

**ABATT**  
**The Widow's Mites**  
 Christian Life Assembly  
 Jim Hoffman

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**The Widow's Mites**

- Matt 6:1 "Watch out! Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven. 2 **When you give to someone in need, don't do as the hypocrites do—blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity!** I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get. 3 But when you give to someone in need, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. 4 Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you. NLT

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**The Widow's Mites**

- A principal for giving to God, or to another person as you are directed by God, is to **give privately.**
- The Pharisees often had trumpets blown when they gave so that the masses could see how generous they were. 😊
- Jesus said of that practice, "they have their reward".

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**The Widow's Mites**

- In the outer court of the temple, where all people were allowed, there was the treasury.



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**The Widow's Mites**

- If you were to find the "Widow's Mites" account in the chronological gospels you would find it right in the midst of some harsh language for the religious leaders of Israel.
- The Matthew account of His speech includes a list of 9 "woes" – in other words, Jesus is condemning them, indicting them on 9 counts of guilt.

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**The Widow's Mites**

- And one of the 9 counts of guilt is "devouring widow's houses."
- Matt 23:14 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! **For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers.** Therefore you will receive greater condemnation. NKJV
- Prov 14:31 **Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker,** but helping the poor honors him. NLT

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### The Widow's Mites

- Notice the text that follows the account of the "Widow's Mites".
- Mark 13:1 As Jesus was leaving the Temple that day, one of his disciples said, "Teacher, look at these magnificent buildings! Look at the impressive stones in the walls." 2 Jesus replied, "**Yes, look at these great buildings. But they will be completely demolished.** Not one stone will be left on top of another!" NLT

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### The Widow's Mites

- Perhaps to underscore the futility of the widow's giving, Jesus discloses that the icon of the corrupt system would be destroyed.
- The very religion that was to honor and care for widows was abusing them.
- Deut 27:19 'Cursed is anyone who denies justice to foreigners, orphans, or widows.' NLT

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### The Widow's Mites

- Psalm 68:4 Sing praises to God and to his name! Sing loud praises to him who rides the clouds. His name is the Lord—rejoice in his presence! 5 **Father to the fatherless, defender of widows**—this is God, whose dwelling is holy. NLT
- James 1:27 Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father **means caring for orphans and widows in their distress** and refusing to let the world corrupt you. NLT

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The Widow's Mites

- God loves all disadvantaged people. For example, when King Ahab's sins brought divine consequences down upon the land, God, through Elijah, still provided for a lone widow and her boy continually (1 Kings 17:1-24).
- In fact, God used her as the instrument to sustain His prophet during a three-and-one-half year famine. The jar of flour never diminished, and the jug of oil never ran dry.

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The Widow's Mites

- Luke 7:11. Soon afterwards He went to a city called Nain; and His disciples were going along with Him, accompanied by a large crowd. 12 Now as He approached the gate of the city, a dead man was being carried out, **the only son of his mother, and she was a widow**; and a sizeable crowd from the city was with her. 13 When the Lord saw her, **He felt compassion for her**, and said to her, "Do not weep." 14 And He came up and touched the coffin; and the bearers came to a halt. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise!" 15 The dead man sat up and began to speak. And Jesus gave him back to his mother.
- At least part of the reason for Jesus' miracle here was that a widow had lost her only son and with him all the support system she had.

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The Widow's Mites

- God commanded the first Christians to take care of these destitute women (James 1:27). The alleged neglect of Greek-speaking widows was the root of the confusion recorded in Acts 6:1-6.
- Later, in 1 Tim. 5:1-16, Paul gives very specific instructions about providing for the needs of those faithful 60+ year-old women who were TRULY widows, i.e. who had no relatives to help them.
- There is a constant, recurring theme throughout the Bible - Don't Take Advantage of a Widow!

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### The Widow's Mites

- If we read “the widow’s mites” again with this perspective in mind, we can hear that Jesus is not amazed and impressed at her courage and her faith, but is almost choking back the tears at how this poor widow has been caught in the lies of greedy deception by the rich and wealthy religious leaders. She is only doing what she has been told to do. She obeys out of faith, knowing that her sacrifice is probably her death sentence. But she loves God so much, she does it anyway.
- But it is not her fault. It is the fault of the religious leaders. They have devoured her house and now they are taking her life as well. Asking widows to tithe from their poverty is like using religion to pick the pockets of the poor. The temple should have been giving to her; not the other way around.

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### The Widow's Mites

- Earlier in His ministry, Jesus had also criticized the religious leaders for teaching people that it was their priority to give to the temple even if this giving deprived a person’s family of financial support. Jesus taught, along with the Mosaic Law, that one’s primary responsibility was to support their family.
- Mark 7:9 Then he said, “You skillfully sidestep God’s law in order to hold on to your own tradition. 10 For instance, Moses gave you this law from God: ‘Honor your father and mother,’ and ‘Anyone who speaks disrespectfully of father or mother must be put to death.’ 11 But you say it is all right for people to say to their parents, ‘Sorry, I can’t help you. For I have vowed to give to God what I would have given to you.’ 12 In this way, you let them disregard their needy parents. 13 And so you cancel the word of God in order to hand down your own tradition. And this is only one example among many others.”

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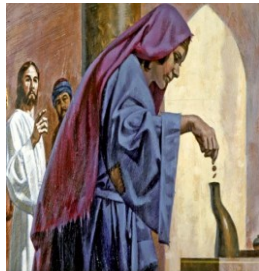
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### The Widow's Mites

- Mark 12:38 Jesus also taught: “Beware of these teachers of religious law! For they like to parade around in flowing robes and receive respectful greetings as they walk in the marketplaces. 39 And how they love the seats of honor in the synagogues and the head table at banquets. 40 **Yet they shamelessly cheat widows out of their property and then pretend to be pious by making long prayers in public.** Because of this, they will be more severely punished.” NLT



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The Widow's Mites

• Mark 12:41 Jesus sat down near the collection box in the Temple and watched as the crowds dropped in their money. Many rich people put in large amounts. 42 Then a poor widow came and dropped in two small coins. 43 Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has given more than all the others who are making contributions. 44 For they gave a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she had to live on." NLT

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The Widow's Mites

- We should note here:
  - Jesus does not commend the widow for her giving – he merely points out that it was more than the giving of others.
  - Jesus does not condemn others for giving less than the widow.

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The Widow's Mites

- The most common lessons from the "Widow's Mites" story are –
  - Giving is more about what you keep than what you give.
  - God wants us to give generously and trust Him to take care of us.
  - God sees what man overlooks.

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The Widow's Mites

- None of those lessons are bad, and they might all be true.
- But on this day, near the end of Jesus' earthly ministry he is not teaching on giving – he is teaching on something else.
- He is in the midst of a searing condemnation of what Judaism had become – a corrupt system driven by money for the leaders in the system.

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The Widow's Mites

- It seems to be universally true that all false religions are driven by money for its leaders.
- Corrupt Judaism, corrupt Christianity in the dark ages, and corruption in today's "health and wealth" movement – all are about money.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Tim 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. NASB

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The Widow's Mites

- One hundredfold return – a number of prominent televangelists have used this biblical concept to enrich themselves.
- Mark 4:20 And those are the ones on whom seed was sown on the good soil; and they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.
- The verse above has been abused and is not addressing monetary needs, or even material needs for that matter.

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The Widow's Mites

- And yet, you could tune in to one of the Word of Faith shows on TV and be convinced that a seed (\$\$) sown with a certain ministry will produce a one hundredfold (\$\$) return.



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The Widow's Mites

- Mark 10:29 “Yes,” Jesus replied, “and I assure you that everyone who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or property, for my sake and for the Good News, 30 **will receive now in return a hundred times as many houses**, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and property— along with persecution. And in the world to come that person will have eternal life. NLT

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The Widow's Mites

- So who do suppose supports these “one hundredfold return” ministries?
- Those who can least afford it – those who are often uneducated and poor.
- The desperate, the ones who are often down to their last \$1000 and need a miracle.

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The Widow's Mites

- There is also a text in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 8 that has been equally abused.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor 8:9 You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich. NLT
- Some have used the above to declare that God wants Christians to be rich, but was that what Paul was teaching?

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The Widow's Mites

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor 8:6 So we have urged Titus, who encouraged your giving in the first place, to return to you and encourage you to finish this ministry of giving. 7 Since you excel in so many ways—in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us—I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving. 8 I am not commanding you to do this. But I am testing how genuine your love is by comparing it with the eagerness of the other churches. 9 You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich. 10 Here is my advice: It would be good for you to finish what you started a year ago. Last year you were the first who wanted to give, and you were the first to begin doing it. 11 Now you should finish what you started. Let the eagerness you showed in the beginning be matched now by your giving. Give in proportion to what you have. NLT

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The Widow's Mites

- The “new” lessons from the “Widow's Mites” for Christians.
  - No one should give to a ministry that exists to enrich its leaders.
  - A ministry that promises to enrich its supporters is not a ministry.

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**Questions**

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