

## 111024 Sermon "Story of the Widow's Offering" Mark 12:38-44

In November, many churches implement a Stewardship Campaign. Therefore, the Bible verses given through the lectionary during this period also include topics related to this. Some people might think that it is a burdensome time to talk about offerings, but in fact, stewardship is not simply about money.

Throughout the Gospels, we find that Jesus speaks frequently about money and material possessions. Why is this? Jesus understands that our attitudes toward money and resources are deeply connected to the condition of our hearts. He knows that wealth can often become a barrier between us and God, tempting us to place our trust in what we have rather than in who God is. When Jesus says, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21), believe it or not, Jesus is reminding us that money and resources are a mirror to our values.

In today's story, Jesus reveals something important about God's perspective on giving. Unlike the scribes and wealthy people who give to gain status, the widow's gift is seen as precious by God because it reflects her deep reliance on God. This tells us that God does not need our money—God is the Creator and sustainer of all things. If God needed anything from us, the amount we give would matter more than the heart behind it. But what God is looking for is our love, our trust, and our willingness to give Him everything we are and have, even if it is only "two coins."

The story of the widow challenges us to redefine our understanding of stewardship. We often think of stewardship as simply managing our resources carefully, and that's part of it. But stewardship is more than just

giving. It is about entrusting everything we have, our time, our talents, our treasures, to God.

The widow's offering was not impressive in worldly terms. She gave only two small coins, an amount so small that it would have gone unnoticed by others. But Jesus, looking beyond the size of the gift, sees her heart. He sees her sacrificial faith, her complete trust in God. While the wealthy give from their abundance, she gives from her poverty, offering "all she had to live on" (Mark 12:44).

When I think about this story, I honestly worry more about how she will live tomorrow than about how great she is. I wonder why Jesus, who does not belong to the world, tells this story to his disciples. Going one step further, one might wonder why Jesus did not stop the widow's offering, especially knowing that the temple system was corrupt at that time. After all, He had just condemned the religious leaders for exploiting the poor, even saying they "devoured widows' houses." The temple, which should have been a place of prayer, had become a den of robbers.

Yet Jesus does not stop the widow, because He sees that her act is about her relationship with God. She is giving not to validate a flawed institution but as an act of worship to God. Jesus recognizes her faithfulness despite the corruption around her, showing us that true stewardship isn't dependent on the purity of human systems but on the purity of our hearts. Her gift becomes an act of worship, and Jesus honors her faith, showing that God's justice and mercy are not limited by human failings.

The widow's story challenges each of us to examine our own hearts and our approach to stewardship. Jesus does not ask us to give merely out of obligation or to be seen by others. Instead, He calls us to give out of love,

trust, and gratitude. True stewardship means offering our resources, time, and talents to God, trusting God with our needs and desires.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodist movement, taught that we should “earn all we can, save all we can, and give all we can.” Wesley understood that stewardship goes beyond financial offerings, it’s about living a life fully dedicated to God’s purposes. Stewardship means using our resources in ways that serve God and bless others, knowing that we are simply caretakers of what God has entrusted to us.

Perhaps this story is an extreme example. If God always asks us to give everything we have, how can we obtain our daily bread? Jesus, who taught us to pray to God for our daily bread in the Lord's Prayer, knows better than anyone else that we need daily bread. Nevertheless, if you think deeply about this story, you can reflect on whether you are still living in faith in God’s provision. Her faith challenges us to go beyond giving what’s easy and comfortable, to consider what it means to give deeply from our hearts, trusting that God will provide for us and for our children as we serve God.

The widow’s offering is an invitation to trust God’s provision. She gave all she had, yet her faith wasn’t shaken by her lack. Jesus doesn’t intervene to stop her because He recognizes that her trust in God is stronger than her fear of scarcity. I honestly don't know what this widow's today and tomorrow were like. However, Jesus said, "If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!" I believe that God took responsibility for her today and tomorrow 2,000 years ago. Just as I believe in God who provides for my today and tomorrow. Her act of faith reminds us that God sees and values even the smallest gifts given with sincerity.

As faithful stewards, we are called to give not only what we can afford, but to trust God with the rest. This doesn't mean reckless giving; it means thoughtful, sacrificial stewardship that acknowledges God as the provider of all we have. When we give sacrificially, we affirm that our security isn't found in wealth, but in God's faithfulness. Jesus assures us that our gifts, given in faith, are honored by God and are a part of God's Kingdom work, even when they seem small or unnoticeable.

As we reflect on the widow's offering, let us remember that true giving is not measured by amount, but by the faith and love behind it. Just like her, we are called to give all that we have to God with a heart of trust and gratitude. Stewardship, at its core, is an act of worship—a way to honor God with everything God has given us.

Dear beloved sisters and brothers in Christ, as we close, may we carry with us the words of the hymn, "Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart." When we give thanks, we open our hearts to see God's blessings and to recognize that everything we have comes from God. Let this hymn remind us that, like the widow, our offerings are an expression of our gratitude, a declaration of our trust, and a way to glorify God with all that we are. Fairfield Grace, may God's grace, peace, goodness, and mercy be with you, your family, your business, your studies, and with the lives of your children. To Christ be thanks and praise. Amen.