

My Utmost for His Highest

Lesson 1

Mark 12:41-44, 14:3-9; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5

July 5, 2020

Passionate Worship

Jesus had just come to Jerusalem. He'd recently thrown out the money changers and those who turned the Lord's house into a market, and now we find him inside the temple, watching a poor widow and wealthy religious leaders showing the real intent of their hearts.

It's easy to see the stories in this week's reading and wonder how much they intersect with our lives. Are we to give everything we have, sell it all and give to the needy, or the church? It's often hard to balance what the Bible is saying with what direction our actions should take.

Giving is an act of worship, and only God sees and truly knows the "why" behind the giving. The answer to the question, "Should we give everything?" is not for anyone but the giver to respond. The more important question is, what is the condition of your heart in your giving? Are you giving merely to look good? To fulfill some spiritual box that needs to be checked? Are you giving because you felt guilt, or saw that others were giving and didn't want to look stingy? As a result, we must understand that true worship of God is costly, giving our whole selves, and must be done in reverence and awe of who God is.

***Memory verse: "She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."—
Mark 14:8-9***

Pray and read Mark 12:41-44, 14:3-9; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5.
What questions or observations do you have about these passages?

What do the passages say?

1. What did Jesus watch the crowd do? (Mark 12:41)
2. How much money was the widow's offering worth? (Mark 12:42)
3. Finish this sentence: "They all gave out of their _____; but she, out of her poverty, put in _____—all she had to live on." (Mark 12:44)
4. What did the woman at the table do for Jesus? How did others respond to what she did? (Mark 14:3-4)
5. For how much could the woman's perfume have been sold? (Mark 14:5)
6. For what did Jesus say the woman was preparing his body? (Mark 14:8)
7. Of what was the Macedonian church in the midst? (2 Corinthians 8:2)

8. To what did Paul testify? (2 Corinthians 8:3)

9. To whom did the Macedonians first give themselves? (2 Corinthians 8:5)

What do the passages mean?

1. Earlier in Mark 12:38-40, we experience Jesus warning his disciples against the teachers of the law. What is the contrast between the teachers of the law, and the poor widow in the next story?

2. The account of the woman anointing Jesus with oil is also found in John 12:1-10. John mentions the woman's name as Mary, whom we met earlier in John 11:38-44 when Jesus raised her brother from the dead. Based on what we know of Mary, why did she sacrifice such an expensive jar of perfume? What value did she put on Jesus when she performed this act?

3. Is sacrificial giving considered worship? Why or why not? (Acts 2:44-47; 2 Corinthians 9:7)

4. Reading the same story in John 12:1-10, how was the reaction of Judas similar to the offering of the wealthy and religious leaders in our first story of the widow? Did Jesus know Judas' real motive? (Proverbs 16:2)

5. 2 Corinthians 8:5 says that the Macedonians "gave themselves first to the Lord." Why is giving ourselves to the Lord needed before anything is given? (1 John 4:19)

6. What does our giving of our resources, our time, our encouragement, etc. reveal about the condition of our hearts? (Matthew 6:19-21)

Applying the passages

1. In the past, what has been your motivation behind your worship in giving, whether financially, practically, or spiritually? Who have you tried to please with your giving?

