

**MINISTRY BY MAIL**  
**Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship**  
[www.lutheranlccf.org](http://www.lutheranlccf.org)  
**Fifth Sunday After Trinity, July 12, 2020**

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 425, 250:4, 405, 443, 45

Lessons: Numbers 9:15-23; 1 Corinthians 15:1-10; Luke 18:9-14

Sermon Text: Mark 12:41-44

Sermon by Pastor M. H. Eibs

Fellow Redeemed in Christ:

In this sermon we want to learn about our offerings to the Lord. We may not like to hear about giving our money in church offerings, for we are by nature selfish and reluctant to part with what we have. But the fact is that the Lord in his Word often speaks about giving. So, it is not something that we can ignore, nor should we want to ignore something that the Lord considers important in the work of his kingdom. We are speaking of a spiritual matter. What needs to be emphasized in our thinking is that our giving to church is a matter of Christian sanctification. Our giving is to be an offering that we make to our Lord and Savior. It is to be a fruit of our faith in Christ, our Redeemer. It is to reflect our love for the Lord Jesus who gave all for us, when He gave Himself for our sins.

Let us ask the Holy Spirit's guiding as we consider:

**WHAT WE MAY LEARN ABOUT OFFERINGS MADE TO THE LORD.**

- 1. Christ judges all offerings made;**
- 2. Large offerings may actually be very small in the Lord's eyes;**
- 3. Small offerings may actually be very large in the Lord's eyes;**
- 4. To give as the poor widow gave results in real blessings.**

We know that Christ judges all offerings made because our text tells us: ***“Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury.”*** Just before this Jesus had spoken harsh words of condemnation to the Jewish teachers of the law because of their self-righteousness and their greed. Jesus said they ***“devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely.” v. 40.*** Then Jesus observed how a certain widow gave to the Lord. Jesus made it a point to watch how the people gave to the Lord in their temple offerings. He sat in the part of the temple called the Court of the Women. Here were 13 receptacles or chests for the people to give their offerings. Jesus did not accidentally happen to sit here. It was his purpose to observe how the people gave their offerings and how much they gave.

So the omniscient Lord today also observes how we give to him in our offerings for the church and the Lord's work. This shows that the Lord is concerned about our giving. We know that the Lord is concerned about what we give also because he has so much to say about Christian giving in his Holy Word. The Lord cares about how much we give because he tells every Christian to give ***“a sum of money in keeping with his income,” 1 Corinthians 16:2.*** All gifts and blessings come from the Lord. He does not give the same amount to every person. So he also wants our giving to be in accordance with his blessings to us. But, even more important in the Lord's sight is the attitude of our heart in giving. We could say it this way: Quality is more important than quantity. In his Word the Lord instructs us, ***“Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver,” 2 Corinthians 9:7.*** The Lord can look into our hearts. Our innermost thoughts are well known to him. He judges not only the amount

of our offering to him, but also the thoughts of our heart as we give our offering. Do we give cheerfully? Or do we part with our money sorrowfully when it comes to giving to church? Only the cheerful giving is pleasing unto the Lord.

There is another lesson we may learn about offerings made to the Lord. **According to the Lord's judgment large offerings may actually be very small.**

2.

As the Lord sat near the treasury and watched the worshippers make their offerings he saw that ***"many rich people threw in large amounts."*** One after the other the rich people gave large offerings. Why do we say then that their offerings were actually small in the Lord's eyes? Because, our text says, ***"they all gave out of their wealth."*** They had much to give because they were rich. And even after they gave large offerings they still had much left over for their own needs. Therefore, in comparison to what they had, their offerings were really small. Such offerings remind us of people today who are rich in money or material goods, but give little to the Lord. Some who can afford to give much, give even less than those who have less wealth. The story is told of a wealthy man who came to church dressed in his costly clothing, wearing a diamond ring. When the collection plate came to him he threw in a miserable nickel. The next offering came from a poor widow. It was a quarter and it fell on top of the nickel. It hid the nickel, but it did not hide the shame of the miserable offering made by the rich man.

There are other things we may learn about offerings given by rich people. The worst kind of giving by the wealthy is hypocritical giving, making a grand display of giving a large gift in order to gain the applause and admiration of men. Indeed, Jesus says ***"Let your light shine before men,"*** but the Lord also says, ***"that they may see your good deeds, and praise your Father in heaven,"*** **Matthew 5:16.** We are not to seek praises for ourselves. We are not to seek praises from others because we have given a large offering? No, indeed! We are always to give our offerings so that our heavenly Father may be praised. We are not to be concerned about gaining the approval of men in our offerings, but we are to remember that Christ is watching, and seek to gain his approval by our offerings. Some who are wealthy may also give substantial sums to the church because they may be tax deductible. If that is the basis for giving to the Lord, it certainly is selfish, and not pleasing to the Lord.

Another thought concerning wealthy people and large offerings is that in a little church body or small congregation we might wish for some wealthy person to contribute much and solve our financial problems. But, this could be harmful to the Church, rather than helpful. For, it could cause the rest to sit back and let the wealthy person supply the need. Those of lesser wealth would then withhold the money that should be given to the Lord. This would not be pleasing to God.

Let us turn now to what the Lord says about the widow's offering and learn that **small offerings may actually be very large in the Lord's eyes.**

3.

***"A poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny."*** The two coins together amounted only to a fraction of a penny. Worldly wisdom would say that this was an insignificant offering. Worldly wisdom would say that the poor widow should have kept some for her own needs. But, worldly wisdom always makes big fools of us!

In the Lord's eyes the poor widow's offering was very precious. Our text says: ***"I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything – all she had to live on."*** Someone might ask, how did the Lord know that the woman was a poor widow and that she gave all she had? The answer is that the Lord knows all things. He is omniscient, for he is the Son of God. He knows everything about everybody. So, the Lord's judgment was that this poor widow with her tiny offering had given more than all the rich gave in the sum total of their offerings. Add all their offerings together and she still gave more, because she gave everything she had, even what she

needed to live on. So you see what we mean when we say that in the Lord's sight quality means more than quantity. He looks at the heart and the motive for giving.

We do not know the widow's name, for the Lord does not mention it. The widow was not interested in making a name for herself! But we will always remember her gift, for the Lord had the record of it written in his holy Word. There is much that we may learn from it!

Finally, we want to consider this: **To give as the poor widow gave results in real blessings.**

4.

What basis do we have for making this statement? In the first place, we may be sure that the Lord abundantly blessed this widow after she gave her offering. This widow was a believer. She might well be praised in the words the Lord spoke to the woman of Canaan whose daughter was seriously ill. The woman asked Jesus so show mercy to her. Then Jesus told her that he was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel and it wouldn't be right for him to give what the people of Israel should have to a woman of Canaan. He put it this way, ***"It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs."*** *Matthew 15:26*. The woman replied, ***"Yes, Lord, but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table, v. 27.*** Then Jesus said to her, ***"Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.' And her daughter was healed from that very hour," v. 28.*** The widow had first given herself to the Lord in faith, and therefore her offering was pleasing to the Lord. Can you imagine now that the Lord would let the widow starve? No indeed! That is not to say that the Lord now gave her great wealth. But the Lord certainly did care for her from day to day and provide all she needed. And if she did not live long, we have the assurance that the Lord took her to heaven, where she would have everything!

We also say that to give as the poor widow gave results in blessings also to the church. The Lord does not command that everyone give all that he has to the church. He did not command the poor widow to do that either. But, think once of how much money would be available for the work of preaching the Gospel to sinners if we all would give as she did! We surely would have more than ample funds to do the work of spreading the Gospel, also beyond our immediate locality.

Have we ever really meditated on the widow's mite? Have we put ourselves in her place and thought of giving all we have to live on to the Lord? Is it not true that when we think of this we immediately are filled with fear? Yes, FEAR! We are afraid that then we will not be able to live and be provided for. When we think of what we should give to the Lord in our offerings, we immediately are concerned that we will not have enough left over for ourselves. And yet when we think of buying something for ourselves, that fear is not present. Our faith is so weak. That is why there is much truth to the statement someone has made: "Men are heroes in spending for themselves, but cowards in giving to the Lord."

When we decide on what we want to give to church, let us think of Jesus who gave his all, his very life. He shed his blood as the price for our redemption. Peter writes, ***"You know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect," 1 Peter 1:18-19.*** So may we be willing to give cheerfully to the Lord what is needed for his work. Amen.

(Revised Ministry By mail sermon from August 7, 2005)