to this widow and her little son that He is the Father of the fatherless and the husband of the widow.
- B. The Macedonian Christians of 2 Cor. 8:1-5.
1. They perfected the riches of their liberality out of their deep poverty.
 2. They entrusted themselves to the Lord first, and then by the will of God to the ministering to the needs of God's people.
 3. They were freely willing to do so; even strongly desirous to do so.
- C. The widow in the temple was no different.
1. In each case God used their poverty to set their hearts free from the bondage to the things of this world.
 2. In each case God enabled them to entrust themselves fully to the care of the Lord the Almighty.
 3. In each case God gave in their hearts the freedom to part even with the little they did have.
 4. Such a heart is a great heart indeed, and such freedom is freedom indeed.