

PICTURE THIS IN YOUR MIND,,, IT'S A MILD SABBATH MORNING IN THE PALESTINIAN CITY OF JERUSALEM. THE SUN HASN'T YET RISEN,,, TO FULL STRENGTH,,, BUT,,, PEOPLE ARE ALREADY LINED UP,,, ALL THE WAY DOWN THE ROAD,,, WHICH LEADS TO THE HOLY TEMPLE.

WE CAN SMELL SMOKE IN THE AIR,,, BECAUSE OF THE ANIMALS,,, THAT HAVE BEEN SACRIFICED AND BURNED ON THE ALTAR.

IN THE SLOW MOVING LANE,,, WE SEE RICH AND POOR ALIKE,,, EACH OF THEM,,, CARRYING THE OFFERINGS,,, THAT THEY WILL OFFER TO GOD! THE LINE LEADS,,, TO A SMALL SQUARE ROOM,,, LINED WITH THIRTEEN LARGE WOODEN COLLECTION BOXES.

EACH OF THE BOXES,,, HAVE METAL HORNS THAT ARE SHAPED LIKE EAR TRUMPETS,,, WHICH EXTENDED OUT,,, TO RECEIVE THE OFFERINGS OF THE PEOPLE.

IN JESUS' DAY,,, PAPER MONEY,,, DIDN'T EXIST,,, SO,,, THEY USED METAL COINS. AS YOU CAN IMAGINE,,, THE COINS MADE A LOUD CLANGING NOISE,,, AS THEY WERE TOSSED INTO THE COLLECTION BOXES. AS THE PEOPLE ENTERED,,, MOST OF THEM MOVED QUICKLY,,, MADE THEIR DONATION,,, AND MOVED ON. *BUT ONE PERSON,,, WHO HAD ALREADY GIVEN HIS OFFERING,,, STOOD WAY OVER,,, IN THE CORNER,,, WITH HIS DISCIPLES.*

IF YOU'LL NOTICE,,, IT DOESN'T SAY,,, THAT JESUS WAS WATCHING WHAT EVERYONE WAS GIVING. BUT RATHER,,, HOW THE PEOPLE WERE PUTTING THEIR MONEY OFFERINGS,,, INTO THE TREASURY.

NOW,,, AS ONE WOULD EXPECT,,, ALSO IN THAT ROOM,,, SUPERVISING THESE MONEY BOXES,,, WERE THE PHARISEES AND THE SCRIBES,,, IN THEIR LONG ROBES WITH MANY FANCY TASSELS ON THEM.

THESE RELIGIOUS LEADERS,, WOULD WALK AROUND SEEKING RECOGNITION,, FOR THEIR LARGE NOISY GIFTS,, WHICH THEY THOUGHT ENHANCED THEIR STATUS,, AND THEY ALSO PRAYED LONGER,, IN FRONT OF THE PEOPLE AROUND THEM,, WETHER THEY WERE IN THE TEMPLE,, OR JUST ON THE SRTEET CORNERS.

AS WEALTHY CITIZENS,, THE PRIESTS AND THE SCRIBES,, MADE LOUD CLANGING NOISES,, BY VIRTUE OF THE MANY COINS THAT THEY THREW INTO THE BOXES.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, WE'RE REMINDED OF THESE WORDS OF JESUS IN (*MATTHEW 6*):

BEWARE OF PRACTICING YOUR PIETY BEFORE OTHERS IN ORDER TO BE SEEN BY THEM,, FOR THEN YOU HAVE NO REWARD FROM YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN. SO,, WHENEVER YOU GIVE ALMS,, DO NOT SOUND A TRUMPET BEFORE YOU,, AS THE HYPOCRITS DO,, IN THE SYNAGOGUES AND IN THE STREETS,, SO THAT THEY MAY BE PRAISED BY OTHERS. TRULY,, I TELL YOU,, THEY HAVE RECEIVED THEIR REWARD.

SO,, ITS NO SURPRISE,, THAT ALMOST NOONE PAID ANY PARTICULAR ATTENTION,, TO THAT ONE,, FRAIL,, LITTLE LADY,, WHO ENTERED THE ROOM.

ONLY ONE PERSON SEES HER,, AND THAT IS THE ONE,, WHO SEES ALL!

BUT NEVERTHELESS,, SHE STOPS AT THE COLLECTION BOX AND CAREFULLY,, REACHES INTO HER TINY LITTLE COIN BAG,, AND SHE CAREFULLY DRAWS OUT,, JUST TWO RATHER INSIGNIFICANT COINS,, CALLED: "MITES". THESE WERE THE SMALLEST OF JEWISH COINS,, WORTH ABOUT A HALF PENNY EACH,, IN TODAY'S COINS.

SHE TOSSES BOTH OF THOSE LIGHTWEIGHT COINS INTO THE BIG METAL BOX,, BUT,, THEIR "FAINT CLICK" IS VIRTUALLY DROWNED OUT,, BY THE HEAVY CLANKING OF THE LARGER COINS.

YOU KNOW,,, THE COINS THROWN INTO THE METAL BOXES,,, BY THE WEALTHIER PATRONS.

SO,,, AGAIN,,, IT SHOULDN'T BE A SURPRISE TO ANYONE,,, THAT NOONE NOTICED HER DONATION! AFTER ALL,,, WHAT POSSIBLE DIFFERENCE,,, WOULD HER TWO TINY TOKENS MAKE?

WELL,,, IT MADE A HUGE DIFFERENCE TO JESUS! HE WAS SO IMPRESSED,,, THAT HE SINGLED HER OUT TO THE DISCIPLES,,, AND HE CHEERFULLY CONFESSED,,, THAT HER OFFERING,,, WAS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT THAN THOSE OF THE WEALTHY,,, AS HE SAID:

AMEN,,, I SAY TO YOU,,, THIS POOR WIDOW,,, PUT IN MORE THAN ALL THE OTHER CONTRIBUTORS TO THE TREASURY. FOR THEY HAVE CONTRIBUTED FROM THEIR SURPLUS WEALTH,,, BUT SHE,,, FROM HER POVERTY,,, HAS CONTRIBUTED ALL SHE HAD,,, HER WHOLE LIVLIHOOD!

AND JESUS RECOGNIZED HER;

“SEEMINGLY UNEVENTFUL GIVING”

BY HAVING THIS EPISODE PERMANENTLY RECORDED IN BOTH OF THE GOSPELS,,, OF MARK AND LUKE.

YOU SEE,,, THE OFFERINGS OF THOSE WEALTHY PEOPLE,,, WERE SELF-SERVING CONTRIBUTIONS,,, WHILE THE OFFERINGS OF THAT POOR WOMAN,,, WAS A SACRIFICE!

AFTER READING AND HEARING ABOUT THE STORY OF THE WIDOW,,, WE MIGHT WONDER,,, *WHY JESUS WAS SO IMPRESSED WITH THE WIDOW,,, WHO ONLY GAVE TWO MITES!*

IT WAS BECAUSE,,, THIS POOR,,, DESTITUTE WOMAN,,, DRESSED IN FRAYED ROBES,,, WITH WORN SANDALS,,, AND ALL ALONE IN THE WORLD,,, WHO COULD ONLY GIVE TWO SMALL,,, ALMOST WORTHLESS COINS,,, THE SUM TOTAL OF HER EXISTANCE,,, THAT MIGHT HAVE EVEN COST HER LAST MEAL,,, MADE A HUGE SACRIFICE,,, SHE GAVE EVERYTHING THAT SHE HAD!

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT CAUSED JESUS TO SINGLE HER OUT OF THE CROWD AND TO HONOR HER MINUTE GIFT,, SO PUBLICLY!

JESUS,,, THE SON OF GOD,,, WAS WATCHING,,, AND HE NOTICED THE WIDOWS HEART,,, AND HOW SHE GAVE. JESUS IGNORED THE POMPOUS,,, GLORY SEEKING HYPOCRITES. THE ONES WHO FELT THAT THEY HAD TO GIVE,,, OUT OF “OBLIGATION” OR,,, JUST TO PUT “SOMETHING” IN,,, TO “GET IT OVER WITH”!

JESUS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS HEARTS THAT GIVE IN THIS MANNER,,, IS THAT THEY GIVE OUT OF THEIR SURPLUS,,, THE OVERFLOW OF WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN GIVEN BY GOD! *SCRIPTURE IS EXAMINING US; DO WE GIVE OUR OFFERINGS TO GOD,,, FOR SELF-GRATIFICATION,,, FOR RECOGNITION,,, TO PAY OUR DUES,,, OR,,, TO MAKE OURSELVES FEEL GOOD,,, TO EASE OUR CONSCIENCE,,, AND NOT FOR REAL STEWARDSHIP,,, OF WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN TO US? NOT TITHING AN HONEST 10% OF THE 100% OF EVERYTHING THAT GOD HAS GIVEN TO US,,, OR,,, ARE WE JUST GIVING A “TIP” TO GOD,,, BECAUSE OUR HEARTS ARE NOT IN OUR OFFERING,,, JUST LIKE THOSE WEALTHY JEWS,,, THAT MADE SUCH A LOUD NOISE,,, AT THE TITHING BOXES,,, SO LONG AGO!*

JESUS ACKNOWLEDGED THE WIDOWS GIFT,,, BECAUSE HE SAW HER HEART! SHE EASILY COULD HAVE KEPT ONE COIN,,, BUT SHE DIDN'T! WHILE OTHERS GAVE OUT OF THEIR ABUNDANCE,,, SHE GAVE FROM HER HEART,,, A SACRIFICIAL HEART OF COMPLETE SURRENDER.

THOSE TWO LITTLE COINS,,, HARDLY EVEN MADE A SOUND TO THE HUMAN EAR,,, HOWEVER,,, THEY RANG OUT LOUDLY,,, IN THE EARS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST! SHE WASN'T THERE TO IMPRESS ANYONE,,, SHE BELIEVED IN GOD'S WORK AND HIS PROVISION,,, AND SHE WAS WILLING TO PLACE HERSELF,,, IN GOD'S HANDS.

IN (*COR. 9:7*) SCRIPTURE SAYS: “

“GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER”

SHE MUST HAVE BEEN A HAPPY GIVER,,, FOR HER TO GIVE ALL SHE HAD AND TO TOTALLY TRUST IN GOD”. GIVING AN OFFERING BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, A TITHE,,, WITH AN ATTITUDE LIKE THIS WIDOW,,, REVEALS A HEART OF COMMITMENT THAT MAKES GIVING TO THE LORD,,, AN ACT OF WORSHIP! JUST LIKE THE WIDOW,,, WHEN WE OFFER OURSELVES TOTALLY TO JESUS,,, WE ARE OFFERING OURSELVES BACK TO HIM,,, BOTH IN OUR TITHES,,, AND AT THE EUCHARIST. WE ARE TELLING HIM,,, THAT WE TRUST HIM TOTALLY!

THIS LITTLE WIDOW LADY,,, TEACHES US SO MANY LESSONS. EVERYTHING WE HAVE,,, BELONGS TO GOD!

YOU SEE,,, GOD ONLY LOANS ALL THAT WE HAVE,,, TO USE WHILE WE’RE HERE ON THIS EARTH. WE’RE CARETAKERS OF IT AND WE’RE TO USE IT TO HIS GLORY.

WE CAN’T TAKE ANYTHING WITH US. WHEN WE DEPART THIS EARTH,,, WHAT GOD GAVE US,,, IS LEFT BEHIND AND GIVEN TO SOMEONE ELSE.

EVERYTHING IS HIS,,, AND WE MUST THANK HIM,,, FOR PROVIDING FOR US AND FOR ALLOWING US TO HAVE USE OF IT.

IN (*PHILLIPEANS*) ST PAUL EXPRESSED HIS TRUST IN GOD’S PROVISION,,, WHEN HE WROTE;

I HAVE LEARNED TO BE CONTENT,,, IN WHATEVER CIRCUMSTANCES. I KNOW WHAT IT IS,,, TO BE IN NEED,,, AND TO HAVE PLENTY. I HAVE LEARNED THE SECRET OF BEING CONTENT IN ANY SITUATION. I CAN DO EVERYTHING,,, THROUGH HIM,,, (CHRIST),,, WHO GIVES ME STRENGTH. MY GOD WILL MEET ALL YOUR NEEDS,,, ACCORDING TO HIS GLORIOUS RICHES,,, IN CHRIST JESUS.

**SO,, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, I SAY THIS,, TO YOU,,
IF YOU GIVE OF YOURSELF,, FROM WHAT YOU HAVE
ALREADY RECEIVED FROM GOD,, YOU WILL HAVE;
A JOYFUL HEART AND A HEART,, FULL OF DEVOTION.**

**WHEN YOU DO THIS,, GOD WILL TAKE YOU TO
PLACES,, THAT YOU'VE NEVER BEEN BEFORE!**

**BECAUSE SCRIPTURE TELLS US,, THAT GOD
PROMISES TO BLESS YOU IN WAYS,, SPIRITUALLY,,
PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY,, YOU'VE NEVER
EXPERIENCED BEFORE!**

**MAY WE ALL LEARN TO TRUST GOD,, WITH THAT
KIND OF CONFIDENCE AND WITH HEARTS OF
DEVOTION!**

THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

+++ AMEN+++

(1,376) WDS,, 6 PGS