

MARK 12:41-44 CLIMB IN THE BASKET

⁴¹ 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. ⁴² But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. ⁴³ Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. ⁴⁴ They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on."

In the kingdom of God it is not what you have, but what you do with it that is important. In our church we had an assistant minister who liked to say that the offering taken up during the worship service was symbolic of putting ourselves in the offering plate. This image is reinforced by our practice of using Romans 12:1 as our offertory sentence.

...I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

Jesus' message is about our attitude toward God when it comes to living this life. The woman is not being praised for being poor, she is being extolled as an example of our proper attitude of dependence upon God. Her faith in God is demonstrated by her act of giving what little she had and depending on God to provide what was necessary. She is contrasted with the wealthy individuals who gave from their excess. Many were thankful, but were any of them dependent on God?

In difficult financial times, individually or nationally, we are given an opportunity to identify ourselves with the widow. Do we hedge our bet on the world by giving only in proportion to our excess, or do we bet on God by giving in faithful dependence? Are you tipping God as your server, or are you giving yourself to God as his disciple?

You, O Lord, are the source of my being and the purpose of my life. Make me ever mindful of my dependence upon your loving kindness. Enable me to have an open-handed attitude toward the wealth of this world. Free my hands to grasp only on to your truth. Amen.