

How Would Jesus Have Us Give?

Luke 21:1-4

I. Introduction

- A. **W.A. Criswell tells of an ambitious young man who told his pastor he'd promised God a tithe of his income. They prayed for God to bless his career. At that time he was making \$40.00 per week and tithing \$4.00. In a few years his income increased and he was tithing \$500.00 per week. He called on the pastor to see if he could be released from his tithing promise, it was too costly now. The pastor replied, "I don't see how you can be released from your promise, but we can ask God to reduce your income to \$40.00 a week, then you'd have no problem tithing \$4.00."**
- B. **Is your life too big? Does God need to bring you down to size so you can gain some perspective? To make you realize that all you have is actually from Him and not the result of what you have done for yourself?**
- C. Some folks get up in arms when the pastor or church begins talking about money. After all, we worked hard for our money... right? We earned it! It is ours! It belongs to us
- D. **Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."**

- E. God created and owns everything. There is not one thing we actually have or own...all we possess is on loan to us from Him...we are temporary stewards of it**
- F. God has allowed us to earn money from people but those people received it from Him. He is distributing wealth as He sees fit and the piece of the pie we think we own still belongs to Him.**
- G. So we do well to find out what He would have us to do with what He has given us...So we can be a part of what He is doing...and perhaps be given more to manage.**
- H. However big our piece of the pie...He can increase or decrease it...Just as the story of the Talents showed us last week...God gives to the faithful so they might be good managers of His Kingdom...and the unfaithful lose even what they have.**
- I. So...How are we to manage our money faithfully?**
- J. Most Christians who have attended church for any length of time would say faithfulness in the area of our money involves tithing.**
- K. Tithing — To give ten percent of your income to God. This was an expectation of God's people in the Old Testament and to refuse to do so was considered theft from God (Malachi).**

- L. **Let me throw a bombshell...I do not believe in tithing...**at least not as a legalistic rule by which we know exactly how much God would have me to give.
- M. **I do not believe New Testament Christians live under the ritual law of the Old Testament in order to be in right standing with God but the grace given us by faith in Jesus.**
- N. **Jesus shows us a better way and gives us a picture of what New Testament giving looks like in our passage today...and 10% is just the starting place for such giving...**

I. The Tithe

- A. **Poor Widow** — Not just a widow but a poor widow. We just finished up the story of Ruth in our previous sermon series. We know the insecurity and hard life of widows in Biblical times.
- B. This woman had not found a Boaz or kinsman redeemer to care for her. She was poor and barely making a life for herself and perhaps even her family.
- C. **Two copper coins were an insignificant amount of money to most people but to her it was her whole livelihood.**
- D. The others in our passage were giving out of their abundance but she was sacrificially giving everything she could...and Jesus says she is the one who gave the most...and it is her gift that Jesus

uses as an example of His kind of giving...**here is the New Testament model of giving to God...generous and sacrificial**

- E. She gave sacrificially and places her trust in God for what she would need to live on otherwise.**
- F. Let's be honest...Here is where a lot of folks fail miserably... Many believers do not give because they are afraid God won't come through for them and give them what they need...Or even worse...won't give them the lifestyle they want...if they give as God has laid on their heart to give.**
- G. We are called to give sacrificially...not what is easy or even what we feel we have the ability to give...to give as God lays on our heart to give...even if it is everything...trusting He will provide for our needs as we do so.**
- H. C S Lewis — I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare.**
- I. If you are giving 10% of your income...great...you are at least doing what those living under the law did in the Old Testament...before the grace of God through the Cross came to mankind.**

J. But we need to understand 10% is just a start in the theology of Jesus.

K. Unfortunately we are all too often like the little girl in a story I recently read...A mother wanted to teach her daughter a moral lesson. She gave the little girl a quarter and a dollar for church "Put whichever one you want in the collection plate and keep the other for yourself," she told the girl. When they were coming out of church, the mother asked her daughter which amount she had given. "Well," said the little girl, "I was going to give the dollar, but just before the collection the man in the pulpit said that we should all be cheerful givers. I knew I'd be a lot more cheerful if I gave the quarter, so I did."

L. God judges what we give by what we keep. — G. Mueller.

M. If you are a believer and have experienced the life of Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit do you not have a desire to give? Would you have the faith to do so? Would you trust God as the widow in our story did?

N. How is God judging what you give? Is it out of the abundance of your heart? Sacrificial? Generous? Extravagant?

O. Would you like to live as one commended by Christ rather than live as those who gave from their abundance and were soon forgotten?

I. Conclusion

- A. We are called to pray and adjust our life to Jesus and His will for us. In the case of giving, we pray and adjust our life so we might give as He leads us to give...Have you prayed such prayers? The answer will be a generous one...a sacrificial one**
- B. We should pray “here is everything Lord!” And then watch expectantly for what He gives back to us in order to provide for our needs...needs He already knows we have!
- C. In the latter part of the 17th century, German preacher August H. Francke founded an orphanage to care for the homeless children of Halle. One day when Francke desperately needed funds to carry on his work, a destitute Christian widow came to his door begging for a ducat--a gold coin. Because of his financial situation, he politely but regretfully told her he couldn't help her. Disheartened, the woman began to weep. Moved by her tears, Francke asked her to wait while he went to his room to pray. After seeking God's guidance, he felt that the Holy Spirit wanted him to change his mind. So, trusting the Lord to meet his own needs, he gave her the money. Two mornings later, he received a letter of thanks from the widow. She explained that because of his generosity she had asked the Lord to shower the orphanage with gifts. That same day Francke received 12**

ducats from a wealthy lady and 2 more from a friend in Sweden. He thought he had been amply rewarded for helping the widow, but he was soon informed that the orphanage was to receive 500 gold pieces from the estate of Prince Lodewyk Van Wurtenburg. When he heard this, Francke wept in gratitude. In sacrificially providing for that needy widow, he had been enriched, not impoverished.

D. If you are not giving to the Kingdom of God you have missed out on the excitement of both being a part of God's work and the thrill of trusting Him for all the needs of your life.

E. But...there is still time for you to be a part of both. This is not a call to poverty but a call to obedience...a call to make Christ the priority...a call to live in light of the riches you have received from Him.

F. Everything you give to this church is used for the Kingdom of God...to in one way or another rich the world with the Gospel and make disciples.

G. If everyone in here simply gave 10% we would have enough money to meet enormous needs both in Bedford and around the world...we would have even greater opportunity to be a part of God's Kingdom work.

H. If everyone in here gave sacrificially in the way Jesus describes here for us in the NT...We would collectively be a

**part of more excitement than we could imagine...literally...
we cannot imagine what God would make all of us a part of
doing!**

- I. The only thing holding us back is us...our obedience to give as the Spirit of God leads.**
- J. Have you prayed and sought the Lord for what to give? Have you placed everything you have on the altar and asked what it is that God has allowed you to live on?**
- K. Are you giving sacrificially...are you giving as the Lord leads? If not today is the day to repent and believe...believe and trust God with all He has loaned you...failure to do so opens you to the Lord's discipline...**
- L. You will one day be held to account for what you do with the things God has given...on this side of the grave or the other... you risk the loss of what you think you now have here...and lose the reward you could have had there**
- M. What will your answer be today? For some it will mean a lifestyle adjustment in order to be a part of God's way of doing things...a downsizing**
- N. Just know this...God always upsizes the life given to Him... What that looks like we will see but know the bigger and better life is one lived in the center of His will...there is no happiness like the life lived in Him**

O. Captain Levy, a believer from Philadelphia, was once asked how he could give so much to the Lord's work and still possess great wealth. The Captain replied, "Oh, as I shovel it out, He shovels it in, and the Lord has a bigger shovel."