



June 13, 2021

“What’s the Cost?”

Mark 12:41-44

Pastor Gary Hamrick

In Mark 12, Jesus observed a poor widow who put two coins, that were only worth a fraction of a penny, into the temple treasury. We learn that she gave all she had – her entire life’s savings. Generosity to God is measured not by the amount but by the sacrifice. There will be certain sacrifices we must make as followers of Jesus, not just financially, but practically, materially, emotionally, and even physically. What does it really cost us to be followers of Jesus? In this message, Pastor challenges us with the example of this poor widow.

## 1. The temple

- a. There were different courts surrounding the temple, and each courtyard had specific restrictions about who was permitted to be there.
- b. The outside courtyard was specifically for Gentiles, and working inward – the courtyard for Jewish women, then the courtyard for Jewish men, and then the courtyard of the Jewish priests.
- c. The account of [Mark 12:41-44](#) takes place in the courtyard of the women, which was the location of the thirteen treasury boxes or coffer.
  - i. The first seven boxes were designated, while the other six boxes were specifically for free will offerings.

## 2. The poor widow

- a. [Mark 12:41-44](#) – *“Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her*

*poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood.’ ”*

- b. This woman was very generous
  - i. The two coins may have only been worth a fraction of a penny, but she gave one hundred percent of her finances.
  - ii. Pastor Gary said, “I want you to imagine for a moment how [you would feel if you put yourself in her place]. Whatever you might have in your bank account, [IRA, stocks] or whatever you might have, I want you to just think for a moment of liquidating everything and then giving it to God. It would be hard to give up what you have, especially if you have a lot. And when you think about what that sacrifice must have felt like, I don’t want [you] to... diminish this woman’s generosity... **To God, generosity is not measured by the amount but by the sacrifice.** ... God gets more glory from the poor person who gives little but sacrifices much than from a wealthy person who gives much and sacrifices little. ... Some of the most generous people in the Bible are women. ... [In [Mark 14:1–9](#), we read the account of Mary of Bethany, who anointed Jesus with an expensive perfume that was worth the equivalent of a year’s salary!] Now, think about what you make in a year... and think to yourself, could you part with that [amount of money] in one moment like this lady did?” (Emphasis added)
  - iii. [2 Corinthians 8:7](#) - *“But just as you excel in everything - in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us - see that you also excel in this grace of giving.”* (NIV 1984)
- c. This woman gave at great cost
  - i. This woman was not required to give according to the Mosaic law.
  - ii. This woman could have given one of the two coins, and her offering would have been seen as being very generous.
  - iii. This woman gave everything she had out of a deep love for God, and she trusted him to provide for her present and future needs.
  - iv. Pastor Gary said, “What does it really cost [us] to be a follower of Jesus? What do [we] really sacrifice to follow him? I don’t mean this financially although that’s a part of it, but I mean it in practical ways. How practical does it cost [us] to follow Jesus materially, emotionally, maybe even physically? [Think] about it; anything you are invested in costs you something and involves certain sacrifices. There are costs and certain sacrifices you make for a career, [a marriage, concerning children, and friendships.] ... Anything you invest in costs you something. ... [This isn’t about] proving yourself to God or earning something with God or paying penance or indulgences or climbing the holy stairs in Rome on your knees... All of [these things] would be reducing Christianity to a performance-oriented religion, which it is not. **Christianity is a grace-based relationship with Jesus,** [who] paid the

price for us on the cross, and he freely offers us the gift of salvation that we receive by faith in what Jesus did, which takes the burden off of [us in regard] to performance. God doesn't expect us to perform or work in some way to appease him or to be liked more [by him]. ... When Christ offered his all, he calls us to sacrifice in some ways as followers of his; because if we love someone, we invest in them, and investing in them means it costs us something." (Emphasis added)

3. Living a life for Jesus as followers of Jesus will cost us something when we understand lordship

a. Pastor Gary said, "[This] woman saw God as Lord, and she trusted God with her life, with her very survival. She trusted God with everything, and this is how we need to see Jesus. He is Lord; he's not just Savior. ... He didn't just come to save us from our sins he came to be Lord of our lives. Part of following Jesus is surrendering to his lordship, and when we understand lordship, then we understand... [that everything we] have he owns. He is master [and lord] of all. ... There is a managing responsibility that we have, but the ownership is God's. ... We will make certain sacrifices in [this] regard because when we honor him and when we serve him, we will sacrifice for him out of what he has entrusted to us, and that means that it will cost us something: materially as you give and practically as you serve with the time that he's given you and the skills that he's given you."

i. [Luke 2:8-10](#) - *"Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is **Christ the Lord.**'"* (Emphasis added)

4. Living a life for Jesus as followers of Jesus will cost us something when we understand citizenship

a. [Philippians 3:20](#) - *"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ..."*

b. Pastor Gary said, "If [our] citizenship is in heaven and that is [our] homeland that is to come but for now [we] live [our lives] on the earth and living [our lives] on the earth means that [our] beliefs and [our] values will sometimes conflict with the world that [we] don't belong to. ... Living for Jesus might cost you little things like friendships [and] it's always been this way. ... It might even rise to the level of costing you your job... or you might make the decision that your faith isn't compatible with some of the values of [the company you work for]... and you can't in good conscience keep working [there]. ... [In the

early church, which was made up entirely of believing Jews, the people were rejected by members of their family and their community to the point where they were no longer able to provide for themselves, so they shared what they had with other believers. This isn't an endorsement of commune living; it's just that that is what they had to do in that time.] ... It might come to [this again the way things are trending. ... Maybe the kind of costs or sacrifices that might be required are even more severe than losing your job; maybe it's even losing your life. There have been plenty of people around the world who have lost their lives for their faith in Jesus. Ten out of the twelve disciples were martyred, tortured and killed because of their faith in Jesus. ... All through the centuries men and women have given their lives as the ultimate sacrifice for their faith in Jesus."

- i. [Matthew 5:11-12](#) - *"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*
- ii. [Acts 2:44-45](#) - *"Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need."*
- c. Pastor Gary shared brief accounts of Christians who were killed for their faith including William Tyndale (died 1536), Dietrich Bonhoeffer (died 1945), Jim Elliott (died 1956), Rachel Scott (died 1999), and the twenty-one Egyptian Coptic Christian men (died 2015).
  - i. [Hebrews 11:37](#) - *"They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword."*
- d. Pastor Gary said, "If you don't find some kind of cost for following Jesus, then you may not be all that invested. ... Living for [Jesus] may cost us something but dying for us cost him everything. ... Count the cost. Live your life for the glory of God. Honor him, serve him, and at times, yes, even sacrifice in different ways for him, and let the example of this dear woman... be an example of what it means to be generous and what it means to count the cost as followers of Jesus."
- e. "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain that which he cannot lose." - Jim Elliott

#### Discussion Questions

1. Read [Mark 12:41-44](#) to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Provide a brief overview of the setting for the account of the poor widow. (See #1 above)

3. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comments about this woman's extreme generosity. (See #2b-iii above)
4. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about the ways the Holy Spirit is helping them to be a generous person.
5. Ask the group to give some examples of times when the Lord has provided for their needs in a remarkable way.
6. Read and discuss [2 Corinthians 8:7](#).
7. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's remarks about the great cost at which this woman gave. (See #2c-iv above)
8. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's comments about lordship in every area of a person's life. (See #3a above)
9. Read and discuss [Philippians 3:20](#) and focus on the mindset change that Christians need to have. (See #4a above)
10. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's remarks about our heavenly citizenship and the fact that we may have to pay a great cost for our faith. (See #4b above)
11. Read and discuss [Matthew 5:11-12](#) and [Hebrews 11:37](#). (See #4b-i and #4c-i above)
12. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when they've had to pay a cost for following the Lord.
13. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's statement, "If you don't find some kind of cost for following Jesus, then you may not be all that invested." (See #4d above)
14. Read and discuss the Jim Elliott quote Pastor Gary shared at the end of his message. (See #4e above)
15. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)