

Jesus Encounters a True Sacrificial Giver – Luke 20:45-21:4

You might be wondering why we took the offering at the beginning of the service today. It's because I want you to listen this morning to what God's Word might say to you & not think that today's sermon is some kind of guilt inducing ploy to get you to put more money in the offering plate!

Today we will be talking about financial giving! Why? **Because Jesus did!**

Scripture speaks about money more than any other topic. There are over 2000 verses in Scripture that speak of money & financial stewardship!

So I begin with an apology, not because I'm going to talk about money, but because I haven't talked about it over the year that I've been your pastor!

Jesus did not back away from this topic, **he actually increased His volume!**
Luke 20:45 – "In the hearing of all the people he said this to his disciples..."

Jesus wanted to make sure everyone understood, & that we understand today, what giving an offering/financial gift to God is all about!

- **It's not about prestige!** Jesus actually says to beware of those who think they are something special because of what they give to God.
- **It's not about how much you give!** Jesus highlights a poor widow who gave less than a penny, & said she put in more than all the rest.
- **It's not even about the church &** meeting the needs of it!

It's about God, & our response to Him for who He is & all He has given to us!

So let me pull up the stool, as Jesus does here, & let's talk about giving!

Mark 12:41—"He sat down opposite the treasury & watched the people putting money into the offering box... then called His disciples over to him"

Does it sound intimidating to anyone, Jesus sitting, watching people give their offering? Isn't that the case every Sunday? God is always watching!

Jesus was not impressed by the wealthy who gave out of their abundance!

Now this does not mean that large financial gifts are bad, or not needed? But Jesus is more concerned here about the motivation behind the gift, than the actual gift itself! **The amount is meaningless if the heart is not in it!**

"God measures not how much we give, but how much we choose to retain!"

For the wealthy whom Jesus observed, **their gift did not include sacrifice!** It was calculated, it was self-serving, and it was given out of obligation.

If by giving you feel a sense of pride or guilt then don't give – **giving is intended to be an act of worship, from an overflow of a grateful heart!**

Here are some lessons for us from this poor widow and her offering!

- She didn't give a tithe, she gave everything she had. It truly was a sacrifice for her. Does what we give fall into that category?
- **She didn't let the amount rob her of the joy of giving**, nor should we
- She didn't let worry/fear keep her from giving, we shouldn't either.
- **She displayed great faith in a God who can/does provide!** Do we?

Some challenging questions for us:

- We have already given our gifts today, but did we give to God out of our abundance or did we give to Him sacrificially?
- We have already given our gifts today, but did we give them freely & joyfully, or did we give begrudgingly or out of guilt-felt obligation?
- We have already given our gifts today, but what needs to change going forward? What does God need to work on in your heart?
- We have already given our gifts today, but what might God be prompting you to do right now? Confess? Ask for help? Give again?

Take a moment, just you & God, & ask Him to speak His truth into you about what He would have you do in response to this Jesus encounter this morning.

Matthew 6:21 – "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

If we truly mean what we have sung, that our hearts desire is to see God build His Kingdom here, that we want to experience God being on the move in mighty ways, that Jesus Christ is our reward - all we are living for, then giving back to God, to the cause of His Kingdom, should be our greatest joy!

Beware of the BUT... **Nothing will paralyze you more in your giving, nothing will steal your joy more than "but..."** Trust God and test Him in this, for this is the one area where we are encouraged to test Him in. **Malachi 3:10**

A good starting point is not with a certain amount or percent, it is with a sense of sacrifice! Real sacrificial giving gives until it hurts!

"The true measure of our giving is not counted, it is weighed!"

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