

## Throwing Your Life Away

**Mark 12:41-44** *KJV And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. [42] And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. [43] And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: [44] For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.*

**Mark 12:44** *WEYMOUTH But she out of her need has thrown in all she possessed—all she had to live on.*

### I. THE TEXT IN MARK 12

- This story told in Mark 12 (also repeated in Luke 21:1-4) gives much insight as to how the Lord really looks at giving. I suppose that when you hear a text read like this one, that the mind of the hearer immediately surmises that this message has to do with money.
- What Jesus was attempting to convey in this passage goes much further than money. It deals not only with money but it reaches further into the concepts of what we do with our time and our talent.
- Jesus never even spent a word on the gifts that the wealthy gave on that particular day. He sensed the hypocrisy in their giving and they gained their reward when all of those in attendance saw the gift that was being given.
- Their giving was entirely to be seen by the people. God is far more interested in seeing what we give in private than what we choose to give in public. That is why the public anointing can never rise any higher than private devotion.
- This account that Mark and Luke write of comes in the last week of the Lord's life. Women from all over the nation would come into the Temple and give their offerings. Along the walls of the court there were huge trumpet shaped

containers that people would place their gifts in.

- The rich and powerful would often make much fanfare with their giving. The containers were made of a thin metal and when coins were dropped into the box much sound would be generated. The bigger the gift, the greater the noise.
- The Scribes who had devoured the widows' houses would make much of their giving but suddenly the widow appears on the scene and her intent has a much more noble purpose but her gift is much smaller in total. But the smallness of her gift is swallowed by the value of the offering.
- The Scribes were rich and selfish. . . The little widow was poor but sacrificial.

#### A. [The Widow](#)

- The eyes of the Lord are literally riveted on this lonely, solitary widow who has come to give in the Temple. She was very poor and she comes alone. Perhaps she came alone because she was embarrassed to mingle with the crowd of those who had something to give.
- Her condition and her clothing betrayed her on that day. She wore the uniform of a mourner and the Lord's eyes watched her very closely and then read her very clearly.
- In her hands was the smallest amount of coins and the Law stated that her gift was not acceptable. It was but just a farthing, which was less than a dime, but it was literally everything that she had.
- It was a very humble gift but it was all that she had. But that small gift propelled her far beyond in the realm of sacrifice than anything that all of those around her were giving on that particular day.
- This widow gave everything that she possessed. The phrase from Weymouth's translation gives it like this: But she out of her need has thrown in all she possessed—all she had to live on.

- She literally threw her life away with this offering. She would only have her faith to carry her on from this point forward.

## II. LESSONS ON COMMITMENT

- There are some very powerful lessons on commitment that come from this particular text.
- It is commitment, not talent or resources that will place you among God's greatest.

### A. Commitment Elevates Value

- Commitment elevates the value of the gift. What was only a farthing (less than a dime) became so much more because of the commitment necessary to give it. The Lord clearly stated that she "cast in more than they all."
- If there is a sacrifice in the giver, there will be power in the gift.
- Often what may seem so small and inconsequential are the small hinges that are fastened to huge doors that open up to fresh power and anointing.
- This is all that God is asking for you to do. Just put your life and your efforts into His hands.

### B. Commitment Comes From Your Life

- Commitment will never come from your abundance but rather from your life. This poor widow gave out of her want. She gave from her lack. Very few really ever grasp the concept of giving out of their want.
- True revival comes with giving in to some things—prayer, fasting, hunger, and the call to holiness. True revival also comes with giving out of some things—sacrifice, desire, change, and worship.

- With every giving that costs something, there will always be a trace of fear that accompanies the gift. But that trace of fear has to be overwhelmed with a consuming faith in God and His purpose for life.
  - Imagine Abraham offering up Isaac.
  - Imagine Moses confronting Pharaoh.
  - Imagine David facing his giants.
  - Imagine the widow of Zarephath releasing the last bit of oil and meal for the sake of a stranger.
  - Imagine Peter, James, and John deserting their nets and their boats.
  - Imagine the young boy giving up his lunch to feed the multitude.
- If the only giving that we ever really submit to is that of our abundance then we never really yield to sacrifice.

### C. Commitment Demands That We Travel Light

- The widow gave basically everything that she had. There was no excess baggage allowed along the way. The Lord often looks not at what is given but rather what is kept back. We cannot afford to hoard our lives in an act of self-preservation.
- When we arrived in Atlanta on Monday afternoon and began to check-in at the Lufthansa counter each of our bags of luggage was weighed. One of the pieces of luggage that was placed on the scales registered that we were 5-6 pounds over our limit. So the agent at the counter told us that we would have to redistribute the contents into another bag. So very hurriedly we opened the overweight bag and then opened another bag and begin to shift over the contents. It seemed to us as if there were a thousand people watching us in the midst of our dilemma. The difficulty was that we tried to put too much into one of the bags.
- Too often in this life, we attempt to take far too much with us in the journey. Consider the advice that the Lord gave to His disciples earlier in Mark 6.

***Mark 6:8-10 KJV And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no***

*money in their purse: [9] But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats. [10] And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place.*

- That list of instructions from the Lord highlights the very anxious relationship that most of us have with our possessions. Instead of possessing the possession. . . . far too often the possessions literally possess us.
- There will always be a cost involved in serving God. The principles of His Kingdom are so “backwards” of the grasp and pull of the lower kingdom in this earth. I am fearful that too much blessing down here is not spiritually healthy for me!
  - Far too many along the way avoid the cost:
    - Moses saw many who made it out of Egypt die in the wilderness because they could not pick up the cost of driving out the giants.
    - Jesus watched many turn away from Him when the supply of the loaves and the fish had been exhausted.
    - King Herod died in his sins because he enjoyed hearing John the Baptist but he never embraced what he enjoyed.
    - Demas found the fellowship of the gospel to be far too demanding and avoided the cost of entire commitment.
- Commitment demands that you travel light through this world. There are things that you must be willing to give up.
  - Self-Righteousness.
  - Secret Sin.
  - Worldliness.
  - Self-Will.

- That old song that goes something like this: Take this whole world, but give me Jesus. Take this whole world, but give me Jesus. Take this whole world, but give me Jesus. I won't turn back, no, I won't turn back!

#### D. Commitment Is Being Observed

- Our commitment is being watched by God even when we do not suspect it. The text states that Jesus sat over against the treasury and watched what was being given.
- God watches what we give. If God were to teach a lesson to others on what I gave, what would He teach?
  - The story is told of a man who faithfully gave and supported the work of missions for years on end with his money. He gave it without much thought except that he was aware of the need on the fields of the world. But there came a day that his heart would be torn with the feeling of deep sacrifice. Over the years, his son had watched his father faithfully give. In later years when the son began to have a measure of maturity in his life, he knew that there were times that his father gave when he really did not have it to give. All of this was watched silently by this growing son. One day the young man came to his father and said, "Dad, I have a strange, relentless, and unyielding burden for a certain foreign field. I want to be a missionary."
  - Suddenly the father was filled with a terrible, wrenching feeling! This was the experience that painfully shattered his world. For years he had given his dollars and nothing with it. But on the day that he gave his boy, a life went with it!
- All of us have to reach a point in life that we are willing to give ourselves to something that is bigger than we are. To fail in this quest means that we become slaves to the weak and beggarly elements of this world.

- Give yourself to something bigger than life!
  - Give yourself to the calling of God!
  - Give yourself to a life that will be challenged!
  - Give yourself to a passion for the lost!
  - Give yourself to an unreachable dream!
  - Give yourself to the pursuit of the upper limits of the Kingdom!
  - Give away your life!
- This message is about far more than money! It is about how that you must throw your life away. . . To a cause that is greater than the soft, wooing, and yet very empty American dream.
  - While the lives of American young people are being wasted on the inane such as:
    - iPods with bigger gigs that hold thousands of tunes.
    - Cell phones that contain cameras and capabilities to text.
    - Computers that pulse with images and sounds with everything from EC, PZ, and to MySpace.
    - Clothes that urge us to give up our money and our modesty just to be hip.
    - Play stations and X-boxes that create much laziness and lost time.
    - Voices that cry out for us to give up our sexual purity so that we waste our bodies and emotions before marriage.
  - What the world will never tell you. . . What the minions of hell who run this world will never let you in on. . . is this. . . The only real satisfaction in life comes when you throw your life away and give in to the call of the fifth cross.

***Galatians 2:20*** KJV *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

- On Saturday night during the altar service, I waded off down into the middle of the Romanian gypsies and begin to lay my hands on them and

pray fervently for them. It was a moment of great emotion for me because my mind took in all that they did not have going for them.

- Bound by strong cords of poverty, trapped in places with very few resources, in fact, I would later learn that very few of them had running water and electricity. I would also learn that they were willing to walk miles to come to church.
- As I began to pray with them, I felt almost hopeless for their material plight in this world. But no sooner had that thought crossed my mind than the Lord promoted me with this Scripture from Romans (14:17), the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink but righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost.
- I don't have enough money or resources to fix their material problems but the power of the Holy Ghost can bless them far beyond measure and give hope for the world to come.

### III. CONCLUSION -- WHERE ARE THE YOUNG RADICALS FOR CHRIST? (FROM JOHN PIPER, "DON'T WASTE YOUR LIFE")

- Where are the young radicals for Jesus Christ?
- Where are the old radicals for Jesus Christ?
- Would you really like to grasp what cool really is all about? Would you like to see something that is far more significant than what anyone can do with a basketball or with a skateboard or with a baseball bat? Then consider Jacklyn Lucas. He was a young man that James Bradley wrote about in "Flags of Our Fathers."
  - He'd fast-talked his way into the Marines at fourteen, fooling the recruiters with his muscled physique. . . Assigned to drive a truck in Hawaii, he had grown frustrated; he wanted to fight. He stowed away on a transport out of Honolulu, surviving on food passed along to him by sympathetic leathernecks on board.



- He landed on D-Day [at Iwo Jima] without a rifle. He grabbed one lying on the beach and fought his way inland.
  - Now, on D+1, Jack and three comrades were crawling through a trench when eight Japanese sprang in front of them. Jack shot one of them through the head. Then his rifle jammed. As he struggled with it a grenade landed at his feet. He yelled a warning to the others and rammed the grenade into the soft ash. Immediately, another rolled in. Jack Lucas, seventeen, fell on both grenades. “Luke, you’re gonna die,” he remembered thinking. . .
  - Aboard the hospital ship, Samaritan, the doctors could scarcely believe it. “Maybe he was too young and too tough to die,” one said. He endured twenty-one reconstructive operations and became the nation’s youngest Medal of Honor winner—and the only high school freshman to receive it.
- How many high school students are even considering the thoughts of that sort of thing?

***John Piper*** -- O God, who is going to get in their face and give them something to live for? They waste their days in a trance of insignificance, trying to look cool or talk cool or walk cool. They don’t have a clue what cool is. . . (From *Don’t Waste Your Life*, John Piper, p. 126)

- What about Ray Dollins who was a fighter pilot at Iwo Jima?
- The first wave of amtracs headed for the shore. The Marine fighter planes were finishing up their low strafing runs. And as the last pilot began to pull his Corsair aloft, Japanese sprang to their guns and riddled the plane with flak.
- The pilot, Major Ray Dollins, tried to gain altitude as he headed out over the ocean so as to avoid a deadly crash into the Marines headed for the beach, but his plane was too badly damaged. Lieutenant Keith Wells

watched it from the amtrac. . . .

- *“We could see him in his cockpit,” Wells said, “and he was trying everything. He was heading straight down for a group of approaching ‘tracs filled with Marines. At the last second he flipped the plane over on it’s back and aimed it into the water between two waves of tanks. We watched the water exploding into the air.”*
- Military personnel listening to the flight radio network from the ships could not only see Dollins go down; they could hear his last words into his microphone. They were a defiant parody.
  - *Oh what a beautiful morning,  
Oh what a beautiful day,  
I’ve got a terrible feeling  
Everything’s coming my way.*

**John Piper** -- Of course, we do not use the word cool to describe true greatness. It is a small word. That’s the point. It’s cheap. And it’s what millions of young people live for. Who confronts them with urgency and tears? Who pleads with them not to waste their lives? Who takes them by the collar, so to speak, and loves them enough to show them a life so radical and so real and so costly and Christ-saturated that they feel the emptiness and triviality of their CD collection and their pointless conversations about passing celebrities? Who will waken what lies latent in their souls, untapped—a longing not to waste their lives? (From *Don’t Waste Your Life*, p. 128)

- If there were some way that I could plead with you to turn away from a soft comfortable life and encourage you to give yourself to the passions that fueled the Apostles in the book of Acts, I would do it!
- If I could simply ask you to give yourself over to the call of God, I would do it!

- But the mission fields are not just over the seas but they are around the corners. They are the hallways of our schools. They are the people that we come in contact with day-in and day-out. The message of “go ye” has to reach all of our hearts in a very powerful and real way!