

Lessons At The Temple

In Acts 20:35, Jesus said, "*It is more blessed to give than receive.*" Part of being a Christian is knowing about not only our responsibilities, but also the acts which we perform which make us grow. Before Jesus' crucifixion, Jesus was at the temple and made an observation of giving (Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4). It is helpful for all of us to know how to be better stewards. Every person has an order of priorities. Most Christians probably respect their relationship with God first, their family second, and their money and possessions third. What is our duty toward our money and possessions? The lessons at the temple teach us about the importance of our giving.

There Is A Treasury In God's House

Some have erroneously tried to prove that church treasuries are unscriptural. However, there was an established treasury for money given to the Lord. Jesus and His disciples had a treasury (John 12:6; Luke 8:1-3). Furthermore, the saints at Jerusalem had a treasury (Acts 4:34-37; 5:2). In Peter's reply to Ananias and Sapphira, he made a distinction church funds and the individual's funds (Acts 5:4). Other churches had treasuries also (1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Philippians 4:15-17). The collection was to be made on the day when the church assembled, which was the first day of the week. This commandment would make no sense if the "*laying by him in store*" were to be done at home. Providing a place to assemble, paying a preacher and helping the needy saints requires funds.

The Lord Watches The Treasury

At the temple, there were thirteen trumpet-like chests placed at intervals around the walls of the court of the women in the Herodian temple where worshipers could walk by and drop in their contributions. The phrase indicates that the Lord was continually observing people's contributions. We cannot escape the fact that the Lord knows what we are doing (2 Chronicles 16:9). When we assemble the Lord knows what is in your heart. He knows exactly what you think when you give.

The Lord Knows Our Circumstances

The adjective "*poor*" in Mark 12:42 meant that this woman was in extreme poverty. Just like the Lord knows our thoughts and actions, He also knows our circumstances. The widow was in very different circumstances than her wealthy predecessors. The wealthy had given what they did not need. But Jesus saw that she gave "*all that she had.*" The Lord will not

measure what you give with what I give (2 Corinthians 9:6-7). Don't you love the fact that God is fair? He will only judge us according to how we have "*prospered.*" Although fair, it can also be a double-edged sword. If we are covetous, we will be judged for that sin.

The Lord Knows Our Contributions

For the benefit of his Roman readers, Mark states that the woman put in "*two mites, which make a farthing*" (vs. 42). Later versions say, "*two small copper coins, which amount to a cent.*" The word "*mite*" came from a word signifying "crumb" or "morsel." Her entire contribution was worth about a quarter of a cent. It is so tempting to measure the value of our actions quantitatively rather than qualitatively. But the Lord reveals that He looks upon the inward rather than the outward. One of the most important aspects of giving which we must learn is that God loves a cheerful giver, not necessarily a big giver (2 Corinthians 9:6-7). We think that we give and sacrifice, but no one can ever recognize and commend our effort (Matthew 6:1-4). However, our Father knows what we give.

The Lord Teaches Us To Give

The functions of the church are financed and carried out by our contributions, but is that all there is to giving? Is there any deeper meaning to the contributing of our prosperity which God has given? In 2 Corinthians 8-9, Paul taught that giving demonstrated their graciousness, love, and the graciousness of Christ. The grace of God is manifested in giving. When we give something important to us, we come closer to understanding the grace of God as He gave His Son (John 3:16). Giving also allowed the brethren to have equality (2 Corinthians 8:13-15). There are many brethren all over the world who are destitute. The Corinthians gave themselves first to the Lord (2 Corinthians 8:5). If you do not give yourself to the Lord, you will not find any joy in giving to the church, helping brethren, or helping your neighbor.

Conclusion

The need to examine giving is constantly reflected in the need to examine our own devotion to God. Giving to God involves a lot of self-sacrifice. Unfortunately, many times we tend to let what should be a "priority" fall to a point of contributing out of our overflow. We divide what is left over after all the bills are paid. God deserves more than that. God has been so good to us. We need to be good to Him! The widow truly understood her duty to God. May it always be with us!

Kyle Campbell