

THE POOR WIDOW'S OFFERING

Mark 11:15-19; 12:41-44.

LESSON 111 -- Primary Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Give, and it shall be given unto you" (Luke 6:38).

The House of God

The Church is God's house and should be treated with reverence. In Ecclesiastes 5:1, we read, "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God." This no doubt means that we should do nothing to displease God while in the Church. Children should not be allowed to be noisy, play, or in any way show a lack of regard for the house of God.

One day when Jesus was in the beautiful Temple in Jerusalem, the Jews' Church, He found people there buying and selling. In those days the people brought animals and doves to the Temple to sacrifice on the altar. Some of the people were busy selling animals and changing different kinds of money. Jesus was very much displeased at this. So he overthrew the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold doves. Then, as the Jews perhaps scrambled for their coins which jingled and rolled along the floor, Jesus said to them, "Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves."

Let us always remember to regard the house of God as a place of prayer and of hearing the Word of God. When we come to Sunday School and Church we should come to worship God.

The Treasury

At another time Jesus was again in the Jews' Church. That day He sat near the treasury, which was an offering box, or chest, to receive pieces of money, which people gave to the Lord. Jesus watched the people that day as they put their gifts of money into the box. Perhaps some were dressed in beautiful clothes. Proudly, one by one, they put their hand into their purses and took out pieces of money. Perhaps some of them looked around to see if someone was watching them, as they gave large gifts to God. The money probably made a great noise as it dropped into the box.

Up the Church steps came a poorly-dressed woman with a sweet face. She did not need to carry a bag, or purse, for she had only two little pieces of money. Quietly, perhaps hoping that no one would notice her, she slipped up to the box and dropped her freewill offering into it. Very likely she was thinking: I wish I had more to give to God; He is so good to me and I would be happy to give Him a bagful of money, but this is all I have. Only two mites – less than one kobo of our money – but it was given from a heart of love for Jesus. We see that she was very unselfish.

All That She Had

Let us hear what Jesus said as He called the disciples to Himself, "This poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: for all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living." She trusted God for the future; the rich men had plenty of money left to supply their wants.

The poor woman went home. Probably she did not know that Jesus had spoken so kindly about her. She did not know that anyone at all had seen what she did – except God in Heaven. But in her heart she knew that she had done right; and she was happy. "God loveth a cheerful giver" (II Corinthians 9:7). He loves one who does good even if no one sees him.

Jesus saw the heart of this poor widow, and perhaps even before the day was over He remembered her need and gave her more than she had before. We feel sure that He rewarded her for her love. She received a blessing for giving freely unto the Lord. She kept nothing for herself but gave to God all that she had, and with a loving heart.

Do you suppose all the rich men also received a blessing from the Lord? Perhaps some of them walked away from the Church that day saying to themselves: "I am sure Jesus will be pleased with my offering. That poor widow probably gave only a few pennies, but I gave much more." Jesus said the widow had given more than they all.

'Tis Done for Thee

So we see that it is not the size of the gift but the willingness with which we give it, that counts. Jesus wants people to do what they do for Him with a heart of love.

What are some others gifts that we may give to Jesus, besides silver and gold? We learned some time ago that we may give Jesus gifts of love, kindness, and mercy. How do we do this? By showing love, kindness, and mercy to others. What we do for others we do unto the Lord. Other gifts we may bring to Jesus are love, joy, obedience, thankfulness, and faith. We may say: "Well, I haven't much money, I cannot sing. There is nothing I can give to Jesus or do for Him." But there are some things we can all do: we can all pray and we can be a blessing to others by being good and kind. Rich and poor alike may give something to Jesus. He will reward every one who does this, for He said, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men gave into your bosom" (Luke 6:38).

QUESTIONS

1. What is another name for God's house? Mark 11:17.
2. How should we act in God's house? Ecclesiastes 5:1.
3. What did Jesus say about the rich who cast money into the treasury? Mark 12:44.
4. What did He say about the widow? Mark 12:43, 44.
5. Do you think Jesus helps the poor widows? Psalm 146:9.