

TRUST IN GOD ABOVE ALL MARK 12:38-44
24TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST SUN NOV 8, '15

³⁸ In his teaching [Jesus] said, “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces ³⁹ and have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, ⁴⁰ who devour widows’ houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.”

⁴¹ And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. ⁴² And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. ⁴³ And he called his disciples to him and said to them, “Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. ⁴⁴ For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

All week long, way we deal with money depends on trust.
We go to work, trusting employer will pay us.
We deposit that pay in bank, trusting it will still be there.
Or we have automatic deposit and automatic withdrawal
to pay bills, trusting right amount will change hands
even though we never see any of it except on paper.
We borrow money, lender trusts we will repay.
We give credit card # in store or type it in on line
and trust business will only use it for amount we owe
and credit card company trusts we will pay it.
or we use checks, each trusting money is in the bank.
All despite the fact that sometimes there is fraud
and cheating and identity theft,
partly because we are trusting government or insurance
to take care of problem if this happens.
Text reminds us that ultimately, we must do
what our money itself says we are doing:
“In God we trust.”
So text shows that what we do with money on Sundays
should depend on our trusting God above all.

GOD SEES OUR TRUST SHOW IN HOW WE LIVE.
WE TRUST GOD TO GIVE WHAT WE DO NOT YET SEE
WE TRUST IN GOD WHO GIVES UNSEEN RICHES

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Jesus is constantly observing people
and he seems to see what not everyone sees.
While everyone notices those sitting in places of honor,
he has to point out widow and her tiny offering.
He seems to have xray vision like Superman is said to have.
Like security scanner in airport, he sees under surface.
As Bible says, God looks at the heart.
Jesus sees that people are not always what they appear.
He sees scribes in their long white robes, looking very holy,
have thinly veiled pride and greed.
Maybe things they do are meant to impress others.
Maybe they trust their long prayers will impress God.
Maybe they are working at convincing themselves
that they are saved because of things they do.
Maybe people putting large amount in offering chest
are trusting that doing this will help pay off God
to look the other way when they do what is wrong.
But when they put impressive amounts in offering,
he sees how much is left in their pockets or at home.
He can also see when big things are done with right heart.
But God sees that, like magician doing magic tricks,
sometimes what we make a big show of doing
is to distract from what is really happening.
We may try to act more prosperous than we are.
Other times may pretend we are more poor than we are.
Yet, the things we do are not always that hard to see through.
Our money may say, “In God we trust”,
but sometimes what we do with it shows that
money itself is the god we trust for what we need.
Sometime it may be that the ones we deceive are ourselves.
We may say as individuals or as a group
that our values or priorities are this or that,
but looking at how much we spend on what,
can reveal what our real priorities are.

Jesus sees these things because he was there
when people gave offerings in temple and is also here.
Just as he is present when we gather to pray in his name
or speak to others in his name or forgive in his name,
because doing it in his name means it comes from him,
So also he is here whenever we use our money,
recognizing that this too is coming from him.

WE TRUST GOD TO GIVE WHAT WE DO NOT YET SEE

Many rich people put in large sums. ⁴² And a poor widow came and put
in two small copper coins, which make a penny. ⁴³ And he called his
disciples to him and said to them, “Truly, I say to you, this poor widow
has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box.
⁴⁴ For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her
poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

So, how much did this woman give?

Her two coins of temple money were worth one Roman coin
which is about 1/64 daily wage, today about \$2.

just enough for value burger & fries at McDonalds.

So texts implies that would be a teeny tiny offering.

but that may be what she had to eat on that day,

like widow in O.T. lesson who had enough for one meal.

But how her money compares to ours is not most important.

Spreadsheet programs can be set to display information
as whole numbers, dollar amounts or percentages.

How should we set our minds to look at how much we give?

not just as dollar amounts that may seem big,

not just in comparison to what others give

or as our share of what seems to be needed

but as percentage of what we have received from God.

So, what percentage does Jesus commend here? 100%

in v. 44, Jesus says she gave all she had to live on.

literally, in original language, “her whole living”

Jesus sees how she honors God not just with her money

but her living.

God has given our whole life. What does he want in return?

not just our money but our whole life.

Life is something you have or don't have, not just in part.

God who gives us whole life intends for us to use whole life

as according to his will for us, for his good purposes.

So how much do we give, enough to effect how we live.

But, more important is not how much this woman gave but why.
We can infer was same reason O.T. widow did what she did,
feeding Elijah first all the food she had,
& why Israel was to bring firstfruits of harvest as offering.
because they trusted God's promise
that there would be more where that came from.
Would you spend all money in your pocket in one place?
Sure, if you had bank account or credit card
and could get more whenever you needed it.
This widow, who surely lived hand to mouth,
had learned that God provided for her one day at a time
and so trusted God for more when she needed it.
When we give our offerings, more than anything else,
more than a way to pay the church's bills,
more than a way to get a tax deduction,
it is an act of worship, expression of our trust in God.
We can trust the God who sees the unseen in our hearts
to provide for us what we do not yet see.
We have to do this all the time anyway with something
even more valuable than our money or possessions.
Why do we so carefully watch accounts
and hold on to possessions?
It is so we will have enough for the future.
But why do we think we will have another day of tomorrow?
we tend to simply assume it because of quality of life
God has given us today.
We can trust God who gives us life for what we need for life.
Now, again, important question is why. Why do we trust God?
We trust the God who sees the unseen in our hearts
and look forward to his yet unseen blessings
because of the love that is in his heart.

WE TRUST IN GOD WHO GIVES UNSEEN RICHES

Many rich people put in large sums. ⁴² And a poor widow came and put
in two small copper coins

Woman in text could have taken her coins and shopped around
to get the most bread she could for her money
Instead she took them to where she got what she needed
for life more than daily bread: the word of God.
What she received in worship was worth far more
than what she or any of the others gave.

Luther said he came to worship with empty sack that got filled
and next week he came back again with empty sack.
What sack was filled with was not potatoes or clean laundry
but hope, love, peace and forgiveness
which he used up each week on frustrations, fears
& failures of daily life

At the end of each pay period, I don't get handed wad of dollars,
these days I don't even get a check. I get a note about
what has been automatically deposited in my account.

When we come to worship each week, we don't get
a ticket for another week of life
but we get a message about what has already been
automatically deposited into our account.

What God puts in our account is a living,
not just day to day here but living forever with him.

He does this for us because he who looks at our hearts
sees the weakness and fear and guilt that is there.
he sees that even our best behavior & greatest riches
are tiny mites compared to what we need
not just for this life & especially for life in heaven.

It is given to us when the righteousness of Christ
is credited to us while our sins are counted against him
and fully paid for by his blood on the cross
where he gave for us his whole living
in order to provide for us our whole living.

Far better than what the scribes or anyone could do for selves,
He dresses us in the beautiful robes of his righteousness.
he gives us a warm greeting in heaven
and a seat of honor at the heavenly banquet.

Along with this, God who gave us his own son
also freely gives us all things.

As Jesus had to point out for his disciples the greatest gift,
We would not realize until Jesus points it out for us
what are God's greatest gifts to us

First verse of text says it all happened as Jesus was teaching
at the temple.

This is why we come here to this house of God
& do what we do in worship
because this is how God does what he does for us.
This is where he gives us his riches
through his word and sacraments.

He gives us all we need for life. He gives us our life itself,
he gives us all we need for eternal life.
This is why we give and why we live as we do.

GOD SEES OUR TRUST SHOW IN HOW WE LIVE.

Jesus sees what counts, not just the money put in the box
but he sees in the heart the trust put in God.

WE TRUST GOD TO GIVE WHAT WE DO NOT YET SEE

We do all our living today for God because we trust God
for tomorrow's living and for all we need for life.

WE TRUST IN GOD WHO GIVES UNSEEN RICHES,

the forgiveness and comfort we need every day
because of the righteousness of Christ credited to us
and the eternal treasure stored up for us in heaven.