

WHAT A GORGEOUS DAY GOD HAS GRANTED TO US!

PICTURE THIS IN YOUR MIND,,, A MILD SABBATH MORNING IN THE PALESTINIAN CITY OF JERUSALEM. THE SUNRISE IS BEAUTIFUL,,, AND PEOPLE ARE ALREADY LINED UP,,, ALL THE WAY DOWN THE ROAD,,, WHICH LEADS TO THE HOLY TEMPLE.

YOU CAN SMELL SMOKE IN THE AIR,,, BECAUSE OF THE MANY *UNBLEMISHED SACRIFICIAL ANIMALS*,,, THAT HAVE BEEN SACRIFICED AND BURNED ON THE ALTAR.

IN THE SLOW MOVING LANE,,, WE SEE THE RICH AND POOR ALIKE,,, EACH CARRYING THE OFFERINGS,,, THAT THEY'RE GOING TO OFFER TO GOD!

THE LINE LEADS,,, TO A SMALL SQUARE ROOM,,, LINED WITH *ELEVEN LARGE WOODEN* AND METAL COLLECTION BOXES.

EACH OF THE BOXES,,, HAVE METAL HORNS ON THEM,,, SHAPED LIKE EAR TRUMPETS,,, EXTENDING OUT,,, TO COLLECT THE OFFERINGS OF THE PEOPLE.

YOU SEE,,, IN JESUS' DAY,,, PAPER MONEY,,, DIDN'T EXIST,,, INSTEAD,,, THEY USED METAL COINS,,, AND AS YOU CAN IMAGINE THOSE COINS MADE A LOUD CLANGING NOISE AS THEY WERE TOSSED INTO THE ELEVEN WOODEN COLLECTION BOXES.

AS THE PEOPLE ENTERED,,, MOST OF THEM HASTILY MADE THEIR DONATION,,, AND MOVED ON.

BUT BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, THERE WAS ONE PERSON,,, WHO HAD ALREADY GIVEN HIS OFFERING,,, WHO 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 WERE THE PHARISEES AND SCRIBES,, WHO WERE SUPERVISING THE MONEY BOXES,, 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.

THEY ALSO PRAYED LONGER,, IN FRONT OF THE PEOPLE AROUND THEM,, WETHER THEY WERE IN THE TEMPLE,, OR JUST ON THE STREET CORNERS.

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

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, WE'RE REMINDED OF THESE WORDS OF JESUS IN;

(MATTHEW 6: 1 - 2)

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 NO ONE PAID ANY ATTENTION AT ALL,, TO THAT POOR,, FRAIL,, LITTLE LADY,, AS SHE QUIETLY ENTERED THE ROOM.

ONLY ONE PERSON DOES SEE HER,, AND THAT'S THE ONE,, WHO SEES ALL!

BUT NEVERTHELESS,, SHE STOPS AT THE WOODEN COLLECTION BOX AND CAREFULLY,, REACHES INTO HER TINY LITTLE COIN BAG,, AND SHE CAREFULLY DRAWS OUT,, JUST *TWO RATHER INSIGNIFICANT COINS,, CALLED: "MITES"*.

THESE MITES,,, WERE THE SMALLEST OF JEWISH COINS. THEY WERE WORTH ABOUT A HALF PENNY EACH,,, IN TODAY’S COINS.

SHE TOSSES BOTH OF THOSE LIGHTWEIGHT COINS INTO ONE OF THE COLLECTION BOXS,,, BUT,,, THEIR “*FAINT CLICK*” IS VIRTUALLY DROWNED OUT,,, BY THE HEAVY CLANGING OF THE LARGER COINS. YOU KNOW,,, THE COINS THROWN INTO THOSE WOODEN AND METAL BOXES,,, BY THE WEALTHIER PATRONS.

SO AGAIN,,, IT SHOULDN’T BE A SURPRISE TO ANYONE THAT NO ONE NOTICED HER DONATION!

AFTER ALL,,, WHAT POSSIBLE DIFFERENCE,,, WOULD HER TWO TINY TOKENS MAKE?

WELL,,, TO MOST OF THE PEOPLE,,, THEY MEANT NOTHING AT ALL!

BUT,,, 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 UNEXCITING OFFERING**”

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,, COULD ONLY GIVE TWO SMALL,, ALMOST WORTHLESS COINS!

THEY WERE POSSIBLY THE SUM TOTAL,, OF HER EXISTANCE,, AND THAT MIGHT HAVE EVEN COST HER,, HER LAST MEAL. THAT'S WHY THEY 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,, IN THE TEMPLE!

JESUS,, THE SON OF GOD,, WAS WATCHING,, AND HE NOTICED THE WIDOWS HEART,, AND HOW SHE GAVE.

JESUS IGNORED THE POMPOUS,, GLORY SEEKING HYPOCRITES. YOU KNOW,, THOSE WERE 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,, BUT,, 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,, DO WE JUST GIVE A "TIP" TO GOD,, NOW AND THEN.

***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.**

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, WHEN WE DIE,,, WE CAN'T TAKE ANYTHING WITH US! WHEN WE DEPART THIS EARTH,,, WHAT GOD GAVE US,,, "TO USE" WHILE WE'RE HERE,,, IS LEFT BEHIND,,, AND IT'S ALL 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 (*PHILIPPIANS 4: 11 - 13*) 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,,, THAT YOU HAVE NEVER EXPERIENCED BEFORE!
MAY WE ALL LEARN TO TRUST GOD,,, WITH THAT KIND OF CONFIDENCE AND WITH HEARTS OF DEVOTION!**

I BLESS YOU ALL,,, THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

+++ AMEN+++

(1,461) WDS,,, 6 PGS