

## The Widow at the Treasury

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### Scriptures:

Mark 12:41-44

Matthew 22:37-40



*"To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God"*

With robes swishing and heads held high, sweeping all before them in their pride and self satisfied belief of their right to be applauded and lauded for their position and wealth, they dropped their coins into the treasury with all the pomp and noise possible. Then, like feverish wasps around ripe fruit, they gloated over the amount that they had dropped in and how all around them knew it. Oh, how these whited sepulchres congratulated themselves on their public image and position in society. Oh, how much did the heart of God break over their self righteous duplicity and pride?

The temple tributes, or taxes, were an institution whose roots were in God's instructions for the tribes who had been allotted land in the Promised Land, to make provision from their income for the tribe of the Levites, who had no land. And, to ensure that the poor and needy were cared for. The money collected was to pay for the upkeep of the Tabernacle, later the Temple, to buy the sacrificial offerings and to feed those who could not look after themselves. There were the official annual taxes, but also "voluntary" tributes which, by the time Jesus was born, had become almost a competition to see who could donate the most. The passion of God to ensure that no-one went hungry had developed into prideful acts of self aggrandisement amongst the wealthy, upper echelons of the Jews of the day. In part, the money was indeed used to supply what were, essentially, the first food banks, but the motivation behind the giving had become fouled by humanity's desire for status and power. This was what Jesus chose to address when He drew the disciples' attention to the widow in the Temple.

As the wealthy and influential relished being seen and admired, the widow, whose name we are never given, hurriedly dropped in the pittance of her two coins, doing all she could to remain anonymous and unnoticed. It was this, seemingly insignificant, act that gave our Lord the opportunity to teach us all a vital lesson in how to truly live the principles of the Kingdom of God. Jesus clearly and emphatically reminded His disciples and everyone who hears these words, that the first and greatest commandment is to love the Lord our God, with all our heart and mind and soul and strength. The second is to love our neighbour as ourselves. On these two commandments hang all the law and prophets, according to the One who had come to fulfil the law and the prophets.

There is no Plan B, our first and greatest goal must always be to grow more deeply in love with God, with a love that is not only prepared to sacrifice our opinions and desires, but strives with every part of us to do this. Loving our neighbour as ourselves then follows, as we allow the love of God in us to

overflow to all we meet. The heart break God must experience as He watches the desecration of these two commandments is beyond our comprehension. He knows that our only hope of fulfilling them is the Salvation that Christ bought for us at Calvary. Humanity has travelled so far away from God that, now, repenting and turning to Jesus is the only way to live the principles of the Kingdom of God selflessly while bringing glory to Him and Him alone.

The widow who gave all she had shines through the pages of our Bible as a beacon of Kingdom Light. There was no weekly pension paid to widows in those days, no top up to a bank account, no credit card that could be paid off one day, maybe. Jesus was clear, she gave all she had, in the sure knowledge that God's promises never fail. The blessing for loving Him and her neighbour would be hers, God's way and in His time. We are not told what happened to her as she left the temple, but we can be sure of this, God saw her innermost thoughts and God knew her heart, and He would never abandon her.

**Prayer:** Abba Father, through Your Grace and Mercy teach us how to love You with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves. Draw us ever more closely to You, so that we may know how to live Your Kingdom principles here and now. In Jesus Name we pray, Amen.