

“Principles Of Biblical Stewardship - Part II” By E Terry Delivered Feb 16 2020
Luke 6: 38; 2nd Corinthians 9:6 - 11; Philippians 4:10 – 20; Mark 12:41 – 43; **(Sermon)**

It would be wrong to take this passage out of context by stating that we should follow the widow’s example and give everything we have to the church.

In verse 38 Jesus said *“Beware of the teachers of the law”*.

You see Jesus was condemning the teachers of the law for their pride of outward appearance of holiness and for taking advantage of widows.

Jesus exposed their hypocrisy by contrasting the widow’s wholehearted commitment to The Lord with the Jewish leaders’ self-serving commitment.

However this account does give us some excellent insight into the way God evaluates our giving.

While all of our scriptures are primarily concerned with giving money they all have application to giving of our time and talents as well.

The treasury was a section of the temple where the people brought the various offerings that were required by the Jewish law.

The treasury contained 13 horn shaped receptacles; one for each of the required offerings.

I.e., one receptacle for the temple, one for the priest, one for the poor, etc.

Verse 42 tells us *“this poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny.”*

In order to fully appreciate this account we need to remember that widows in Jesus day had no status and widows had no way of earning a living.

If a widow did not have any sons they were totally dependant upon the generosity of the religious leaders and their neighbors.

The first principle of Biblical stewardship that we see is that Jesus is interested in our giving.

Jesus was watching the people as they gave.

God has given each of us a certain amount of time, talents, and money and God wants to see what we do with what He has given us.

The Lord is interested in our giving because when our giving is done correctly, our giving is an act of worship.

Our giving also shows the extent of our generosity or the extent of our selfishness.

It is a sobering thought to know that Jesus is watching each one of us as the offering plate is passed on Sunday morning?

The next principle of Biblical stewardship that we see is Jesus more interested in our motives and our attitude about giving than He is in the gift itself.

We really cannot give God anything because God already owns it all, but we can give in the sense of returning a part of what God has given to us.

The widow was completely unselfish in that she gave the only two small copper coins that she had.

This widow was more interested in God and the welfare of other people than she was of herself.

From this account we also see that Jesus is not as interested in how much we give as He is in how much we keep for ourselves.

The widow put in everything that she had to live on.

Jesus looks at how much we trust Him to provide for us.

The principle is that God can take two small copper coins and turn them into a miracle.

Jesus took those two copper coins and made them into something more valuable than all of the rich people's gifts.

Love and devotion were in the widow's giving.

You see Jesus looks at our hearts and that is the way Jesus measures our giving.

We need to remember Jesus words; "*Beware of the teachers of the law*".

They practiced their religion for show and what they could get out of it.

The warning to us is our offering is a private matter between us and The Lord.

And we should not give to The Lord just to get more.

Although that is certainly true because we can never out give The Lord.

In Proverbs 3:9-10 we are told "*Honor the Lord with your substance and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.*"

Jesus said "*Give and it shall be given unto you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap.*"

The Bible contains a number of promises to those people who willing invest in God's Kingdom.

But our motives for giving must be pure and our giving must flow out of our love for The Lord and out of our appreciation for what The Lord has done for us.

We also need to note that Jesus did not commend the rich for their large gifts.

The next principle of stewardship is in Luke 6:38.

The measure you use will be the same measure The Lord will use in judging your stewardship.

“For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

Next we see that God does not expect all of us to give the same amount.

The widow did not give the same amount as the rich people did.

In the Old Testament giving was to be based on a percentage.

If God had blessed a person with \$100,000 and they gave 10% of it to Him that would be equivalent in God’s eye to a person that gave 10% of a \$100. that God had given to that person.

Last week we answered the question; *“are Christians required to tithe or to give 10 % of the money they earn”*.

The New Testament is quite clear Christians are not required to give a certain amount or a percentage!

The operative word is required!

In 1st Corinthians 16 Paul makes it crystal clear that we are to give in the same proportion as God has prospered us.

Our giving is to be a spontaneous response to God’s love for us and our giving is to flow out of gratitude for what The Lord has done for us.

Therefore our giving is an important part of worshipping The Lord.

You would not think about talking to your neighbor during a prayer.

So if you are talking or moving around when an offering is being received you are being disrespectful to The Lord.

The Apostle Paul also makes it clear that Pastors should not have to take time away from preaching and teaching The Word to constantly dwell on having enough money to support the work of the church.

The church does not take up a collection; in the church it is always an offering.

Also an offering is never taken an offering is only received!

You see the emphasis is our giving is to be a voluntary response coming out of our love for The Lord and our appreciation as opposed to something that is a mandatory obligation

Last week when we looked at 1st Corinthians 16:2 we saw that Christian giving is to be systematic and purposeful.

“On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up”.

And in 2nd Corinthians 9:7 we read *“Each person should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver”*.

In our text from Philippians we find some more principles of Biblical stewardship.

Paul commends the Philippians for sending money to spread The Good News of Jesus Christ.

Verse 17 is the key; Paul thanked them for the gift but Paul says: *“I am not looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account”*.

The Philippians who sent the money were the ones who received the most.

You see the giver always receives the most when their gift comes from their heart.

We do not receive an offering every Sunday because God needs our money, after all God owns everything in the universe.

We do not take an offering on Sunday because the church needs the money.

We trust God to provide for our needs by stirring people’s hearts to give.

The offering is received each Sunday morning for each of us.

The offering is received to give each one of us an opportunity to show our love and our appreciation to Almighty God for everything He has done for us!!

Our offering is our response to God’s love and God’s mercy!!!

Our giving is an investment that pays great dividends throughout eternity!

We are the ones who benefit when we give to The Lord for the right reasons.

The way we spend our money is our choice but our giving is a true reflection of the condition of our hearts.

Our giving reveal what our real priorities are.

Our giving is also a true measuring stick of our commitment To Jesus.

We need to ask our selves; *“What does Jesus think about my giving”*?

The church receives an offering to help other people.

In 2019 31.5% of our offerings went to helping other people.

This is admirable however 31.5% was less that the 35% goal set by your Session

The church receives an offering to maintain the church building and the church ministries.

The heat, the lights, the office supplies, and the maintenance of the building and grounds all cost money.

The church building provides a place for us to gather as the people of God; to worship, to study, to celebrate, to encourage, and to fellowship.

Also a visible active church is important because it attracts new people to Jesus Christ.

Our offerings are an act of worshipping God.

Our offering is acknowledging that everything we have belongs to God.

Deuteronomy 8:18 challenges us to *remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth.*

Our offering is an acknowledgement that we are God's stewards and we joyfully bring our offering in response to Jesus saving our souls.

But the main reason an offering is received is for the benefit of each individual giver!

The offering provides each one of us with an opportunity to be a part of building God's Eternal Kingdom on earth!

The question is never how much should we give.

The question is how much do we love the Lord?

The question is how much has The Lord blessed us?

The question is how much are we keeping for ourselves?

The question is do we want a blessing from The Lord?

You see if love is not the foundation of our relationship with The Lord we are always going to have a problem with giving.

The basis of our stewardship has got to be the fact that I love The Lord with all my heart, my soul, and my strength.

We do not give because we have to; when we really love The Lord and if we are thankful for our salvation we will willingly give our time, our talent, our money, and our worship to The Lord.

Love says how much can I give not how little can I get away with.

Christian stewardship is not about meeting the church budget but rather Christian stewardship is our response to God's love, God's forgiveness, and God's blessings!

Giving is for us!

AMEN