



The Gospel According to Luke Wk. 100 "The Most Famous Donor" By Pastor Jody May

Luke 20:45-47; 21:1-4 ESV

Beware of the Scribes

⁴⁵ And in the hearing of all the people he said to his disciples, ⁴⁶ "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, ⁴⁷ who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

The Widow's Offering

21 Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, ² and he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. ³ And he said, "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. ⁴ For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

Introduction:

I have a friend of mine, a pastor, who's elderly widowed mother has recently been involved in money fraud. A man, pretending to be a family friend, had asked her to become an investor in realty that he was developing. She has already given him over 100K, and she has nothing to show for it. Recently she has gone to my pastor friend and has requested that they release to her money out of her Trust fund. It seems that the initial investment wasn't quite enough, and he still needed to do more land development.

It's a tragic and crazy story. First that someone would take advantage of an elderly widow. Second that this scoundrel would find it so easy to convince this woman to give him her money, perhaps she liked his attention, perhaps she liked being a part of something, or perhaps she believed she was making someone's life better, or even she was sold on the idea that this would better her standing with God, who knows? Thirdly, that she has sons that she now ignores and believes that are in the wrong and are against her. Fourthly, that at the end of the day



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they have not the power to control her. Fifthly, that we don't live in the wild west where this type of crime we could go find the guy and hang him from a tree. j/k

Some of you have stories like that and you know that fear. From our story today you can see that this has been the practice for thousands of years. The feeble and the weak are always the most susceptible to the wolves. One of the challenges for the church is to be able to not only identify the wolves but teach the sheep what to look out for.

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Let's set this scene up, Jesus has had the last word against His accusers. They won't say anything else against Him. In their silence He has thrown out there that He believes, according the Messianic Psalm 110, that He is the Lord, *Adonay*. He then precedes to warn the people, to beware of the Scribes, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees, because they pretend to be helpful but in reality, they prey off the people like wolves.

The text says He “*looks up*”. I was reading this week and was reminded this is two days before the crucifixion. It is Wednesday and He has been preaching at the Temple all week, arguing with the leaders, throwing out money lenders, and receiving the **false adoration** of people that thought of Him only as a deliverer from their physical troubles, just an earthly Messiah. These same people would yell, curse and spit on Him blaming them for their misery, because they wouldn't heed his warnings and would follow the leads of the scribes in the cheers of “crucify Him” directed at Pilate. He has wept, over Jerusalem, in their stubbornness and blindness, and out of love and hope has been preaching the Kingdom nonstop.



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Folks I think the man is tired, he is looking down, in Mark 12 it says He "*sat down.*" He is finishing a long arduous trial of life. For three years he has turned around to watch people leave Him, to see family believe not in Him, He has no physical support in this world other than the disciples and **they aren't converted yet** as well. I tell you what I would do, I would run away and curse those people. **Let's all praise Jesus that He is not like us**, and it is more important to Him not to be controlled by man's desires, by their comments, by their lack of faith, by their threats, by their likes and dislikes, **but He is more concerned about glorifying His Father!**

I do want to show you though, in Mat. 23, it is this same moment in time, and while Luke doesn't record it here, I think it does portray **Jesus' righteous frustration and anger**, and I think it helps to understand what is happening in our text today.

Matthew 23:

1. **Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! (v.13) You work to keep people out of Heaven instead of working to get them in.**
2. **Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites. (v.15) Through your teachings you lose people to the world.** (more intent on making disciples of you)
3. **Woe to you, blind guides, makers of false traditions ...(v.16)** (they nit-picked about stupid oaths)
4. **Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! (v.23) you make your lives about hassle over the law (tithing) instead of living out the intent of the law** (the money was to help fulfill worship justice and mercy)
5. **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! (v.25) you are more concerned with outwardly appearances instead of what's on the inside.**
6. **Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! (v.27) for you appear righteous but inside you are dead.** (whitewashed tombs)
7. **Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! (v.29). How are you to escape hell? For you will commit murder** (what they have done and what they will do to Him - Scapegoating) **to keep your man-made places of honor.**



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It is then in that same moment Jesus sits down and looks up from where He sat:

Mark 12:41 ESV

And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums.

It is right here at this moment before He announces judgment on these people, Israel, Jerusalem, their destruction, their dispersion, in v.5-19 that He makes His observation about the widow today.

He observes not just this woman but all the people giving money. Jesus had said in Matthew 6 that **you were to do your giving in secret**. But the religious system had developed a very public, prominent way to do it and Pharisees came along and had trumpets blown announcing their arrival to give, according to Matthew 6. This is **Virtue Signaling** at its' most blatant, you know it as wearing a mask even when you drive, this is there way of saying **I am down with the majority...**

What is the treasury? Well the court in which Jesus was sitting is a very, very large open court in the temple area. It was called the Court of the Women. There was an inner court where only the men could go but this is the court where everyone could go, men and women. Jesus taught here as indicated in John chapter 8, in fact, He taught on the light of the world on that occasion. And He taught in the Court of the Women, the great open court, because it was where everyone could come. He calls it the treasury, because there was a section of it that the leaders had designed as the place you give your money. They had set up thirteen shofar (trumpet) shape... You know what a shofar is. It's a horn. They had set up thirteen of those in which people dropped their money. And each of them had a sign on the bottom of it indicating exactly what that money was to be used for. Old shekel dues, new shekel dues, bird offerings, wood, incense, gold, free will, they all were labeled and people would go by and they would in very open courtyard, publicly put their giving on display. The treasury is actually the word *gazophulakion* from two Greek words, *gaza* meaning treasury, *phulakē* meaning prison. Once you dropped them in, they were held in there. This is the real heartbeat, folks, of false religion, right? This is the real center of false religion. **The center of false religion is the treasury, folks.** It's all about the money. ~~They do it, says Peter, for filthy lucre. Luke 16:14, Jesus said, "The scribes and Pharisees were lovers of money." We know the Sadducees who ran the temple franchises were lovers of money, because Jesus said you've turned My Father's house, a house of prayer, into a den of robbers, as they extorted money out of people for sacrifices and coin exchange. False religion is~~



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always about the money. **(Because money fuels False Religion!)** When you get to the treasury, you get to the heart of false religion.¹

Why bring this all up, what does this have to do with our story?

Because I think many of us have **heard this passage preached** in such a way that it **honors what the widow is doing**. Pastors, theologians, and commentaries all vary on this passage of scripture and there are some different ways to look at it:

- The measure of the gift is based on what you have left.
- The measure of the gift is based on the self-denial involved.
- The measure of the gift is based on the attitude (humbleness) of the giver.
- The measure of the gift is based on giving God your all and trust Him with your nothing.

What is actually in the text this morning

But the problem with these interpretations of the text is Jesus never said any of that, He never followed up with, **“I think this lady is doing a great job and here’s why!”** No, He is pointing out her offering after yelling, condemning, and cursing the Scribes and the Pharisees (Mat. 23) over their false religion they have made. He’s like, **“You see!? That’s what I’m talking about! You have just robbed that poor woman and what’s worst she’s just as guilty for she’s believing in a false gospel!”**

The Widow's Offering

21 Jesus looked up and saw the rich **(plousios, the abundantly full)** putting their gifts into the offering box, ² and he saw a poor *(penichros having little, needy)* widow put in two small copper coins. ³ And he said, “Truly, I tell you, this poor *(ptochos (pto-kho’s / tohos)* having nothing, you are now a beggar) widow has put

¹ John MacArthur, “Abusing the Poor,” Sunday Morning Sermon, Grace Community Church, Sun Valley, California, September 02, 2007, typewritten, <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/42-251/abusing-the-poor>.



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in more than all of them. ⁴ For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.

The end result of their false religion lead to both a physical and spiritual bankruptcy!

Let's reiterate this and summarize - False Religion is all about the MONEY, because money FUELS false Religion! The end result of false religion is that it will leave you both PHYSICALLY and SPITIUALLY Bankrupt!

We have seen this time and time over again:

Modern Prosperity Gospel movement. It started with a guy name E.W. Kenyon in the first half of the 20th century. He needed more "**pizaz**" for his Christianity, so he denounced his Methodist upbringings, proclaimed himself an agnostic, studied new age and mysticism and started the prosperity gospel movement. This movement gave birth to people that you may know, Kenneth Hagan, Pat Robertson, Kenneth Copeland, Creftlo Dollar, Joseph Prince, Joyce Meyers, Benni Hinn, Bill and Benni Johnson of Bethel Church, and the list goes on. Turn on your religious channel and there is a 50/50 shot you'll watch one.

You have also seen it in the form of the Catholic Church. Martin Luther wrote the **95 theses** in response to Johan Tetzel, a Dominican priest, that was hired by the pope, to sell (not collect) indulgences. That is, money paid to keep your soul out of purgatory which graduated to the practice of buying your family members out of purgatory as well.

You could say the first nail on the door of the 95 theses, was placed there by Tetzel because his little rhyme was so infuriating to Luther, "Once a coin into the coffer clings, a soul from purgatory springs." The Catholic church today is fat, monetarily, off of the collections they take in from all over the world, especially the 3rd world countries.

Lastly, there is even this new string of pastors using the angle of accusations against white Christians, that since they are racists, they **should pay reparations**,



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the new indulgences to pay for your sins since Jesus was not enough, see Eric Mason, formerly of Acts 29.

I cannot imagine a falser gospel than for someone to be saved and one of the first things you teach this young disciple is that they must pay for their ancestor's behavior, whether they know they did something or not. That is a false Gospel. Because the Social Justice church doesn't look at whether you are poor and have the money to pay or not, your need to pay reparations is based on the color of your skin.

Let me bring that into perspective, **it doesn't matter what the Bible taught in numerous places about widows and taking care of them**, but the **Pharisees developed a new religion** that said the reason you are alone (to be a widow) is because God is not blessing you, it has to do with your sin and the sin of your ancestors. Therefore, the only way for you to receive the favor of God was to give sacrificially! That was 2,000 year ago reparations and it still doesn't sound right does it? For we are told:

Romans 8:33 ESV

Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

God has made it right with Himself (wrath), the world (accusations), and has removed our guilt (of all past sins), that's what Justice does, for there is nothing left to pay on behalf of my past!

Romans 3: 22-24 ESV

²²the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

I am justified, made right, by His Grace as a gift (the gift must be enough), through redemption, buying me back from the world that says you owe ME! All in Christ Jesus' name! **Either it has been paid in full or it is not Christianity!**



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Now before we run off on a tangent of confronting “*Wokeism*”, I want to keep us on the thrust of the text today. I think Jesus’ brother had something to say to it, after he had learned who his big brother was.

James 1:27 ESV

Religion that is **pure** and **undefiled** before God the Father is this: to **visit orphans and widows** in their affliction, and to **keep oneself unstained** from the world.

True religion, an undefiled and pure following of God, worshipping the Son, moving in the Spirit, **IS to love the least of us, the Widows and Orphans AND to keep oneself from being affected by the False Religions of the World. Meaning, we fight the wolves off of them and we sure as Heck keep them out of here...**

Three things that we can now do and believe:

Following God is not about how much you can sacrifice for a better life now, Jesus has given you the best thing in life already, a clear conscience.

Anything and anyone that condemns you for the color of your skin, to where you were born, to how much money you have **is antithetical to the Gospel**, reject it for it is a false religion, Jesus’ blood has paid to remove guilt from you for a clear conscience.

Following God is about celebrating that He’s sacrificed enough to get us into heaven, meaning your offerings are the fruits of your changed heart.

BE A JOYFUL GIVER and if you are not pray about why you are not because that has more to do about your view on life than about how much you have.

Following God is about loving others as well in word and deed, this is why we have our wealth, to care for those that can’t care for themselves.

We have the right and privilege to care for the widows and orphans and we have been born into the wealthiest nation in the world so I believe we here at HCC can make a difference in helping the less fortunate. That is why this year instead of



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shutting shop down after COVID and Spastic election cycle we will choose to help those that need our help, the less fortunate, the children and women that have been beat up by the world.

This most famous Donor in all the Bible is not someone to emulate, she is **someone to be pitied**. If it was not for the work of Jesus on our behalf, to actually pay the price of sin on the cross, we would be bound to a dead religion just like she was. If it was not for the glorious resurrection, we would also not know the value of following Jesus in our True Religion, a glorious Resurrection for US!

His victory shows why we should restrain from worldly practices of virtue signaling to others, about or BY our works, and why we should protect those around us, especially the downtrodden, from the world. What He has won is what we should want – JUSTIFICATION - and you receive that by Faith, not by your works, and that is what we have to protect! Which is why when we see heresy and false Gospel you have to speak against it.

We have been freed from a dead religion, let us not go back, and let us speak up for those that need our protection.

PRAYER

COMMUNION

BENEDICTION

Go in the name of the Father, that paid the price of His innocent Son so once and for all the dead religion of works could be killed.

Go in the name of the Son, that beat a dead false religion so we could know freedom in His name.

Go in the name and the power of the HS, that helps us to say, 'no' to the world's invite to be like them and empowers us to help and protect our neighbors.