

WEALTH IN MOTION: Put in Everything

Mark 12:41-44:

**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 few cents.

**43** Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, 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.”

Intro:

And we have many people in this room who Sunday by Sunday give generously of their income as part of their worship of God. They put in the offering 10% of what they make. It is a statement of love for God, of faith in God, and of gratitude to God.

I want to persuade you to join their number, not because it is good for me or good for this church, but because it is what God expects, and it is good for you.

\*\*\*I am not asking you to do something that Janet and I do not do. We were audited by the IRS several years ago. They wanted copies of all the tithing checks we gave to your church. They did not ask for anything else—just proof that we had given that money. I had to recruit my banker to help me get that evidence. The IRS just didn't believe that we would actually tithe.

I read an article recently about people who make ten times that amount. Instead of \$60,000 annually, these people are making \$600,000 annually—and they are spending more than they make. They are going into debt. One lady making more than \$400,000 annually had accumulated credit card debt of \$300,000.

Sometimes it is tough to know how to diversify your investments, particularly your retirement funds. Should you keep 20 percent in cash, then put 20 percent in international, 20 percent in bonds, 20 percent in large cap, and 20 percent in small cap?

You don't want all of your eggs in one basket, they advise us. Your money is safer if you diversity.

**I. PUT IN EVERYTHING: They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on (Mark 12:44).**

I want to convince you this morning to put in more. In fact, I hope you will put in everything—all you have. That's right. I am suggesting you go all in on an investment that never fails to deliver the best returns available in all economic times.

My suggestion is not original. I am retweeting Jesus. A wealthy man asked Jesus, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?”

Jesus replied, “You know the commandments.”

“All these I have kept since I was a boy.”

Then, Mark records, **Jesus “looked at him and loved him.”**

“One thing you lack,” Jesus said to him. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me” (Mark 10:17-21).

**A. Deny yourself. Don't make your own needs the priority.** You might think that nobody ever does this, selling it all to follow Jesus. Actually, people do this all the time. \*\*\*Why, we have a family in our worship center every Sunday that will soon leave for a dangerous part of the world, following God's call. We have people in this room every Sunday who have felt God's call to leave behind a comfortable, affluent lifestyle for a different direction and focus.

**B. Take up your cross daily. Publicly identify with Jesus.** Bear all the burden of discipleship, whatever the cost. Let your words of witness and your love of neighbor define you, be your reputation and your heart.

**C. Follow Christ.** He will lead you where he wants you to go.

**II. ACKNOWLEDGE TOTAL SURRENDER WITH YOUR MONEY: They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on (Mark 12:44).**

A. A variety of ways to do this.

1. The widow does this. She puts in literally everything.
  2. The Twelve Disciples did this. They left it all, as Peter said, to follow Christ. They surrendered their future to him.
  3. Zaccheus, the rich tax collector, gave half. Jesus said, “Salvation has come to your house” not because he had purchased his salvation with half his wealth but because he had become an all-in follower of Jesus.
- B. Some financial gift would acknowledge that God owns it all for you.
1. It cannot be too big, according to Jesus, for even literally giving it all is within his parameters, as the widow did.
  2. It would be more than a nickel a week, would it not, or even a dollar? Would such a small amount really say to God what your heart wants to say in gratitude, praise, and devotion?
- C. It would need to be PROPORTIONAL. Two pennies would not stretch many people in this room, maybe none. You can find them laying around in most places in our city. Yet this is what the widow gave—two pennies. For her, they were precious, but not for us. We live in a different time and place.
1. The average American now gives less than 3 percent of their adjusted gross income to all charitable causes. If they give to churches and religious charities, the average donation is 1.8%.
  2. The very rich and the very poor do better than we who are in the middle. If you make between \$50,000 and \$1,000,000 annually, you are in the sector of the population that gives the lowest percentage to churches and all charitable causes. If you are like most people in this country, you make around \$60,000 annually, and you give about \$1,500 to all charities combined including your church.
  3. Is that enough? Proportionally, are you satisfied with 2%? Even more importantly, is God satisfied that this is a generous gift of thanks from your heart to him?
- D. The number you are searching for is 10 percent—the TITHE.
1. The tithe first appears with Abraham, long before the law. Abraham gave a tenth of all that he had to a priest named Melchizedek.
  2. The law of Moses called for a TITHE, a tenth of their income. In fact, the law said that the TITHE BELONGS TO GOD. Malachi said the one who withholds the tithe ROBBS GOD.
  3. Everyone in this room would likely agree that a tithe indicates REAL COMMITMENT and REAL SACRIFICE and GENUINE GRATITUDE to GOD.
  4. Jesus commended the Pharisees for tithing. He told them that they should give the tithe.
- E. Resolve today to honor God with your money by working toward the tithe.

### **III. WHERE TO GIVE YOUR TITHE: Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury (Mk 12:41)**

- A. You want to give your offering TO GOD. How do you do it?
- B. You give as an act of WORSHIP. Tithing is part of worship.
  1. Abraham gave the very first tithe recorded in the Bible to the priest of the Most High God.
  2. The Law of Moses called for the tithe to support the Levites. This was the tribe of Israel that cared for the houses of worship. They did not get an inheritance in the land. The other tribes were called to support them so that they could take care of the worship for all Israel.
  3. WHERE Jesus and disciples were sitting—in the temple, the house of worship. The house of worship is the STOREHOUSE of Malachi who said, “Bring all the storehouse, that there may be food in my house.” (Malachi 3:10).
- C. Why would I give my tithe at my house of worship?
  1. Because you know your house of worship. You will not find a charitable enterprise that you know so thoroughly as your church. The people with whom you worship both receive and disperse your tithe money. You can see your tithe at work through the preaching, teaching, and love of neighbor. You know your preacher and other staff. Do you really know these preachers that you never meet? Bring your money home to what you know.
  2. Because you receive from your house of worship. The TV preacher will not be coming to see you if you get sick. Do you enjoy this facility? The average family of four people uses \$100,000 of space when they spend Sunday morning here. We will provide music and teaching programs for your children, grandchildren, and many other children in our community. We will teach ethics, morality, and the good news of God’s love

and forgiveness. We will visit the sick, care for the dying, and encourage the brokenhearted. We will engage the difficulties of our community with the love of Christ. You will receive the satisfaction of knowing you are helping.

3. Because God commands it. What more do we need to say? Give your tithe through your house of worship. Expand its ministry and influence. Plug in with your whole heart.