

The Widow's Mite

Jesus observes a poor widow giving two small coins to the temple treasury and declares she gave more than all the wealthy donors because she gave all she had.

Mark 12:41-44 • Luke 21:1-4

CHARACTERS: Jesus, The Widow, The Rich People, The Disciples

THEMES: Generosity, Sacrifice, True Giving, Humility

JESUS SAT OVER against the treasury, observing how the people cast money into the collection box at the temple. Many that were rich cast in much, making their large donations with fanfare and drawing attention to their generosity. The wealthy could afford to give large sums without it affecting their comfortable lifestyles, and they likely took pride in the recognition their giving brought them.

In the midst of this parade of prosperity came a certain poor widow, unnoticed by most. She came quietly and cast in two mites, which make a farthing - the smallest coins in circulation, together worth less than a penny. In the eyes of the world, her contribution was insignificant, barely worth acknowledging. No one else likely paid any attention to her meager offering.

But Jesus saw her. He called unto Him His disciples and taught them a profound lesson about the nature of true giving. He said unto them, 'Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury.' This statement must have shocked the disciples, who had just witnessed the wealthy depositing large sums of money. How could two mites be more than hundreds or thousands of coins?

Jesus explained the spiritual mathematics that heaven uses: '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.' The rich gave out of their surplus, from what they had left over after taking care of all their needs and wants. Their giving, though large in amount, cost them nothing in terms of sacrifice or faith. But this widow gave out of her poverty, casting in everything she had to live on, holding nothing back for herself.

Her gift required complete trust in God's provision. She could not know where her next meal would come from, yet she gave her last two coins to God. The rich gave what they could spare without inconvenience; she gave what she could not spare, trusting God to care for her. Jesus honored her sacrificial faith and used her example to teach His disciples - and all believers through the ages - that God measures giving not by the amount given but by the sacrifice involved and the heart behind it. In God's economy, the widow's two mites outweighed all the gold in the temple treasury.