

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #263

Tuesday of Passion Week... Day of Testing and Teaching

Jesus Rejoices in a Poor Widow Who Gave Everything MK 12.41-44 (Parallel Text: LK 21.1-4)

41 ^MJesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were kept, and ^Las he looked up, ^Mhe watched ^Lthe rich in ^Mthe crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people kept on throwing in large amounts. 42 ^LBut he also saw ^Ma poor widow come and toss 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 ^Ltheir gifts ^Mout of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

CONTEXT DIGEST	
Location	The Temple Courts in Jerusalem
Timeline	Early April (Month 39)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VIII: Passion Week
	C. Tuesday: Day of Testing and Teaching
Title	13. Jesus Rejoices in a Poor Widow Who Gave Everything

COMMENT:

Today's reading could not offer a greater contrast to the long, heated exchange that had continued all day in the Temple between Jesus and his enemies—the leaders of the Jewish nation. They were not worthy of the title, "leader." They were out to destroy Jesus; willing to lie, cheat, and manipulate in any way needed to see him dead. Jesus had loved them by confronting them with the truth.

Now, after choking on the stench of their hypocrisy and disobedience all day long, Jesus was blessed to see one of the most inspiring expressions of love and devotion to God of his entire life. Just as the final scene of Jesus' life prior to Passion Week was the gift of Mary, the brother of Lazarus in anointing him for burial prior to his death, one of the final scenes of Jesus' public ministry in the Temple was another reminder of his cross.

Jesus had repeatedly said that true greatness in kingdom is comprised of humility in loving service. An unknown, poor, obscure widow gave a perfect example of greatness in this reading.

I have written an extended description of this beautiful incident that you can see here. The PDF file is attached below. I encourage you to read it, because the lesson is crucial for every one of us. In this post we will only consider the big picture of this precious event.

Consider just a few of the contrasts here.

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The leaders were hypocrites. This woman was utterly sincere.
The leaders were greedy and self-seeking. This woman was unbelievably generous, and God-centered.
They were proud and self-righteous. The woman was humble and self-effacing.
The leaders were filled with evil. She was filled with the kind of goodness that only comes from God.
The leaders required severe rebuke and correction. She earned high praise.
They were examples we must never emulate.
The woman was an example we must imitate if we would follow Jesus.

What Jesus experienced in this widow was the opposite of what he had seen in the Pharisees and teachers of the Law in every way. She was a breath of fresh, cool, mountain air for him.

The key thing about the woman is that she gave everything she had. As poor as she was, she still gave it all to the Lord. Perhaps this was the tithe that she had set aside when she had last received some income. Now it was all she had left, but she did not hold it back. Perhaps it was a free-will offering, or a thank offering. It does not matter. The crucial thing is that she gave everything she owned, and had nothing left when the offering was complete. Why is this so important?

Jesus was about to give everything he had. The Lord of glory would give up all that he was and possessed, with literally nothing physical or spiritual left for himself when he was done. Atoning for our sins required 100% of Jesus.

If he had held anything back for himself it would have been his right to do so--there would be no wrong-doing in it at all--but our salvation would not have been obtained. Jesus did not need saving. We did. Therefore, he gave everything he had to purchase our salvation, and ourselves--when he had no need, or self-interest to gain in the transaction.

This widow's gift was one of the closest things Jesus had seen on earth to his own sacrifice--and it touched him profoundly at the end of a heart-breaking day of dealing with devilish sin and selfishness. The picture of her pure, total sacrifice was the greatest gift this widow could have given Jesus on that day, and he received and welcomed it with joy. It was exactly what he needed on an otherwise dismal and depressing day.

APPLICATION:

God measures the size of our offerings not by the volume of what we give, but by the size of what we do not give--what we hold back for ourselves. This widow gave more than anybody else because she had nothing left over when she was finished. This is a different perspective on giving--a kingdom point of view.

Have you ever given everything you had? How did it make you feel?

Do you measure your giving Jesus' way, or by the size of the gift?

How will your giving patterns change when you adopt Jesus' standard of measurement?

When will you begin?