

(11) The Poor Widow's Great Offering (Mk. 12:41-44; Lk. 21:1-4)

1. Shortly before departing the temple for the last time (Mk. 13:1), Jesus sat down and observed the treasury deposits (Mk. 12:41).
 - a. Jesus sat down (aorist participle) and *began* observing (imperfect) how the crowd was throwing (present) copper into treasury.
 - b. Jesus made a thoughtful and reasoned observation. θεωρέω theōreō #2334_{58x}.
 - c. His consideration centered on the manner (how, πῶς pōs) i.e. the attitude of the activity (Mk. 12:41,44).
2. Edersheim details 13 trumpet-shaped collection receptacles in the womens court (The Temple, p.48).
3. Many rich people were throwing in (imperfect) much, but one poor widow came and threw in (aorist) two lepta (Mk. 12:41b,42).
 - a. The lepton was the smallest coin in circulation. A denarius equaled one days wage, and could be divided into 16 assarions. An assarion equaled four quadrans. A quadrans equaled two leptons.
 - b. The value of the rich people's donation is not known but is irrelevant to the story and the doctrine this story supplies.
4. Jesus perceives comprehensive information regarding this widow that turns these observations into as a significant message on grace giving.
 - a. He called His disciples to Himself for a divine message (ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν amēn legō humin).
 - b. He declares that the poor widow gave more than all the others He observed (Mk. 12:43).
 - c. Jesus explained the standard by which two leptons is more than all the money the rich people were giving (Mk. 12:44).
 - 1) The rich people gave with a single description of surplus.
 - 2) The widow gave in a three-fold description of deficiency, totality, and livelihood.
 - 3) The rich people's offering is not described as worthless, but it is inferior to the widow's offering.
 - d. The widow in this episode must have reminded Jesus of the widow at Zarephath (1st Kgs. 17:8-16; Lk. 4:26).
5. The significance: surplus giving is inferior to deficiency, totality, livelihood giving.
 - a. Deficiency giving is never commanded, but in this passage it is commended.
 - b. Totality giving is commanded once as an illustration (Mt. 19:21; Mk. 10:21; Lk. 18:22), but in at least one passage is commended to the Lord's Apostles (Lk. 12:33).
 - c. Livelihood giving refuses to place temporal expenditures ahead of spiritual expenditures. Spiritual expenditures are the first priority, followed by temporal expenditures (Lk. 12:22-31).
 - d. Rewardability is assigned to the attitude (2nd Cor. 8:12a; 9:6,7).
 - e. Attitude makes the absolute cash value irrelevant (2nd Cor. 8:12b).
 - f. Modern American terminology would define surplus giving as coming from discretionary income. This is cash on hand after taxes and necessary living expenses are paid.
 - g. Modern American terminology would define livelihood giving as coming from disposable income. This is net income after taxes. (Discretionary and Disposable are now often interchanged and confused).