

## “So... You Want to Give?”

Scripture: Mark 12:38-44

Graphics: pennies on a card, money, temple court

Big Truth: The people of the PUMC are called to give sacrificially, motivated by faith in the One who has given all things to you and who is trustworthy for all things in the future. You can't take the 'pennies' with you, so share them now with others, because everlasting life come to those who live by faith.

Focus Phrase: Faith in the One who holds the future allows me give all I have now for His kingdom.

### 1. Introduction

#### A. Let's PRAY!

- B. When I was a kid, I thought **pennies** were pretty great. Growing up, we didn't have much money that I can remember, yet we had all we needed. Still, whenever I found a penny, I'd scoop it up and place it in a little money jar I had. When I got enough pennies, I'd roll them or try to trade with my brother for some paper money, which, to me, was more valuable.
- C. My brother was a bit of a coin collector and he'd scrounge around and find old pennies from the early 1900s, or from the War era. Every once in a while, he'd find a rare older one and put it into a fancy folder that had cutouts made for pennies. He had a book that told him what each one was worth. Most of the time, a penny was worth exactly a penny, even if it was old.
- D. I always thought coin collecting was a strange hobby, but if you have an older brother you know that your opinion about something he was doing was worth about as much a Canadian penny in 2002, when it hit an all time low of 0.61 cents U.S.
- E. I once asked my brother why he liked to collect coins and his answer was something like, "Because someday, they'll be worth something." Forty years later, he's not rich and neither am I, so I guess our coin scrounging didn't amount to much yet.
- F. Jesus, in our next installment from the gospel of Mark, had something to say about a penny. In fact, the four gospel writers record that Jesus had more to say about money than any other topic. Now, we don't know why Jesus kept going back to money, but I'm sure the fact that it's one of the most basic and powerful elements in our society - and has been since the beginning of trade and culture - has something to do with it.
- G. Money, in our lives, has incredible power to either set our hearts right on the purposes of God, or the power to take us in the opposite direction from God's plans for us.
- H. A few weeks ago we heard Jesus say in Mark 10 that it's harder for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God than it is for a camel to go through the eye of a

needle. Clearly, Jesus has a desire for us to view money and possessions with Kingdom lenses.

- I. But, as we'll find out today, it's MUCH more than just about money. And Jesus' focus on money always has the greater view of faith and action in mind.
- J. The next installment of our journey through the book of Mark comes from Mark 12:38-44...So, You Want to Give?
- K. Yes, this is about money. But, it's about so much more...it's about faith in the One who holds the future in His hands.
- L. If you're taking notes, this would be a good time to write this down: **Faith in the One who holds the future allows me give all I have now for His kingdom.**
- M. Let's dive into the first section...Mark 12:38. Jesus, talking to the disciples in the temple courtyard one day...uses the people and scenes around him to teach a lesson about money and faith...

## 2. Scripture

### A. READ Mark 12:38-40

- i. I'm pretty sure I wouldn't want to be a scribe who was alive when Jesus was alive. These three verses are pretty harsh.
- ii. Yet, it doesn't take me long to read that list and begin to wonder how many of those outward signs are part of MY life...knowing that Jesus wasn't just condemning those outward signs of showy demonstration. Jesus was pointing at and convicting the hearts within...hearts that find the need to make grand gestures and performances in order to gain attention...all while calling it 'holy' or 'righteous'.
- iii. Is that me? Maybe the disciples were asking themselves that question.
- iv. The scribes with the heart issue like to:
  - a. Walk around with long robes - this would be a tallith, which is a long fringed robe worn by Jewish men in the temple and for prayer. The longer the robe and the more colorful, the more noticed you would be.
  - b. They like to be greeted with respect in the marketplace - having people bow to them and loudly proclaim that they know them.
  - c. They like to have the best seats at the football game - no wait, the synagogue - and places of honor at the banquet.
  - d. They devour widows' houses - This may be a reference to the fact that the scribes would often act as lawyers for the estates of women who had lost their husbands. They were notorious for getting rich off the sale of property and such. Shameful.

- e. They like to say long prayers so people will hear and notice them - for appearance's sake.
- v. Jesus was zeroing in on the symptoms of hearts that were not focused on God - not true hearts of faith.
- vi. See, the scribes believed that because they were doing all these things, and had been given authority to teach and lead and preach, that they were in line for greater honor in God's eyes.
- vii. Jesus said, "They will receive the greater condemnation." 180 degrees from what the scribes thought.
- viii. Contrast all that - all that Jesus noticed about the scribes and the people in the temple court that day - with what he's about to notice in a widow who came to that same place that same day...
- ix. Look at verse 41...

**B. READ Mark 12:41-44**

- i. John Wesley wrote about this scripture passage, "See what judgement is cast in the most specious outward actions by the Judge of all! And how acceptable to Him is the smallest which springs from self-denying love."
- ii. When Jesus watched the widow fumbling about in her change purse for the last coins she had, he was curious.
- iii. He called his students over to watch. And, note that they 'sat down.' Whenever the rabbi SAT with his students, he was getting ready to teach.
- iv. And he did — from a distance - opposite the treasury, which would have been offering boxes into which people would deposit money for the temple.
- v. Yet, this widow's two coins amounted to a penny. A single penny! He and the disciples watched her drop the two small copper coins into the collection box. Probably what was left over from her estate.
- vi. And knowing her situation, they were all amazed. Her bank balance just went from **one penny to zero**.
- vii. Jesus was highly impressed, especially since he had just watched the Pharisees, and scribes and rich people put all KINDS of crazy money into the treasury. Loudly! So that everyone would know!
- viii. But these were the same people who Jesus said had oppressed the poor widows in the first place. Some of what they gave was from ill-gotten gain.
- ix. This woman worshiped God with the coins that she had — ALL the coins she had. Jesus was inspired, and he said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on" (vv. 43-44).

- x. That widow's penny had the power to inspire Jesus to use it as a teaching moment.
- xi. However, it was not the *penny* that inspired Jesus. It was the **faith** that motivated the giving of her last two coins that did that.
- xii. Jesus was always impressed by faith. Nothing moved him more, and a lack of faith was often distressing to him.
- xiii. The widow's offering was an expression of faith and a test of her discipleship, and Jesus found this utterly impressive and inspirational.

### 3. Application

- A. What does all this mean for us today? Obviously, Jesus wants us too to connect giving with faith.
- B. The penny is the smallest and simplest of all coins, the lowest denomination of money. Yet, it represents something so precious in the hands of someone for whom it is everything.
- C. Jesus sacrificed his life for your salvation, and desires your sacrifice for Him and others.
- D. When you sat down this morning, you found a penny on a little card. That penny represents the building blocks of your faith. If you have only a penny and are willing to give it in faith that God will provide, know that He will provide.
- E. If you have 10 pennies or a million pennies, and are willing to give them in faith, trusting that God will provide for all your needs, then give. He WILL provide.
- F. If you have unlimited pennies, you'll soon find out that it's not about the pennies, but about the faith in what God can do through you and in your life.
- G. Take that penny with you today, but know that you can't take any pennies with you when you die. So share them now with others, because everlasting life comes to those who live by faith.
- H. So, what are your pennies? What small, simple things in your life are at the core of what God is doing in your life?
- I. What one thing is God asking you, right now, to release to Him so that your faith in Him is evident and grows?
- J. What is the one thing that seems so valuable to you that if you were to give it up for someone else to have, that it would leave a void in your life that only God could fill?
- K. Now, I'm not saying you should just pick the most valuable thing you have and give it away. This needs to be something that God is asking you to release, and that you will trust Him to provide for in the void left of that thing.

- L. First, pray about what that is. It could very well be money. It could be time. It could be a listening ear or something tangible.
- M. Then, without making a show of it, give. But when you give, consciously pray that God would continue to provide for all your needs both now and especially into the future.
- N. When you and I take our trust OFF money and possessions and place that trust ON the God who provides is all, then freedom floods into our lives...freedom from the worry of having enough...freedom from the stress of trying to make more...freedom from allowing money and things to be our focus.
- O. And freedom to joyfully say, “God, all I have is yours. I can’t take it with me and I can do so much good in this world today. I know you’ve got my back.”
- P. In our Intentional Discipleship Plan, this is the focus of SHARING. Go back and review that section and keep shifting in your discipleship.

#### 4. Conclusion

- A. Pennies. Are we stacking them up, “...because someday, they’ll be worth something?”
- B. Did Jesus withhold his life, delaying his sacrifice because, “...someday, it’ll be worth something...?” He did not. He KNEW that the day he gave up his life for you and me, it cost the Father everything. Yet, it was worth infinitely more.
- C. On THAT day, you were redeemed. That day is today, again...you are redeemed!
- D. As we come to this Table, we remember and celebrate the sacrifice of Jesus on the day of his death. In that regard, communion is a remembrance.
- E. But if that’s all that happens in communion, then why the big deal? We can remember a football game or a birthday or a phone number as easily as we can remember the death of Jesus - granted the death of Jesus is more historically important.
- F. When we come to this table, we experience something even more profound: we experience **the real presence of Christ among us**. When we hear the words spoken about the body and blood of Christ, “...make them be for us the body and blood of Christ so that we can be for the world the body of Christ redeemed by his blood...” we’re stating emphatically that we together have FAITH that Christ rose from the grave and is here with us now.
- G. And if Jesus is here with us now, the Word of God made flesh, is here.
- H. In the presence of Jesus, nothing else has the value that we think it does. Nothing we own - NONE of our pennies - have ANY value compared to the presence of Jesus and the Kingdom that he’s ushering in.

- I. It's like finding out that your crypto-currency has suddenly lost all its value. When Jesus is in the room, your pennies may be physically pennies, but they are nothing compared to Jesus.
- J. If that's the case, then giving them away FOR Jesus, seems a lot easier. No matter whether they are your ONLY pennies, or if you have many more, what matters is your faith to not only trust Him for today, but to keep trusting Him for every tomorrow, forever.
- K. When you come forward this morning, come holding that penny on the card you found on your seat. It's going to be a little awkward to hold the penny while you take the juice and bread.
- L. But isn't that a fitting metaphor today. In order to hold the elements of communion that represent the sacrifice of Christ and the real presence of Christ...it'd be easier to lay the penny down so you can put your full attention on Him.
- M. Put your full attention on Him today...in faith.
- N. Faith in the One who holds the future allows us give all we have now for His kingdom.
- O. Let's pray...