

LUKE Lesson 53

Sacrificial Giving; the Widow's Mite (21:1-4)

7 June 2019

This record of a widow giving all that she had to the Lord is very instructive to Christians today. It reveals the importance and benefit of sacrifice. We learn from this passage of scripture, as well as others, that the Lord is not concerned with the amount that is given, but with our hearts and what motivates us to give.

Overview of verses 1-4

- Jesus watches what we give (vss 1-2).
- The rich men offered from their abundance (vs 4). They gave a small percentage of their wealth.
- The widow offered from her extreme poverty (vs 4). She gave everything she had.
- Jesus stated that the widow gave more than everybody, even though it was a smaller amount (vs 3).
- **The principle taught:** The Lord doesn't measure your giving by what you give. He measures your giving by what you have left after you give.

The purpose of giving in the church:

- It is NOT to pay for sins so God will accept you in Heaven. (God doesn't need money).
 - It is to show how much you love the Lord and how much you care about the things He cares about (Souls, peoples' lives).
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Biblical examples of sacrificial giving:

Exodus 36:4-7, the Israelites gladly donated to build the tabernacle.

- They were giving to the work of the Lord's sanctuary (vs 4).
 - They were eager to have a place where they could fellowship with God and excited to know that God wanted to have fellowship with them.
 - They were not commanded to give.
 - They gave more than what was needed (vs 5).
 - Moses had to ask them to stop giving temporarily (vs 6).
 - They put the Lord first and showed that they loved Him by doing without some things that they could have kept for themselves (sacrifice).
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First Kings 17:8-16, the widow woman of Zarephath.

- This is another case of extreme poverty. The whole land was experiencing a drought and there was no food to be found.
 - The widow only had enough food for one last meager meal. She expected to die after that.
 - She trusted the word of the Lord through the prophet Elijah. She gave all she had to God's prophet.
 - After that, the blessings kept coming, sustaining her and her whole family for many days (vs 15).
 - **Lesson:** you don't have to give, but if you don't, you may be missing some great blessings.
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Matthew 26:6-11, a woman anointed Jesus' head with costly ointment.

- In this woman's estimation, Jesus was more important than anybody else, including the poor.
 - Jesus confirmed that her sacrifice was "a good work" (vs 10).
 - Many churches place too much emphasis on temporal giving (feeding and clothing the poor).
 - This kind of giving has no eternal benefits for the recipient of the gifts (the poor).
 - The church needs to devote itself to giving the Gospel of Jesus Christ so that souls can be saved eternally, and people can learn how to live for God and enjoy fellowshiping with Him.
 - Won't you spend yourself on the things of the Lord? Do you have that kind of heart?
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Acts 4:32-37, the early church gave sacrificially.

- The believers in the early church sold lands and houses and donated the proceeds to the church.
 - They were not commanded to do this. In their heart they wanted to see as many people saved as possible. They knew it costs money to get the gospel to the multitudes.
 - God does not appreciate the kind of giving that involves pride and putting on a big show and giving credit to those who give so that others will be impressed. (See Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5).
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2 Corinthians 8:1-4, the churches of Macedonia gave sacrificially.

- These churches were in deep poverty (vs 2), but they loved God so much, they begged the apostles to receive a gift for the ministry.
 - They wanted to be a part of "the fellowship of the ministering to the saints" (vs 4).
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John 3:16, God gave sacrificially.

- Giving is not about money; it's about the heart! It's about love.
 - We show our love for the Lord Jesus Christ by giving of our time, our strength, our energies, our talents, our abilities, etc. for the glory of God.
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