



Luke 21: Pay to be faithful

Luke 21:4 “All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on”

I can't imagine giving my last 2 dollars to the church. The question I ask myself is: would I actually do it? I can remember many years ago I had just enough money for milk. Unfortunately, I left the carton on the top of my car. That is the closest I came to despair and poor. I also read a book about living a life dedicated to poverty. I doubt I could do it. Yet, we know that people in Jesus day were very rich and very poor. I suppose it's the same way today.

There are a cluster of money stories and parables in and around chapter 21. I feel that faith and money are tied together. Should we believe that God will bless us if we give it all away? It's a yes and no answer. Yes, God does bless people who are faithful. God seems to bless the wicked at times too. Jesus gives different examples of how we treat money. It seems the rich like to hold their money. Oddly enough, the poor seem to be more generous.

Jesus is at the temple area. He sees that it has become a market place. The rich are there giving to the temple. They were probably shopping as well. It also may have been the in place to be seen. A poor old woman silently comes into the temple and gives two copper coins. I suspect that she does not want to be noticed. Better than that, she is probably not noticed. Yet, God sees two things. One is that

the woman gives coins. The other is that God notices her heart. She gave all she had. I suspect the rich felt blessed. Is it better to be blessed or faithful?

The flip side is the rich people. Did they give a bag of money to be seen? Was it by faith or out of abundance? I have wondered how the rich give. I know that tithing with my salary is tough. If I made a million dollars, then 100,000 would not hurt that much. That is no small change. I bet I would be noticed if I gave that much. God noticed both the rich and the woman. I doubt either of them thought much about that as they gave. The woman probably gave and silently slid out of the temple. The rich probably lingered and shopped. Yet, God was there watching through Jesus.

The old woman is faithful. I doubt many are that faithful. To expect a blessing is a bad reason to give. Give because you can. Give because it helps. It comes back to the left and right hand. In Matthew 6 Jesus says to give to the needy but do not let the left hand know what the right is doing. It means to give without thinking. Give for no reason. Be generous without agenda. A poor person can give with a thought of blessings. A rich person could give to make someone's day. It's not about rich and poor. It's about being faithful to the process. God says give with a joyful heart and good things will come of it. Pay it forward in faith for others because you can.

I like this saying by Pastor Joby Martin "God gives us strength. That strength is not meant for us but for others." It means we have the ability through our generous hearts to give out of blessing and abundance to others for their benefit, not ours.

Matthew 6:3 **"But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing."**