

May 14

Scriptures: Read Luke 20 & 21

Key Verse: “all these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty...”
(Luke 21:4)

Overview

The question occurring to me as I read this story is, “what would Jesus think or say about some modern ministries that unscrupulously bilk widows of their life savings?” We have no record of what Jesus said or did about this poor widow who put all she had to live on into the Temple treasury. All we read is that Jesus saw her to it and was impressed.

What do you suppose motivated her? It was probably the first time she had done this; and probably the last. How often can you give all you have to live on before the well is completely dry, and you die? Maybe she had a great need and felt that her meager gift was a part of expressing her deepest sincerity in petitioning God for help. Maybe she felt especially guilty about some secret sin. Or perhaps she was in such desperate straits that giving all she had were an act of frustration, anger, and acquiescence—a kind of financial suicide. Maybe she thought this might force God to intervene. Then again, maybe she gave out of total gratitude for some special answer to prayer. Who knows? But the point Jesus made was that she gave out of her poverty: her gift was costly.

Contrast this to the carefully measured gifts of the wealthy. Many of them, no doubt, were meticulous in their commitment to tithing—every month the first donation was a tithe to the Temple. They perhaps even preached the importance of giving first to God before any other bill was paid, and I doubt the Lord would fault them for this. In fact, Jesus said nothing overtly negative about their donations. What He did say, however, related to the relative value of the gifts—not as men say it, but as God saw it.

The gift of the wealthy was simply that—a gift. The gift of the widow was something else—it was a sacrifice—and sacrificial giving then, as now, was pretty much out of style.

Prayer

Our Heavenly Father, according to our Bible reading, this age will come to an end. Please give us the Spirit of giving to You now, because only what is given to You will last forever.