

PRETENSE OR DEVOTION

--MARK 12:38-44--

INTRODUCTION:

Jesus did not hold back when He began His attack on the scribes, and He began as we saw last week where it hurt them the most by attacking their interpretation of Scripture. They were the self-proclaimed experts on Scriptural interpretation. They had fallen captive to their culture and interpreted the Scriptures to fit their dreams. In today's passage we will see Jesus go after the scribes again and compare their self-righteousness and the pretense of their lives with true faithfulness and devotion seen in the life of an unnamed widow.

I. A WARNING (Mark 12:38-40)

- a. In these opening verses of our passage Jesus stepped up His _____ on the scribes.
- b. Jesus went on _____ them for devouring widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offering long prayers.
- c. Our Lord's judgment was especially pronounced on those who persisted with their phony, _____, profit-making lifestyle. (James 3:1)

II. AN OBSERVATION (Mark 12:41-42)

- a. At this point Jesus was finished _____ and moved away from the crowd that had gathered to hear Him.
- b. Mark writes that He sat down opposite the _____.
- c. Here in the court of women Jesus had found a place to sit and _____ the givers without drawing attention to Himself.
- d. What did Jesus observe as He sat across from the treasury and watched as the worshipers made their _____?
- e. Then Jesus observed something that made His _____ applaud.
- f. He saw that "*a poor widow came and put in two small copper _____, which amount to a cent.*" (Mark 12:42, NASB95)
- g. Undoubtedly she did not seek to draw _____ to herself as she quietly approached the trumpets, head bowed.

III. A TEACHABLE MOMENT (Mark 12:43-44)

- a. After observing this poor widow drop her two small coins in the offering, Jesus uses this as a _____ moment for His disciples.
- b. Realizing that Jesus' commendation cuts both ways calls for some _____-searching observations.
- c. First, when it comes to giving, the posture of our _____ makes all the difference. (1st Corinthians 13:3)
- d. Second, God can do _____ things with tiny offerings.
- e. Third, at the _____ Christ will square His accounts.
- f. Finally, a forth observation, God is completely _____.
- g. Is it possible for the Church to love and _____ like the widow? (2nd Corinthians 8:1-5)

CONCLUSION:

Our study of this passage of Scripture should cause us to begin by asking three major questions of ourselves. First, what place does the Word of God have in our lives? Do we know it? Do we read it? Or are we being bound by our culture so that the Word is not going to our hearts? Do we want the Bible to really do its work? This calls for a resolve to be carefully, even painfully, Biblical in our Christianity.

The second question is, why do we serve God? Is it to be seen by men? God help us if that is our motivation, no matter who we are or how we serve God. God have mercy on us if we use piety for gain.

Third, is it possible for me to love and give like the widow? God does not want our money. He wants us. Yet, we cannot give ourselves to Him apart from our money. The saying is true: Money speaks. It tells us where our hearts are. What does your giving say about you, what does my giving say about me? I have said before that ten percent is a good starting place, but don't allow that percentage to stop you from giving sacrificially like the widow out of your love for God. How much do you love Him? Do you love Him with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength?