

The Question of Giving



LUKE 21:1-4 TEXT, EXPOSITION AND PRACTICAL HELPS

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THE SON OF MAN'S DRAMATIC ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM: HIS CLAIM AND CONFLICT, [Luke 19:28-21:4](#)

The Widow's Mite: The Question of Giving, [Luke 21:1-4](#)

[\(Luke 21:1-4\)](#) **Introduction—Stewardship:** giving to the church and charity is a thorn in the side of many. Most persons give a little money or a few worn out or unwanted items, but few give much of value. However, if the needs of a world that reels in desperation are to be met, many must begin to give and to give sacrificially.

Something needs to be seen: giving may be debated among men, but it is not debatable with Jesus. Jesus answered the questions about giving, and He did so strongly—without hesitation and debate. Every person must give *everything he is and has* to meet the needs of a world that has thousands *dying every day*, dying because they lack the very necessities of life and have never heard the gospel of His glorious love and deliverance.

1. **Jesus sat and rested (v.1-2).**
2. **Giving must be in the right spirit (v.2).**
3. **Giving must not be based on the amount given, but on the amount kept back (v.3).**
4. **Giving must be sacrificial, given because a person has need (v.4).**

1. [\(Luke 21:1-2\)](#) **Jesus Christ, Tired— Vision: Jesus sat and rested.**

He had suffered a great deal of pressure and tension over the past few hours. The authorities had baited Him time and again with trick questions, trying to trap and discredit Him before the people ([Luke 21:1-47](#)). He was tired and mentally exhausted.

Note the words, "He looked up." He had walked out of the court of the Gentiles into the court of the women and sat down to rest over by the treasury (see below [Deeper Study # 1—Luke 21:1](#)). His elbows were upon His knees and His face and head were resting in the palms of His hands. Sitting there with His eyes closed and resting, He heard the clanging of the money being dropped into the collection boxes.

At some point "**He looked up and saw**" what must have been an impressive sight. It was Passover week and teeming thousands would be streaming by the boxes making their contributions. In fact, Mark says "**many that were rich cast in much**" ([Mark 12:41](#)). Jesus saw the rich making their contributions. In some cases the gifts were very large. Then all of a sudden out of nowhere something caught Jesus' eye. A poor widow cast in "**two mites,**" which were the smallest coins—coins that had the least value in that day.

The point is this: Jesus saw in the widow's mite a timely illustration, an illustration that would answer man's question about giving to the work of God and meeting the desperate needs of the world.

DEEPER STUDY #1

(Luke 21:1) Temple— Treasury: the treasury (*gazophylakion*) was in the court of the women. A section of the court had thirteen trumpet shaped collection boxes. Each box had written on it the purpose for which the offerings were to be used. People simply dropped their offerings into the box of the ministry they wished to support.

2. (Luke 21:2) Stewardship— Tithing: giving must be in the right spirit.

The widow was very poor. Jesus used two different words for "poor" to describe just how poor the woman really was. In verse two the word is *penichran* which *means* "a person who earns only a meager, pitiful wage."

In verse three the word is *ptochē* which *means* "abject poverty, utter destitution, poverty that is visible and unquestionable." It is the poverty that forces one to beg and seek alms in order to survive. In that day there was little work for a widow. Poor widows had to struggle for their very survival. Such was the case of this poor widow; she was desperately poor. **Note:** she had cast in two mites, and the two coins were all she had **(Luke 21:4)**.

1. She was giving to God's work because she wanted to give. She wanted God to have what she had to use in His service. She did not give grudgingly or reluctantly, but willingly.

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7).

"For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (2 Cor. 8:12).

2. Her trust was not in money. Her trust was in God. She literally gave all she had to God. Her spirit was right; it was reaching out to God, saying that all she had belonged to God. Both she and her possessions were the Lord's.

"But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you" (Luke 11:41).

"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Tim. 6:17).

"The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate" (Psalm 34:22).

"Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed...Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass" ([Psalm 37:3, 5](#)).

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" ([Isaiah 26:3](#)).

"Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is" ([Jeremiah 17:7](#)).

3. ([Luke 21:3](#)) Stewardship— Tithing: giving must not be based on the amount given, but on the amount kept back.

This is difficult for men to accept, in particular rich men, but it is definitely one of the points Jesus was making. Wealth and money are not for the purpose of hoarding and storing and banking, not in a world reeling with poverty and need, sin and death. The needs of all men must be met and the message of salvation and eternal life must to be proclaimed. **The imperative of the need and command of God is unequivocal and irrevocable.**

Note what Jesus said. She "**hath cast in more than they all.**" Jesus was not saying that she cast in more than any *one* of them, but she cast in more than *all of them put together*. This was shocking! How could He make such a statement, for some had cast in much more money than she? And all the rich combined had cast in an enormous sum.

Very simply, God measured what was kept back, not how much was given.

- a. The widow had less remaining; the others still had much.
- b. The widow had given more of what she had; the others had given less of what they had.
- c. The widow had sacrificed more; the others had sacrificed less.

In proportion to what she had, the widow gave a larger percent. The others gave a much smaller percent. After they had given they still had 85% or 95% to spend on themselves.

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" ([Matthew 6:21](#)).

"Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth" ([Luke 12:33](#)).

"Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me" ([Luke 18:22](#)).

"And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold" ([Luke 19:8](#)).

"And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" ([1 Cor. 13:3](#)).

"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" ([2 Cor. 9:8](#)).

4. ([Luke 21:4](#)) Stewardship— Tithing: giving must be sacrificial—given because a person has need.

This is a critical point, a truth that must be heeded by all givers of every generation.

1. The rich gave *out of their abundance*. They believed in God and trusted Him, and they were appreciative and thankful for the blessings of God. They were even concerned about the needs and welfare of God's work, concerned enough to give *sizable offerings*. It is important to see this fact in order to clearly see what Jesus was saying. The rich were giving and giving much because they cared deeply about the work of God.

2. The widow gave sacrificially; she gave "out of her need." She "gave all the living she had." Why? Because she had a need, a great need. She desperately needed food, clothing, and shelter. She was so desperate she seldom knew where her next meal was coming from. The pressure and pain of being destitute and hungry and exposed to the elements was a daily experience for her, and no one cared or helped.

But she knew something: God cared. She could trust God, so she took her need and gave it to God. Her need was financial, so she took what money she had and gave it all to God. She simply said, "God, I have need, the need for money. I do not even have enough money to buy food. If I am to eat, you have to provide—somehow, some way. I have worked as hard as I can at the jobs I have been able to find. Here is all I have. Take it; use it in your kingdom. I cast myself upon You. You take care of me."

She knew the great principle that God would take care of those who give all they *are and have* to Him. She knew that if she was to be *assured* of God's care, she had to give *all* to God. If she gave *all*, God would not deny anything to her. He would provide all the necessities of life ([Matthew 6:33](#)). She took her need and all that was involved in it and gave it to God. She sought God to meet her need by giving to God *all that she had*.

Note another fact. Two needs are present and being met.

1. God's temple (church) had need. The widow, though poor, gave to help the temple carry on the ministry of God.

2. The poor widow had need. She gave believing God would see to it that she had food, clothing, and shelter. **And note:** God saw her, and although we are not told about how He did it, He took her under His wing and took care of her.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" ([Matthew 6:33](#)).

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" ([Malachi 3:10](#)).

"The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" ([Psalm 24:1](#)).

"Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies" ([Psalm 41:1](#)).

"The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself" ([Proverbs 11:25](#)).

"He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor" ([Proverbs 22:9](#)).

"But the liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand" ([Isaiah 32:8](#)).

"And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity and thy darkness be as the noonday" ([Isaiah 58:10](#)).