

Bible Stories for Adults

The Widow's Offering

Mark 12:41-44

Opening

- Gathering: Why do so many people have trouble giving back to God?
- Today's Focus: A poor widow gave little, but gave all, in a lesson to teach us how God wants us to give.
- Key Verses: *"This poor widow has put more ... 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."* Mark 12:43-44
- Everything comes from You, and we have given You only what comes from Your hand.*
1 Chronicles 29:14

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Setting the Tone for the Week (*Mark 11:1-26*)

- How did Jesus begin the last week of His ministry?
John 12:1, 12-15 = Rode into Jerusalem with great fanfare as king of God's people
- What strange object lesson on faith did Jesus teach over the next two days?
Matthew 21:18-22 = Showed the power of faith aligned with God by cursing a fig tree
- What did Jesus do on Monday that strengthened the resolve of the Jewish leaders to kill Him?
Luke 19:45-48 = Cleansed temple of corrupt Bazaars of Annas; leaders afraid of crowd
- Bazaars of Annas - Sold certified sacrificial animals and changed Roman money into temple money
Made great profit for the effective High Priest Annas = Jesus attacked Anna's business

A Challenging Tuesday (*Mark 11:27-40*)

- How did the Jewish leaders deal with Jesus on Tuesday?
Mark 11:27-28 = Asked for His authorization to condemn and destroy the temple marketplace
- Why didn't Jesus claim authorization from God?
Mark 11:29-30, 33 = They rejected that God authorized John the Baptist; They'd reject His
- How did Jesus then point out that the leaders habitually rejected God's authority?
Mark 12:1a, 12 = Told parables saying so that were obvious even to the Jewish leaders
- What did the Jewish leaders do since they were afraid to stop Him in public?
Luke 20:20 = Sent spies to trick, trap and discredit Him in something He said
- How well did this plan work? = They dropped the trick question strategy
Matthew 22:22, 33, 46 = It backfired; He was too wise for them; they gave up

A Typical Day (*Luke 21:37*)

- What was Jesus' normal pattern for a day during His last week?
Luke 21:37 = Days teaching in temple, Nights on Mt of Olives, In temple early next morning
- Where did Jesus spend His nights on the Mount of Olives?
Mark 11:11 = Bethany, other side of Mount of Olives, stayed with Mary, Martha and Lazarus
- Did Jesus make any rest stops on His way to Bethany? = Garden of Gethsemane (olive press)
John 18:1-2 (Luke 22:39-41) = He would stop in an olive grove and pray
- How early would Jesus head to the temple? = Bethany – 2 miles east of Jerusalem, up to 1 hour walk
John 8:1-2 = Early enough to be in the temple by dawn

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Teaching in the Temple (*Mark 12:41*) = Point out Solomon's Porch and Court of Women at bottom of page

Why did the Jewish leaders permit Jesus to teach openly in the temple each day?

Matthew 26:3-5 = Stop Him after people left the Feast to prevent a riot

Did Jesus understand why He was permitted to teach openly in the temple?

Mark 14:49 = Yes. Pointed it out when arrested alone at night

Was Jesus teaching in Solomon's Porch when He taught today's lesson?

Mark 12:41 = No, In the temple where offerings were given

Thirteen "trumpets" (narrow top, wide bottom) were along the walls of the *Court of the Women*

Each collected offerings for special temple purposes - wood, oil, incense, etc.

Offerings were voluntary and showed devotion to God's Temple = Given on top of tithes

Mighty Mite (*Mark 12:42*)

Did only the rich give these voluntary offerings since God had blessed them with extra?

Mark 12:42 = No, even a poor widow (no source of income) gave of her poverty

Lepton ("*the thin one*") - Smallest, lightest and lowest value Jewish coin of the time

Two were worth less than a *kodrantes* - lowest value Roman coin of the time

KJV: *two mites, which make up a farthing* - mite & farthing are old English coins

Value of two lepta was worth less than one of today's pennies

The Widow's Offering (*Mark 12:43-44*)

How did Jesus comment on the worthlessness of the gift of two lepta?

Mark 12:43 = She gave more than all the others

The others had obviously donated more money. How could Jesus say she gave more?

Mark 12:44 = She gave her all, not just something that might be extra

Paul's Example (*2 Corinthians 8*)

What example did Paul give to the Christians in Corinth to make this same point?

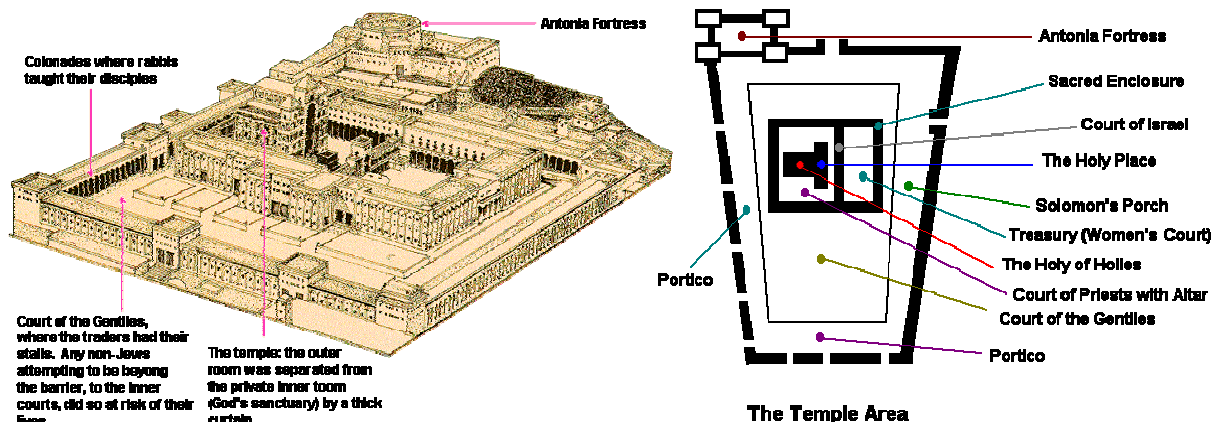
2 Corinthians 8:1-5 = Poor Macedonians pleaded to give and gave beyond their ability

Did Paul give this example to help the Corinthians consider making a gift to help other churches?

2 Corinthians 8:8, 10-11 = They had pledged a year earlier but had not followed through

What if their situations had changed and they couldn't meet their pledges?

2 Corinthians 8:12 = They are to give as God provides



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How Much? (2 Corinthians 9:7)

How do we know how much God wants us to give? A tithe? More?

2 Corinthians 9:7 = Each should give as guided by God

But God really wants us to give a tithe or more, right?

1 Samuel 16:7 = Man may look at the amount, *but the Lord looks at the heart*

To help us determine how much to give, should we figure our budget to see what is available?

Exodus 23:19a = No. We are to give of our first-fruits - before our other expenses

You Reap What You Sow (2 Corinthians 9:6-15)

Isn't it irresponsible to give before taking care of our own personal obligations?

Proverbs 3:9-10 = Give your first-fruits and you will be blessed beyond expectations

How does Paul put this?

2 Corinthians 9:6 = Sow sparingly - reap sparingly; sow generously - reap generously

Are these just nice sayings, or do we have such a promise directly from God? = Can't out-give God

Luke 6:38 = The measure you use will be the measure used for you - Overflowing

How does God respond to us returning the first-fruits of what He has given us?

Matthew 25:21 = *Well done, good and faithful servant...faithful in few...give you many*

Why would God give us many blessings when we give as faithful servants?

2 Corinthians 9:11 = So we can give more and grow in our generosity

How do our gifts go beyond our gifts and the blessings we receive?

2 Corinthians 9:12-15 = They fill needs and lead to praises to God and prayers for us

A Greater Example (2 Corinthians 8:9)

What greater example do we have of a life of giving than the widow and Macedonians?

2 Corinthians 8:9 = Jesus gave up His riches to be poor for our sakes

Why does Paul say Jesus was rich? = God created all and owns all

Haggai 2:8 = The silver and gold are the Lord's - Exodus 19:5 says the world is the Lord's

Sure, God the Father owns everything in the universe. Why does this mean Jesus was rich?

John 16:15a = *All that belongs to the Father is mine.*

Examples from the Example (Hebrews 2:17)

What are some ways that Jesus, though He was rich, became poor? = Ask class, list on board

Luke 2:7 = Born in a "barn" and laid in a manger (feed trough)

Luke 2:22, 24 = Sacrificed two birds instead of a lamb - allowed for poor parents

Mark 6:3 = Carpenter; As oldest son, ran family business after father died (?)

Luke 9:58 = *The Son of Man has no place to lay His head* - homeless

John 12:14 = Borrowed a donkey for ride into Jerusalem - also boat, upper room, etc

Matthew 27:59-60 = Buried in a borrowed tomb

Why did Jesus have to give away His rightful riches and become poor for our sake?

Hebrews 2:17 = He had to be made like His brothers in every way ... atonement

What should we learn from Jesus becoming poor for our sake?

Philippians 2:5-8 = We are to humble ourselves in service to others

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Examples of Giving (Acts 3:6)

Without material wealth, how could Jesus serve as an example to us of how to give?

Acts 3:6a = *Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you.*

What are some examples of ways Jesus gave without having riches? = Ask class, list on board

Mark 6:41-44 = Fed 5000 men (plus women & children) with 5 loaves and two fish

Matthew 8:25-26 = Gave protection and peace from fears in storm on sea

Mark 6:56 = Gave healing to the sick

Luke 5:20 = Gave forgiveness of sins

Matthew 11:28-30 = Gave rest from burdens of life, fullness of life

John 15:9, 11 = Love and joy

Jude 21 = Mercy and eternal life

Greater Gifts

What are some things Jesus gave that are especially important to us?

Acts 1:8 = Power of the Spirit to share His good news with others

Matthew 26:26-28 = Gave His body and blood for the forgiveness of sins

John 16:7, 13 = Sent us the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth

Luke 11:2-4 = Taught us to pray, to talk with our God

John 10:28 = He gives us and secures for us eternal life with Him

The Proper Attitude (John 13:1-17)

When in His ministry did Jesus give the strongest object lesson of giving to His disciples?

John 13:1-2 = Last hours before His arrest and crucifixion - not concerned for Himself

What unheard of thing did Jesus do to teach His lesson?

John 13:3-5 = Though above all, He took lowest form of foot-washing servant

What happened when a disciple tried to stop Him from this improper act?

John 13:6-11 = He made it clear that it was not only proper, but essential

Did He make sure they understood the object lesson?

John 13:12-17 = Yes. Live a life of giving of yourself to others and to God

How should we determine when, what and how much to give?

Ephesians 5:1-2 = Be imitators of God, give as Christ would give

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. Do I give to God out of thankfulness and praise to Him or to receive praise or something in return?
(Mark 12:38-41; Psalm 68:18; Amos 4:5; Matthew 6:1-4; 23:5-7, 28; Acts 4:32-5:11; Romans 11:35)
2. When have I been stingy in returning to God what He has first given me?
(Luke 21:1; Deut 16:17; Proverbs 11:24; Isaiah 43:22-24; Malachi 3:8-9; Mark 12:17; Luke 12:48b)
3. When and how have I given sacrificially?
(Mark 12:41-44; 1 Chronicles 29:14-16; Psalm 116:12; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15)
4. When have I experienced God's blessings in response to my stewardship of what He first gave me?
(2 Corinthians 9:6-15; Malachi 3:10-12; Matthew 13:12; 25:21, 29; Luke 6:38; James 1:17)
5. Do I give to God from my first-fruits or from my left-overs?
(Proverbs 3:9-10; Exodus 22:29-30; 23:19; Deuteronomy 26:1-15; Nehemiah 10:35; Hebrews 11:4)