

Investing in the Vision

Luke 21 v 1-4

Context:

Some churches seem to talk about money all the time, whereas others seem almost afraid or embarrassed to mention it at all. There must be a holy and godly balance for us to find in this and that is what we seek at St James. Our motto is ALL OF LIFE FOR CHRIST and that includes our money and what we do with it. In fact, Jesus seems to suggest that our attitude to money is a clear demonstration of the depth of our worship and the strength of our faith. There can be few more powerful examples of this principle in the whole Bible than the poor widow we meet in today's study. Let's join Jesus and his disciples at the temple in Jerusalem.

Observation:

1. What did Jesus notice as he looked up in v 1?
2. Who else did he notice and what was this person doing in v2?
3. What was his startling observation in v 3?
4. How did he explain this observation in v 4?

Meaning:

NOTE: In the Jerusalem temple, near the Court of Women, there was a room called the Treasury where gifts and valuables were kept. Near the Treasury were thirteen large boxes or receptacles with trumpet-shaped funnels. Worshippers who wished to give free-will offerings to the Lord could come to the Treasury, present themselves to the priest on duty, announce aloud how much they were giving and the reason why, and then you would hear the rattle of coins as they were dropped through the trumpet and into the receptacle. A Lepton (also known as a Prutah) was the smallest and least valuable coin in circulation in Palestine at the time, worth approximately 6 minutes of a day labourer's pay.

1. Read Luke 20 v 45-47, which comes immediately before today's passage, and discuss how this context can help us understand why Jesus may have drawn attention to the widow.
2. Noting that worshippers who put money into the receptacles had to publicly announce the size of and the reason for their gift, what do you think the rich people and the widow would have been thinking and feeling as they made their donations (v 1-2)?
3. In what sense did the widow 'put in more than all the others' (v 3)?
4. Presumably the widow could have put one coin into the offering and kept the other for herself (v 2), but she didn't. What does this tell us about her love and her faith?
5. Read the following passages and discuss how they illustrate or shed further light on the example of the widow:
Matthew 6 v 19-24
Matthew 6 v 25-34
Luke 6 v 38
2 Corinthians 8 v 1-15
2 Corinthians 9 v 6-15
Philippians 4 v 10-20
1 Timothy 6 v 6-10, 17-19
6. Compare and contrast the widow with the rich young ruler described in Mark 10 v 17-31. What lessons can we learn from them both to shape our own approach to money?

Application:

1. What does *your* attitude to money and especially your giving say about your love and faith?
2. The widow gave everything she had to live on – do you think this is practical for us today?
3. How does this true story make you feel?

Pray:

- For grace to follow the widow's example.
- Thank God for his promise to provide for all your needs.
- Ask God to strengthen deepen your love and strengthen your faith in him.



Two Lepta



Trumpet funnelled giving box