

Empire Church of the Brethren
Sunday Service Sermons

21 January 2024

Worshiping God with our Gifts

Text: "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 12:44*

You know the story of the widow and her mite.

Those with means gave a portion but she put in all she had, one copper coin.

Jesus was standing there and commented that she had put in more than all the others for she put in all she had to live on.

Why did she do that?

Did she trust God to reward her by providing for her need?

Or did she want to give her last before she starved to death?

We do not know her motivation but Jesus probably did.

Maybe she wanted to contribute and that was all she had so she put God first and put the little coin that she had in the offering.

One thing I do know.

When you have little it is easier to contribute a larger portion of what you do have.

For the more you have the tighter you hang on to it.

I had one customer who was known to have means and he always wanted to know what my services were going to cost him up front before we started work.

It hurt to part with any of his means.

How easy is it for you to give generously with the right attitude?

Are you a cheerful giver?

God asks us to bring the first fruits of our labors to him as an act of worship.

Without blemish and nothing held back.

Jesus honored the person who worshiped God by bringing her generous gift to the temple.

It was not the size of the gift but the quality.

Jesus was across from the place where people were offering their gifts, and he watched as they made their contributions.

The only person Jesus honored on this occasion was a poor widow who demonstrated a good spirit with her giving.

Jesus continues to honor those who give.

The basis of his honor is not the size of the gift but the spirit of the gift.

Jesus wants to honor our giving.

How can he do so?

Let us notice some ways that Jesus honors giving.

Jesus honors an interest in the treasury.

Interest in the treasury represents an interest in the Lord himself.

The widow did not go to the temple to pay a bill but to honor her God.

All through biblical history people have expressed an interest in the Lord through their giving.

Even Cain and Able made offerings to God.

In the tabernacle, temple, and the synagogues God was worshiped by means of the treasury.

Interest in the treasury represents a concern for the Lord's work.

The widow evidently went periodically to the temple, and she gave.

When she gave, she knew that it was for the Lord's personnel, for temple upkeep, and for provision for the sacrifices.

One prominent reason for interest in the treasury is the advancement and continuation of the Lord's work.

Churches are involved in the Lord's work, and people give to advance it.

The Lord honors an interest in the treasury.

We should periodically ask ourselves, "How interested am I in the treasury?"

Our record of giving discloses our interest.

Jesus honors a proper motive toward the treasury.

Jesus examines the motives of those who give.

The Lord had a good place for observing the givers.

He saw those who wanted to be seen for their giving.

These people probably hit the "trumpets," trumpet-shaped offering receptacles down which coins rattled.

So that others would know that a large contribution had been made.

Jesus saw those who gave; but more than merely observing who gave, he saw why they gave.

A poor widow made an acceptable gift.

Its acceptance was not on the basis of its size but of its spirit.

She gave because she wanted to honor the Lord, not to be seen or heard by others.

Jesus continues to examine motives for giving.

He sees those who give out of guilt, self-righteousness, or ostentation.

He is not pleased.

The proper motive is to give out of love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Giving from the proper motive satisfies the giver.

People who give for any reason other than selflessness can never be satisfied.

Those who think they can buy God never feel they have paid their bills.

Those who parade their giving must work harder to have a bigger show next time.

Jesus honors unselfish giving.

The rich as well as the poor can give honorably.

Remember that it is not the size but the spirit of the gift that counts.

Jesus honors a sacrifice for the treasury.

Sacrificial giving originates with a great desire to give.

No one prompted the woman to put in the mite.

The thought of giving began in her heart.

She had a giving spirit before she ever gave a gift.

If you study sacrifice, you will see that the one who sacrifices has a genuine desire to help others.

Look at the Lord,

He sacrificed his glory in heaven.

Why? He had a deep desire to help others.

Sacrificial giving results in personal relinquishment.

When the woman gave to the treasury, her giving was costly.

"She of her own accord cast in all that she had, even all of her living."

If you do not give at least the tithe, you can be assured that you are not an honorable giver.

This message has been shared not to gain a collection or to raise a budget.

It is shared to develop honorable givers.

God will bless those who give honorably.

Resolve this day that you are going to follow the example of the poor widow.

Take an interest in the treasury.

Develop the right spirit in giving and then sacrifice to the treasury.

God desires honorable givers.

Those who give with a cheerful and generous spirit to honor God and his work.

It all belongs to God in the first place, why not give some back and be blessed?

God likes to bless those who bless him.