

Text— Mark 12:41-44

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

It has occurred in a number of churches, when the subject of offerings is mentioned, some folks have remarked, “all the church talks about and looks for is money in the plate.” Well, if you go to a church where money is CONSTANTLY talked about by the preacher and/or various committees, there is certainly a problem in that particular church. Nevertheless, it frequently happens that the very same folks who regularly make remarks against their church concerning offerings have no problem personally spending large sums of money to attend sports events or to dine out and so forth. Yeah, they’ll groan about throwing five dollars in an offering plate and yet they’ll spend hundreds to attend a football game or some entertainment event, or to eat at a gourmet restaurant or to purchase lottery tickets and the like.

Be that as it may, the truth is that the subject of offerings is not to be altogether ignored in any Christian congregation since God in His Word addresses the topic. Our Scripture selection is a case in point, for it teaches us about:

“GOD-PLEASING GIVING”

With that as our theme, may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) Why God-pleasing giving should certainly be our practice
- 2) What attitude we need to have if our giving is to truly be God-pleasing

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Verses 41 & 42, ----- (Mark 12:41-42)

As we just read, our text opens by informing us: *Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a*

certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

Interestingly, the “treasury” at the temple in Jerusalem consisted of thirteen trumpet-shaped receptacles, which were chests or boxes, located in the court of the temple and into which monetary offerings were deposited by the people.

It is right and proper to give offerings in the Lord’s house since God says we are to do so in His Word. For example, Proverbs 3:9-10 states, “Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.” And, we read in Hebrews 13:16, “to do good and to communicate [which means to share what one has] forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” Accordingly, there is no question that we are to willingly give monetary offerings to the Lord who blesses us so very much with temporal and spiritual gifts while we dwell on earth. Indeed, God-pleasing giving should certainly be our practice because the Holy Bible directs us to do so.

We certainly owe God thanks for all that He has done and still does for us, for Psalm 118:1 urges, “O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: because his mercy endureth for ever.”

The Lord God has shown us immense mercy and love in that He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to save us from our sins, “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Romans 6:23; 3:23-26)

Additionally, fellow Christians, we would not have

faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and Lord if not for God graciously gifting us with such faith, for Ephesians 2:8-10 declares in no uncertain terms, “by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Hence, as 1 John 4:19 states, “We love him, because he first loved us.” Fellow Christians, we are to show our love to the Lord; and, one way we can do so is by monetary offerings, which is why God-pleasing giving should certainly be our practice.

Oh beloved, having faith in Jesus Christ, we are so spiritually blessed by God and ought to regularly confess with our lips from our hearts the following words found in Lamentations 3:22-24, “It is of the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.”

Now think about the temporal blessings of food, clothing and shelter we Christians have from God. It’s as David the sweet psalmist of Israel declares, “I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.” (Psalm 37:25) Oh, the Lord does not promise His believing children that we will be rich in worldly wealth, but He does tell us not to be worrisome about basic needs and to keep our priorities in proper order when He says in Matthew 6:31-33, “take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Thus, the Lord will see to it that we have all we need for this body and life. Hence, we should be grateful and should show our gratefulness; and, one way we can do so is by monetary offerings, which is why God-pleasing giving should certainly

be our practice.

Looking again at the opening verses of our text we read: *And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.*

My friends, Jesus was watching the people give their monetary offerings and was noting WHAT they gave and HOW they gave. Take it to heart that Jesus still watches WHAT people give for monetary offerings and HOW people give those offerings, because Jesus is true God in addition to being true man, for Colossians 2:9 reports, “in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” And, Hebrews 4:13 adds, “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” Thus, the fact that Jesus is always watching us is also reason why God-pleasing giving should certainly be our practice.

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As we ponder our text to its conclusion, let us see what attitude we need to have if our giving is to truly be God-pleasing.

Again, verses 41 & 42, ----- (Mark 12:41-42)

Jesus was watching HOW the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

Jesus does NOT knock the fact that the rich gave much money into the treasury, nor does He knock the poor widow for throwing in *two mites, which make a farthing.*

Historians relate that a “mite” was the smallest brass coin that was in use at the time and was worth about 1/8 of a cent of our money, with a “farthing” then being worth about 1/4 of a cent of our money. Nevertheless, the poor widow notably

willingly gave her offering.

Verses 43 & 44, ----- (Mark 12:43-44)

Notice the remarks Jesus made to His disciples concerning what He observed as many who were rich cast much into the treasury while the poor widow threw in two mites, which make a farthing, for Jesus *called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: 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.*

Accordingly, it is quite evident that Jesus not only observed the actions made by the givers, but especially the hearts behind the actions of the givers. It's as we read in 1 Samuel 16:7, "the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."

As I mentioned earlier, the Lord Jesus did not knock the fact that many that were rich cast in much into the treasury, for they at least did not omit making an offering. However, the poor widow woman went further than the rich in that *she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living*. So, while the rich had plenty of money left for their own needs and extras, the poor widow gave her last two mites to the temple treasury.

My friends, it is evident from our text that the attitude we need to have if our giving is to truly be God-pleasing is an attitude of sacrifice from a heart which beats in love and trust in the Lord coupled with thanksgiving to Him for whatever we have, even if we do not have much in worldly wealth and goods. Let us remember the following instructions found in 2 Corinthians 9:7, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." Yeah, God does not want money from us which is extorted from us by threats or gimmicks. The attitude we need to have if our giving is to truly be God-pleasing is an attitude of

free-will in offering to the Lord.

It's sad that numerous churches these days which wear the label "Christian" extort money from their members – as well as non-members – by all sorts of sales, raffles, dinners, and entertainment events. I recently heard a church advertising not only bingo, but a Vegas-like gambling night in order to raise money— that church thereby promoting the sins of coveting and stealing which God's Word forbids. Such things are a disgrace in view of the fact that during Jesus' public ministry He twice cleansed the temple of abuses. At the first cleansing, Jesus said "unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise," as John 2:16 relates. And, later in Jesus' ministry, He "went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves; And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves." — reports Mark 11:15-17. So, the attitude we need to have if our giving is to truly be God-pleasing is one of free-will offering in obedience to God's will as revealed in His Holy Word.

Now, looking at our text we note again that Jesus said to His disciples: *Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: 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 cast in of their abundance; consequently, it is probable that at least some of them gave their offerings from mere force of habit in a mechanical fashion rather than out of loving obedience to God and gratefulness to Him. Others among the rich may even have been tithers giving 10% of their earnings. Nevertheless, it was not a real sacrifice for most of those rich folks since they still had plenty of money remaining.

On the other hand, because the poor widow cast in all that she had, even all her living, she definitely showed great love to God and gratefulness to Him for the blessings she had beyond temporal things. We know that such was the widow's attitude from her heart because Jesus remarked that the poor widow had cast more in, than all they which had cast into the treasury. The lady went far beyond tithing. It was not more money than the rich gave, but it was vastly more sacrificial to the Lord in that her heart beat in strong love and trust in Him.

That poor widow woman surely trusted in the Lord that He cared about her and that He would provide for her needs in some way, for she *did cast in all that she had, even all her living.*

We can be sure the Lord did care for that widow woman's temporal and spiritual needs, for Hebrews 13:5-6 says, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." Thus, the Lord definitely helped that poor widow woman and did not permit her to starve.

Fellow Christians, the attitude we need to have if our giving is to truly be God-pleasing is to be an attitude of love and trust in the Lord for all that He has done and still does for us in both our temporal needs and our spiritual needs, our present and future needs, for James 1:17-18 pointedly states, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." Yes, God who has gifted us with faith in Christ will certainly keep us in the faith, grow us in the faith, make us fruitful in the faith, and provide all we really need for this body and life as long as we do not wilfully turn from Him, forsaking Him and His Holy Word.

Accordingly, let us daily and sincerely repent of our

sins; let us, with the help of God, keep our full trust and confidence in Christ Jesus as our personal Savior and Lord by continuing in His pure preserved Holy Word; and, let us go forward remembering what we've considered regarding God-pleasing giving as we've pondered our Scripture selection, putting the positive principals we've seen into action. Amen.

m.e.l.