

This poor widow offered more than all the others

Mar 12:41-44; Luk 21:1-4

Preface

The spiritual growth of a saint is closely related to his “economic view”. Those yet to go through economic healing often run into contradictions and struggles on their way to learn from, enjoy, love and follow the Lord. Therefore, after a saint is called, God tests him in economics – his first training (e.g., Abraham, Issac, Jacob; Israel’s testing in the wilderness; Jesus’ testing of the rich young man; Zacchaeus’ first resolution after salvation and Jesus’ response “Today salvation has come to this house”).

-“It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God” <Mar 10:25>, “for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” <Mat 6:21>. “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.” <Mat 6:24> “If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” <1Jo 2:15> “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.” <1Ti 6:10>

If one truly believes in God the Creator, the Lord of all, and God the Father who loves his children and rewards them with the crowns of the eternal kingdom of heaven, one would not love that “extremely small treasure” more than God; neither would one covets for fear of want or invest one’s precious life and time in the “ephemeral world” and “crave for wealth”. Otherwise, “craving for wealth” only proves that he does not believe in God’s love, God’s abundance, God’s provision, and God’s good will; it also proves that he does not value “treasures such as soul and eternal kingdom of heaven”.

-We have seen that, after having overcome in terms of money and economics, many blessed brothers and sisters experience fast spiritual growth and growth in the love of God and that they are able to witness to him in all things with confidence and are blessed with all kinds of grace...

Scripture Reading: Mar 12:41-44

1. To make offerings in order to receive blessings – NO
Because we are already blessed, we are able to make offerings – YES
Jesus praised that poor widow for her offering because her offering is pleasing to the Lord.
- 1) The motive for offering for some believers is “to follow the law”, “to receive more blessings” and “for others to see”.
=>They are not able to please God, neither are they able to receive the blessings brought about by their offering.

=>God is pleased to accept not wealth itself but “the life of the one making the offering”.

-For those who do not know God and have not met God, they do everything in the reverse order in terms of their faith (they strive to love God, to enter the kingdom of God, to succeed, and to make offerings).

-For those who have met God and know him, they find it impossible not to love God, to already live in the kingdom of God and to enjoy the success they have already achieved.

2) The kind of an “offered life” God is pleased to accept are those who:

(1) have received the identity of the “children, heir and owner” in Jesus Christ and their eternal inheritance. Therefore, they live their lives with a heart of an owner and they live for “loving God, loving man, and loving the kingdom and glorifying God, benefiting man and establishing kingdom”.

(2) have been given God’s eternal and infinite love and abundant provision and help at all times. Therefore, they are content with God’s abundant provision; they do not worry about the need of tomorrow; they do not covet or store up; and they are good administrators.

(3) have seen the importance and urgency for church building, worker building and sending, and soul saving. Therefore, they invest their time, gifts, and money in the “church’s gospel ministries”, thereby increasing the power of the church.

(4) have understood the Lord’s principles and teaching in terms of economic management. Therefore, they obey willingly the teachings of the Lord and manage their wealth according to the saints’ principle of economic management.

(5) have know clearly the motives and purposes for their offerings; they focus not on “getting more later” but on “thanksgiving to God and pleasing him and God’s using them”. Therefore, each time we make offerings, we should instead focus on “our own heart of thanksgiving”, “serving him with all our hearts, all our strength and all our minds” and “evidence of God’s acceptance with pleasure”.

3) Making offerings is not only the duty but also the privilege of “all those who believe and are born again in Jesus Christ”.

*Duty – citizens of a country have a duty to pay taxes; citizens of the kingdom of heaven also have a duty to pay taxes, thereby empowering the kingdom and the house of the Lord in holy missions. All the people of God have is the property of the kingdom of God and should be used for “heavenly things”. People of God receive the grace, the power, the protection and the rewards from the kingdom and should repay.

*Privilege – The more we offer, the more rewards we receive; the more we serve, the more gifts we receive; and the more we invest, the more inheritance we receive. No one can take away the duty conferred on the saints through their gifts, power and rewards and the holy privilege of ever increasing blessing. Therefore, do not be compelled to offer, but always offer because “your heart is touched, you are begging to be accepted with pleasure, and you fight to invest”.

2. No to: strive to offer more
 Yes to: Offer all we have!
 Jesus said, “but she, out of her poverty, put in everything – all she had to live on.”
- 1) Lord’s demand of the saints
 - a) Offering all we have: Those out of Egypt (born again) all belong to the Lord and are his. Therefore, all Israel’s first born males, both man and animal, and its first fruits should be given over to God <Ex 13:1>=Tithe
 - b) The most precious, the best offering: God wanted Abraham to offer Issac, i.e., the most beautiful son given over to God. When offering, we give the best animal and fruits.
 - c) Offering all our lives and in everything: to become the body of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit, the living sacrifice, in order to seek God’s good will and obey.
- 2) The essence of the gospel messages is to ask saints of “all they have”.
 -<Rom 6:1-11; Eph 2:1-7; Gal 2:20; Phi 1:20>
 -Therefore, throughout the ages, the saints who are truly born again sacrifice their worldly fame, profession, family and even their very lives for the Lord.
 -like the saints of the original church in Jerusalem, “selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.”
- 3) The Lord’s teaching on offering of wealth
 - (1) Affirming our eternal belonging (in the spiritual family): our lives’ inheritance is to become good administrators.
 - before offering, we have to be restored to the correct “economic view”
 = mindset of an owner, contentment and administration
 - we are not to disbelieve, doubt, and covet; neither are we to make money in the wrong way (e.g., gambling, playing the lottery, buying and selling stocks)
 - (2) “Tithe” is not offering; that’s what we should (that belongs to God).
 -“Tithe” is not the law but a declaration of faith by one who is born again that “all is God’s”. ->before the law of Moses, that’s what Abraham and Issac did, offering all. Jesus Christ also said, “You should practice the latter, without neglecting the former.” <Mat 23:23>
 - Those out of Egypt (born again) all belong to the Lord and are his. Therefore, all Israel’s first born males, both man and animal, and its first fruits should be given over to God <Ex 13:1>=Tithe. Out of the 12 tribes of Israel, the Lord consecrated the Levites in place of the first male offspring of every Israelite woman. <Num 3:11-13> When Israelites received their inheritance in the land, Levites didn’t receive any share. They were not to work but were consecrated to the Lord for his work. Therefore, all Israelites gave their tithe to the Levites as their inheritance,

Levites in turn gave their tithe to Aaron and Aaron kept what he needed and gave the rest to the Temple <Num 18:21-32>.

- the Tithe of the saints is used to restore the temple (holy services by the Levites), restore Israel and bless this date and age.

- Through Malachi God rebuked the Israelites severely that they had robbed God of the tithe and that tithe was determinative of blessing or curse in the future <Mal 3.8-12>.

*How to tithe: this is required of all Israelites and it is set aside from all you have, i.e., you have it set aside before using any of your money. You are not to delay but to turn it in to your own tribe, i.e., your own church. Your name is then recorded.

*You are not to regard the tithe as your own and use it in place of any other type of offering or turn it in to any other church or mission.

(3) Sunday Offering, Thanks offering, Mission Offering, Church Building Offering and Love Offering

-“No one is to appear before empty-handed.” <Ex 23:15; 34:20>

-Each “burnt offering, sin offering, guilt offering and fellowship offering” must be done with “grain offering” (Thanks offering)...

-Each offers according to his ability and what God has given <Deu 16:17>

-“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” <2Co 9:6-7>

-He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.” <2Co 9:9; Psa 112:9; 1Ti 6:18-19>. “I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.” <Luk 16:9>

3. The Lord knows it all and will bless the givers accordingly!

**”Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasurer.”

1) We give each offering and do it before God.

-Never offer when you are not moved to do so or you do it out of formality or habit. Neither do you do it under compulsion or as a contest.

->more important than monetary offerings is what you pray for before the Lord.

-You do it because you have seen and want to declare your faith: that all I have is God’s love and blessings, comes from him and is to be used for him.

-You have seen the need of the Lord’s house and his work, the urgency of saving souls that are helpless and oppressed, and the value of disciples’ training and sending.

-You offer with thanksgiving, love of the Lord, man and kingdom, with a heart trusting solely in the Lord, and willingness to be a faithful and kind administrator and to store up wealth in the kingdom of heaven.

2) The heart of the giver is the heart of the Lord.

-The giver himself will know whether the Lord is pleased with his giving.

-Giving that does not move your heart will not move the heart of the Lord.

-Giving without a righteous heart may be an insult to God and blaspheming...

(God is not the tax collector; he has never forced anyone to give.)

3) Blessings to be received

(1) blessing of your soul: <3Joh 2> receive a soul for the love of man; will love more the Lord, the church, the soul; faster spiritual growth

(2) blessings of wealth: many spiritual references <Mal 3:10; Ecc 11:1; Phi 4:19; Luk 6:38> God is always looking for those with whom he trusts his wealth.

**Receipt of wealth without economic healing leads to certain calamities.

(3) blessings of children: <Ex 20: 4-5>, e.g., blessings of Issac, Jacob and Joseph, Abraham's children; many other testimonies of this day and age.

(4) Blessings of ministries: <Act 2:45-47; 11:19-30; 2Co 8:1-8; 9:6-9> e.g., power of the ministries; beautiful testimonies; ability to encourage others/generosity encouraged