

Seeking praise of men or praise of God?

1. What is greater—The gift that is given? Or the Spirit Behind the Gift Given?

- a. Like when a small child makes a drawing with crayons
- b. And no one even can recognize what it is! It's Not Practical or Useful.
- c. There's nothing the child can give that the parent doesn't have or could get themselves.
- d. But It is a precious gift of the heart

2. It is not the gift given—but the spirit and love behind the gift that is greater

I. THE PRAISE OF MEN (20:45-47)

A. LIFESTYLES OF THE RICH AND FAMOUS

BEWARE OF THE SCRIBES

- a) Scribes were Pharisees, Religious Lawyers and 'Teachers of the Law' (NIV)
- b) They Had Entrenched themselves in positions of power
- c) Jesus said: Beware of them—They Were Dangerous—especially when challenged!

1. FIRST: THIER ARROGANT PRIDE & SELFISH AMBITION (v.46)

"who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts" (v.46)

a) Who desire to go around in long robes:

- (1) The scribes didn't wear work clothes or got their hand dirty helping others...
- (2) They were too important and too sophisticated to work
- (3) They were too busy fluttering around in long robes...

b) Who love greetings in the market places:

- (1) They demanded recognition from others for their standing with God.

c) The best seats in the synagogues and best places at feasts:

- (1) They didn't have time for the common people except to use them
- (2) They demanded the all the special benefits of status and entitlement.

2. SECOND: THIER GREED & COVETOUSNESS (v.47)

a) Who devour widows' houses

- (1) We don't know exactly how they devoured widows houses...
- (2) but no doubt they used their religious power to make it happen
- (3) They loved money—and wanted a lavish lifestyle of the rich and famous
- (4) But imagine religious rulers scamming widows out of their houses and property!
and Jesus calls them out for it!

3. THIRD: THIER HYPOCRICY (v.47)

a) and for a pretense make long prayers.

- (1) They wanted to think they were more spiritual than everyone else—
so they had to appear more spiritual than everyone else...
- (2) Long Flattering Prayers to Impress Others—but not God

B. BUT EVERYTHING THEY DID WAS TO BE SEEN BY MEN

Fake Honors, Fake Worship, Fake Prayers, Fake Faith

1. They Didn't Want to Serve—they wanted to BE served...
and then be praised for it! (**Matthew 6:1-8**)
2. Everything they did was to be seen by men...
They loved the praise of men—more than the praise of God
3. This was their Fatal Mistake that led to their Final Destruction...
They just don't realize it yet.

II. THE PRAISE OF GOD (21:1-4)

A. LIFESTYLES OF THE POOR IN SPIRIT

It is passover so the Temple is crowded with worshippers from all over the Roman empire, giving their gifts to the Temple treasury.

But Not Everyone is Like the Scribes and Pharisees...

While Jesus is watching—His attention is drawn to one worshipper

1. **FIRST: She is a Widow, she is poor and she gives two mites.**
 - a) Greek *two lepta* [the smallest of Jewish coins]
 - b) a copper coin worth LESS than a half cent.
 - c) Two Mites equals Less than a Penny
2. **SECOND: She gave all she had!**
 - a) A half cent would be like pocket change to us...pocket lent to the rich
 - b) And she gave two mites! One of which she could've kept for herself
 - c) But she gave BOTH! She gave ALL that she had.
3. **THIRD: She gave more than all the rich!**
 - a) She doesn't know anyone is watching...
 - b) She doesn't draw attention to herself like the scribes and pharisees
 - c) But she gives more than all the rich combined because she gave all she had
4. **But Why would she give all she had? —LOVE (Mark 12:28-31)**

B. BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT

'Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' (Mt 5:3)

1. **FIRST: She is not worrying about the things of this life...**
 - a) Like what she will eat or drink what she will wear...
 - b) She is not living in Fear—She is 'living her best life now!'
 - c) She is laying up treasure in heaven. (**2 Cor. 6:10**)
2. **SECOND: She Has Given the Greatest Gift—Her Heart!**
 - a) Did you think God needs two mites? He Owns the Universe!
 - b) He wants your heart! — [The IRS doesn't care about your heart—just your \$]
 - c) And She has already Placed Her Heart before the Throne of God!

3. THIRD: God can do Great Things with Small Things...

- a) Those 2 Mites—Worth Less than 1 penny—Given quietly by a poor but godly widow
- b) Changed the hearts & minds of hundreds of millions of people across 2,000 years!
- c) Liberating the hearts of people in good times and bad, in little and in much...

To Give to God From the Heart.¹

III. THE LESSONS FOR US

A. BE HONEST WITH GOD

1. Being Honest With God is Having a Real Personal Relationship w/ Him!

- a) The Scribes and Pharisees were Not Being Honest With God...
because they wanted the praise of men rather than the praise of God.
- b) But this Poor Widow Had an Honest and Pure Heart for God

2. We Need to Step Out in Faith and Just Be Honest With God!

- a) Even in our Weakness, our Failings, our Doubts and Struggles.
- b) God Knows Our Weakness and our Failings
- c) Nothing is Hidden From His Sight! (**Psalm 139:23–24**)

3. But He Wants Us to Be Honest With Him and With Ourselves

- a) and Confess Our Sins to Him So We Can Be Healed (**1 John 1:8–9**)

B. DON'T GIVE UP

1. This Widow gave the last of what she had...

- a) But not because she was giving up—But Because she was NOT giving up

2. She was walking by Faith—Not Fear—Knowing God Would Provide!

- a) One Thing I Like About Older Christians in the Faith is they know how many times God has answered their prayers over decades of faithfulness.
- b) They Know God Will Provide!

3. God Works Things Out for Good to those who love the Lord!

- a) There was another Widow in OT who was about to make her last meal...
- b) It was a Severe Famine and all she had was just enough to feed her & her son before they died of starvation.
- c) It was a Dire situation—And guess who shows up? A stranger asking to be fed!
- d) A prophet named Elijah (**1 Kings 17:13–16**)

C. THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE

1. Scribes & Pharisees Loved the Praise of Men more than the Praise of God
2. The Widow loved God with all her heart, soul, mind and strength!
3. Love is the Faith—Force Multiplier that changes everything! (**1 Cor 13:1–3**)

CONCLUSION: The Widow Gave it All for God—and Jesus Gave it All For Us—

He loves you so much He would rather die than let you be lost forever (Ps 103:8–14**)**

¹ This insightful point was made by R. K. Hughes; Luke: that you may know the truth.