

"The Widow's Mite"

A man got on the train in Edinburgh and looked up the head porter. He handed him a fifty-pound note and said, "Now, I'm going into my berth to get some sleep, but I want you to make sure to get me up so that I can get off the train in Birmingham." He went on to say, "I'm a very sound sleeper, and I'm hard to get up in the morning, but I'm giving you this money to make sure you get me up. Tomorrow, I'm marrying the boss's daughter in Birmingham. It's the most important day of my life, and I have to be there."

So he went to bed, and when he woke up, the train had gone all the way to London. He went looking for the porter, found him and said, "This is the maddest I've ever been. I'm so furious I could kill you!" The porter said, "You think you're mad? You should have seen the fellow I put off in Birmingham!"

Now here is a man who saw how important it was to give the porter fifty pounds to make sure he got up. But what we also see is how the porter gladly took the money but didn't really look at the person who gave him the money in the first place or he wouldn't have thrown the wrong person off the train.

Now thankfully our God is not like that, He knows exactly who it is that gives for His cause and He knows exactly how much we give towards His cause. Now you guys all know that every Sunday as part of our worship service to the Lord, we take up an offering, which goes to help the Lord's people and other people throughout the world.

Now why do we do that? 2 Corinthians 8:9 "For you know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."

We give each week because we recognise that even though we are all poor, were actually the richest people on the planet. You see as Christian we have many privileges and one of our privileges as Christians is to give back to God some of what He has blessed us with.

We also give because that's what they did in Bible days. Paul commanded brethren to give on the first day of the week as they had been prospered in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 "Now, concerning what you wrote about the money to be raised to help God's people in Judea. You must do what I told the churches in Galatia to do. Every Sunday each of you must put aside some money, in proportion to what you have earned, and save it up, so that there will be no need to collect money when I come."

Now do you think that Jesus is interested in how much money we put in the offering bag? Well let's see what the Bible has to say, the Bible says in Mark 12:41-42 that one day, "Jesus went to the temple and sat down near the place where the offerings were placed. He sat and watched the people as they came by and put in their offerings. Many rich people, dressed in fine robes, came by and put in a lot of money. Then, a poor widow came by and put in two small copper coins that weren't even worth a penny".

The Bible says that Jesus is interested in our offering, that's why he sat down and watched the people as they dropped their offerings into the offering boxes. And He's sitting there and along come these rich people, who were all well dressed and put in loads of money into the offering. And then as He was still watching them this poor widow came along and put in the offering next to nothing.

In fact she put into the offering around about 8p of today's money. Now that's not a lot of money is it? Or is it?

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Well to you and I that may not seem a lot of money especially if these rich people are putting hundreds of pounds into the offering. Now people who are not Christians may not even think this was a lot of money and if you were to ask them **who do you think gave the most?** I'm sure most people would say those rich people.

Well that may well be the way that most people think **but what does Jesus think? Do you think Jesus was pleased with her gift? Mark 12:43+44** "Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything--all she had to live on."

You see, Jesus is more interested in what is in the **heart** of the giver than he is in the **size** of their gift. I have wallet with me today. Let's see how much money is in it. Hmm not a lot, **57p**. Well, that isn't much money, but this morning **I want to tell you the story of a little girl named Hattie and how her gift of fifty-seven pence helped to build a great church building.**

One Sunday morning, the **preacher** of a church went outside to find a group of children who were unable to get in to go to **Sunday school** because the building was too crowded. One of those children was a **six year-old named Hattie**. When the **preacher** saw her, he lifted her up in his arms, put her up on his shoulder, and carried her into the church where he found a place for her to sit in the **Sunday school class**.

The next morning as he walked to church, the **preacher** saw **Hattie** again and stopped to talk to her. He told her that he hoped that some day the church would be able to build a building that was large enough so that there would be room for all the children who wanted to attend.

Two years later, **little Hattie died** and the **preacher** was asked to preach the **funeral service**. After the service, **Hattie's mother** handed the preacher a small purse containing **fifty-seven pence**. She told him that **Hattie** had been saving her pennies to help the church build a new **Sunday school building**.

The **preacher** took the **fifty-seven pence** back to his church and told the people about the little girl who had been saving her pennies to help them build a new **Sunday School building**. The people were so inspired by **Hattie's gift** that they gave faithfully until they built a wonderful new building with plenty of room for all of the children who wanted to attend.

Now I'm sure that Jesus would say that **Hattie** gave more than anyone to build this great church building, **why?** Because she gave all that she had. But let me to something else about her giving, she didn't tell anyone what she was doing except her mother. Now on our televisions at home we hear about people giving millions of pounds to charities, aid workers and a whole host of different people.

In fact there's a TV programme called **the secret millionaire** who goes about helping people trying to discover their needs without letting them know that they are a millionaire. Now I think that what they do is great but one problem I struggle with is **why do they need TV cameras following them, why do they have to broadcast what they are doing?**

That widow didn't tell anyone how much she was giving; she didn't want anyone to feel sorry for her because she was more than happy with what she was giving. And the reason she was happy was because she knew that God will always provide for her. God would provide the next meal, God would provide a roof over her head, and she knew that God would provide even more pennies for her to continue to offer what little she has to God.

In Jesus' eyes it's never the amount but the attitude.

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And guys, Jesus is asking us all today, **what are you willing to give?** Let's look at **Mark 12:43-44** again, **"Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything--all she had to live on."**

Now like I said earlier every week we take up an offering during the worship service. And as you know, someone usually walks up and down the aisles and passes the offering bag down each and every row. And we all place our offerings to God in the bag and when we have finished passing the offering bag, it may look like this one that we have used this morning.

Inside you will find a **twenty pound note**, and a **ten pound note**. There are probably **five pound notes** and a lot of **one pound coins**. Down in the bottom of the bag I'm sure there will be even some **other coins**, and I know that we will even find some **pennies**.

Who do you think gave the most? Was it the person who put in the twenty pound note? The ten? The five? We can be sure it wasn't the one who put in the pennies, can't we? Or can we?

I heard a story about a little boy who went into a church one Sunday morning to get out of the cold. He had been trying to sell newspapers, but not a single customer had passed by. He entered the church, hoping to pass an hour unnoticed on the back row. The preacher delivered a powerful sermon about Jesus and his love for us. At the end of the service, they took an offering.

The ushers went from row to row until, finally, one came near to the little newspaper boy. He stopped right in front of the little boy and held out the offering bag. The boy stared at the offering bag, and after a long pause, he asked the usher to place the offering bag on the floor.

Then the little boy did something very unusual. He stepped into the offering bag, first one foot and then the other. He slowly looked up with tears streaming down his cheeks and said, "Mister, I don't have any money; I haven't sold a single newspaper today, but if Jesus did all that preacher said he did just for me, I will gladly give my life to Him."

I don't know if that story is true, but I do know that God wants us to give him our all, our hands, our feet, our hearts, our voices, our silver and our gold. **Remember the pennies in the offering bag?** Maybe they were the greatest gift given after all.

This poor woman would not give less but her poverty prevented her from giving more. And what I'm saying guys, any gift which is given just to boast about your giving. Or any gift which is given grudgingly actually loses its value. Because God loves **"a cheerful giver"** according to **2 Corinthians 9:7**.

Now I said earlier that God blesses us in different ways and truly He does. Whether it's loving parents, a good school, a job, a house or good friends, the point is God blesses us all the time. But he blesses us so that we can bless others, but I'm not just talking about financially blessing other.

1 Peter 4:10 "Each one, as a good manager of God's different gifts, must use for the good of others the special gift he has received from God."

A young British soldier who was blinded in battle. He was an accomplished musician and spent much of his time in the hospital playing the piano for the wounded. He always put his heart into his playing, hoping the music would encourage the men.

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One day when he finished a number, someone clapped energetically. The soldier asked, "Who are you?" He was astonished when the man replied, "I am your king!" The king had come to encourage those who had been wounded for their country. Without realizing it, this young man had been using his talent to entertain the king.

Peter says, "Each has received a gift." Now what is your gift? Well that's something you will discover as you get older. Maybe it's just being helpful at school, or being a friend to someone who is upset. Maybe it's just keeping your room tidy or washing the dishes. Maybe it's simply having the gift of bringing a smile to people's faces by acting funny.

I don't know what your gift is but God does and it may not seem like much when compared with what others may possess, but utilize it "in serving one another" Peter says. When it is used, we may be sure there is always an audience of at least one, our Lord. All I'm saying is you just do what you can, no; you may not get much attention. You may not even win an award, you may not even get a special mention in the newsletter, it doesn't matter.

And do you know why it doesn't matter? It doesn't matter if no one else notices because God notices it. When Jesus was teaching in the temple, he went and sat opposite of the treasury and watched the people as they contributed their money. There was one who caught the eye of Jesus but she wasn't noticed by anyone else. And why didn't anyone notice this widow? Well simply because her gift was too small; but in the eyes of Jesus, it was bigger than all the others.

You see when you use your gift faithfully, whether it is an encouraging word, a pat on the back, visiting the lonely, generous giving of money, making a phone call, providing transportation, whatever it may be, you all need to remember, you're playing for the King.

After giving a woman a full medical examination, the doctor explained his prescription as he wrote it out. "Take the green pill with a glass of water when you get up. Take the blue pill with a glass of water after lunch. Then just before bed, take the red pill with another glass of water." "Exactly what is my problem, Doctor?" the woman asked. "You're not drinking enough water."

Now what's the point of that story? Well simply to remind you that we need to be a giving people. Some people don't need pills, some people just need someone to give them what they need most of all.

A cup of water because Jesus says in Matthew 10:42 "You can be sure that whoever gives even a drink of cold water to one of the least of these my followers because he is my follower, will certainly receive a reward."

Have you ever seen the film Nanny McPhee? Cedric Brown is a sad and wife-sick widower, owner of an undertaker's business, who doesn't know how to manage the horrible situation with his undisciplined children. Every nanny (17 exactly) have run away from them.

Simon, the oldest brother, is the head behind the pranks and he doesn't have a very good relationship with his father. But the solution will be Nanny McPhee, a magic nanny who literally falls from heaven to discipline the children and teach them some lessons.

Now if you remember at the start of the film Nanny McPhee is really ugly with warts and a crooked nose but the children and their father begin to learn some lessons and they begin to see Nanny McPhee losing her warts. And what she was trying to teach the whole family was very simple; every action whether positive or negative has a consequence.

And so guys what can we learn from the widow and her offering?

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Well to put it simply, keep doing what you're doing, keep giving. And remember it's not the amount it's the manner in which it is given. [How about you? Would you give Jesus your all?](#) No matter how small your gift is, you will be so blessed because you gave.