

THE WIDOW'S MITE

(Optional: Bring a candy coin for each person if available or use a picture of an old widow's mite coin from the internet that you print out.)

-How many of you remember the story of the widow's mite in the Bible?

-It is found in the books of Mark and Luke, when Jesus was teaching at the temple in Jerusalem.

-To start off, let's read this short story together and see what we can learn from it.

It is #1 on our Verse Sheet: (Mark 12:41-44 *"Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. Calling His disciples to Him, Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything – all she had to live on.'"*)

-Many times it is good to take the stories in the Bible, break them apart and learn how to apply them to our lives today. So, today we are going to do that to this story. Let's begin with a few questions from this verse.

-What was the first thing Jesus did in the beginning of these verses? (He sat down and watched the crowd.)

-If we really stopped here for a moment and thought about this very statement, that the Creator of the universe sat down and watched the crowd, knowing He already knew the hearts of everyone in that temple because He created them, what do you think He wanted us to know? (That He takes time out to observe each one of us.)

-Do you think He is doing that today, watching us here on earth?(...)

-When Jesus is watching us, what is He really looking at? (Our heart, our motives, why we are doing what we are doing.)

-Let's read verse #2 on our Verse Sheet that shares this. It comes from the story of when Samuel, the prophet, came to anoint the boy David to be king over Israel: (1 Samuel 16:7 *"But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the Heart.'"*)

-Who is talking here? (The LORD Himself.)

-Again, what is He saying He is looking at when He looks at us? (Our Heart.)

-Notice the part of the verse where it says "The Lord does not look at the things other people look at."

-What are some things other people may look at? (physical appearance, money or status, popularity, personality, etc.)

-But we are learning right here that He is trying to remind us repeatedly that He does not look on any of these things but on a person's heart.

-Have you ever met a person who may not be physically attractive but has an amazing heart for the Lord and love for others?(...)

-Didn't that person become more attractive because of their heart and you enjoyed being around them?(...)

-Let's turn it around, have you ever met a person who was absolutely attractive but they just did not have the kindest personality? They were mean or sour?(...)

-Did you want to be around them?(...)

-Isn't it much better to be with a person who has a heart for the Lord and for others than a beautiful person who is sour or bitter?(...)

-We might want to ask ourselves this question as well, are we representing a heart of love for the Lord or a heart of bitterness or sour attitudes? (Just something for us to consider.)

-Let's go back to our sweet widow who got out of bed that morning, that's if she even had one, and then willingly gathered her last few coins together and headed to the temple to give them to the Lord.

-Let's stop here for a moment and let me ask a question. This little widow got up that morning and was more concerned about her offering to the Lord that day than she was on how she was going to survive. (We're going to see that in a little bit.) So, let's ask ourselves, each day we wake up, before our feet hit the floor, what offerings can we gather in our mind and hearts and give to the Lord? (Praise, thanksgiving, trust, hope, faith, etc.)

-An offering of praise and thanksgiving given to the Lord at the start of the day honors Him and also encourages us as well. Remembering all that He has done and is doing for us can lift our spirits.

-These are the things He treasures, the offerings of praise and thanksgiving from our heart.

-So, now that we know He is observing our hearts as He was those who were putting the money in the money chests, we begin to see a lesson unfold that He wanted to teach His disciples and in turn, us as well.

-It says in our verses that MANY rich people threw in large amounts. Then came the "but". "But, a poor widow came and put in two very small coins, worth only a few cents."

-Here is the "but"..., Jesus notices the weak and lowly. He is *looking* for them.

-Many times we may be caught up looking around us and comparing ourselves to others. We may feel small and insignificant.

-What are some ways that a person may feel small or insignificant as they compare themselves to someone else? (They may feel not as talented, not as wealthy, not as spiritual, not as outgoing, etc....)

-But, we are not insignificant. Just as this poor widow was not insignificant to Jesus, neither are we. She mattered to Jesus, just like we do. He noticed her and shared her story in His Word, the Bible, and we are reading it thousands of years later.

-Do you think she ever thought or knew that the simple thing she did would ever be spoken of throughout history and for generations?(...)

-Do you know that each of you in some simple or small way, when you exercise acts of faith, that you are speaking to those around you that you love God and you trust Him for your provisions?

-What are some ways that we show these acts of faith? (Trusting Him when things seem impossible, speaking His promises in hopeless situations, having thankful hearts even when there may not be much to be thankful for in the world's eyes, praying in faith for others, etc.)

-These are acts of faith that others watch and are encouraged by. There are generations around you that are watching or hearing of your simple acts of faith and belief in God that encourages them to do the same.

-Let's continue with this story. Jesus notices her and tells His disciples to come here and notice this woman's generous action. I'm sure when they heard she only gave two copper coins they were disappointed that it wasn't more and even wondered why Jesus would even bring attention to it!

-Let's talk about this for a minute.

-Does anyone know what a mite (or the copper coins) were worth? (It was the smallest and least valuable coin in circulation in Judea, worth about *six minutes of an average daily wage*.)

-These coins together were worth about \$1.60-\$2 in today's wages. Jesus said that these two coins were *all she had to live on*. In the Greek version it is said they were *all she had to sustain her life on*, all she had to uphold her life for one day.

-Let's think how this poor widow could have used that money to sustain herself and any other family member in her care that day. She could have gone to the market to buy a loaf of bread and possibly some goat cheese to make it through that day, even though she would have nothing left over to help her out for the rest of the day, like for lodging if she needed it, or clothing, or anything else she may have needed.

-When you think about all she gave up, how much do you think she trusted the Lord for her provision and how much do you think she loved Him? (...)

-Compared to her example, how much do we trust and love the Lord? (...)

-The story doesn't end here and what we can learn from it.

-She humbly dropped this in the offering box while all the rich and religious were watching, trying not to bring attention to herself but being obedient to the Lord's Word.

-Some probably snickered at her meager offering, maybe some felt sorry for her or even ignored her since she was in poverty.

-But, Jesus brings His disciples over to share with them what she has done and says "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything – all she had to live on."

-When we think about this, I know there are some here today that cannot give what others can give. Maybe you don't have the money anymore, the health or time that others have, or even just the opportunity that others have.

-Just like this widow, you may not have what others have but are you willing to give what you do have? (...)

-Can anyone offer up some suggestions on what we can do if we have nothing physical or financial to offer? (We can offer time, love, encouragement, praise, prayer, etc.)

-Let's look at some verses that offer up some suggestions as well.

-Let's look at verse #3 on our Verse Sheet and read it together: (Psalm 57:16-17 "You [God] do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; You do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart You, God, will not despise.")

-Does anyone know what a contrite heart looks like? (Humble)

-Probably a lot like this widow's.

-We can offer God our humble hearts, humbly trusting in Him and being humble and loving to others. Not selfish or prideful.

-What does a humble heart look like in this world today? (Kind, generous, loving, thoughtful, depends on the Lord, etc.)

-Let's read our next verse together, #4 (Hosea 6:6 "For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgement of God rather than burnt offerings.")

-What does a merciful heart look like? (Compassionate and forgiving.)

-What does acknowledging God look like? (Recognizing and praising Him for all He has done for us and for Who He is, the God of all creation and our salvation.)

-Let's read #5 on our Verse Sheet together to learn some more offerings we can give Him when we feel like we have nothing else: (Hebrews 13:15-16 "Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a *sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that openly profess His name*. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.")

-What does a "Sacrifice" of praise look like? (...)

-What does openly professing His name look like? (...)

-What does doing good and sharing with others look like? (...)

-Do you have breath to breathe a prayer for someone? (Yes, since you are still alive!)

-Do you have a mouth to praise the Lord for the things He has done or is doing in your life? (...)

All these things may seem like widow's mites to others and maybe even to you, but these are the things the Lord is looking for. These are things we can all offer up to the Lord if we do them with the right heart.

-A right heart is one full of love and thankfulness for what He has done for us. And in that realization of what He has done for us, we are able to openly give these things to the Lord and to others just as this widow openly gave her mites to the Lord.

-So, let's remember that all these things are valuable to Him: love, mercy, compassion, forgiveness, acknowledging Him, professing His name, doing good and sharing with others, offering Him praise and thanksgiving in our lives.

-So as we walk these things out in our lives, let's remember one other very important thing that this story has taught us as well, just like the widow, we are sought out by Jesus too because He finds us just as valuable! Let's us live in that today and everyday.

(Optional: You can give out the candy coins for them to use to remember to count the blessings the Lord has given them with humble hearts of gratitude. A gift that He so lovingly loves to receive.)

THE WIDOW'S MITE VERSE SHEET

1. Mark 12:41-44 “*Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. Calling His disciples to Him, Jesus said, ‘Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything – all she had to live on.’*”
2. I Samuel 16:7 “**But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, *but the Lord looks at the Heart.*’**
3. Psalm 57:16-17 “**You [God] do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; You do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. My sacrifice, O God, is a *broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.***”
4. Hosea 6:6 “**For I desire *mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgement of God* rather than burnt offerings.”**
5. Hebrews 13:15-16 “**Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a *sacrifice of praise* – the fruit of lips that *openly profess His name.* And *do not forget to do good and to share with others,* for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”**