

# WHAT JESUS SAID – THEN AND NOW

## Jesus Describes New Testament Giving

TEXT:

INTRODUCTION: The last two weeks, I have shared with you two of the passages where Jesus talked about stewardship and finances.

In the first Jesus said,

Matthew 6:19–20 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, ... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven... .

In the second He said,

Luke 11:42 “But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass by justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

Today, in the third and final saying of Jesus we will consider about stewardship, Jesus gives what I believe is the overarching principle concerning giving for Christians. Jesus describes what New Testament giving should look like.

### I. THE GIVING JESUS COMMENDED

#### A. When Jesus gave an example of what He considered to be good giving, what did He tell us?

- **The Widow’s Mite**

Luke 21:1–4 1 And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, 2 and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. 3 So He said, “Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; 4 for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had.”

**She put in all that she had!** In today’s buying power, these two small coins might have been worth between \$1 and \$2. But the point is, she gave everything!

**And she was poor!**

- **The Boy’s Lunch**

John 6:5–13 5 Then Jesus lifted up *His* eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” 6 But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.

7 Philip answered Him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.” 8 One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him, 9 “There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?”

10 Then Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. 11 And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed *them* to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. 12 So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, “Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.” 13 Therefore they gathered *them* up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.

The boy who had a lunch was poor too.

Listen, he did not have two BigFish Sandwiches and an extra piece of bread.

These two small fish were a type that were about the size of sardines. And the bread was not your mother’s yeast rolls or Red Lobster’s biscuits. Barley loaves were what the poor people ate, and they were not soft nor tasty.

And how much of this meager lunch did Jesus take from the boy to feed the 5,000 hungry families?

### **Jesus took it all!**

Now before you get up and walk out because you conclude that I am saying that Jesus gave us a New Testament standard for giving that says we ought to give everything in our possession to the Lord, let me tell you, that’s not what I am saying or going to say.

1. I am just being honest with the text. Last week we noted that Jesus commanded the people of His day to continue to be careful about the giving of the tithe, which is 10% of your income.
2. But although Jesus commanded this, we do not find Him bragging about anyone just because they were tithers.
3. When we find Jesus commending someone because of their giving, we find Him holding up the example of someone who gave all to the Lord.

And while you contemplate these two examples, remember a third,

- **Mary’s alabaster flask of oil of spikenard**

Mark 14:3–9 3 And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured *it* on His head. 4 But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, “Why was this fragrant oil wasted? 5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.” And they criticized her sharply.

6 But Jesus said, “Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. 7 For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always. 8 She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. 9 Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.”

John and Matthew also tell us of this event, John identifying the woman as Mary the sister of Lazarus whom Jesus had raised from the dead a short time before. There are so many things in this passage that are worthy of note and meditation, but for our purposes this morning we will only speak of one.

**Mary also poured out the whole bottle**, even broke the alabaster flask, itself very valuable, **in an extravagant act of worship for the One Who was about to go to the cross to pay for her sins.**

**The widow had given two coins, each of them worth 1/64 of a single day’s wage.**

**Mary anointed Jesus with perfume costing a year’s salary!**

**And Jesus defended her against the more practical minded men in the room because she too gave everything of value she owned.**

So why was Jesus glad about each of these giving so selflessly, generously, completely?

Frankly, what Jesus did was very counter-culture both for the Jews and for us today.

- If one of us knew that a widow was giving all of her income in the offering plate, we would want to stop her. We would say, “You don’t need to do that! We don’t want you to do that!”
- If a poor boy brought in his equally poor lunch to share with us because the preaching was going a little long and tummies were beginning to growl, we would protest at him giving the whole thing for us and for others.
- If a woman was giving the only valuable thing she had accumulated in a lifetime for which she had labored and saved for years and years, we would be more like the disciples, even more like Judas, than like Jesus concerning the gift.

So what made Jesus react so differently than is our natural inclination?

It certainly was not because He needed the gift.

- The widow's mite went into the temple treasury, and Jesus certainly had no benefit from it.
- Jesus did not even need the boy's lunch, although He chose to use it. After all, when the tax was due, Jesus caused Peter to catch a fish with the tax money in his mouth. If the boy had not brought his lunch that day, the crowd would not have gone hungry.
- Mary's perfumed ointment did not heighten or enlarge the work Jesus was about to do on the cross.

I will tell you that

**I think Jesus delighted in each of these giving all  
because of what would happen to the givers.**

And I think that because of something else Jesus said.

## II. JESUS STATED THE PRINCIPLE

Luke 6:38 Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

- God would not let the widow starve or die from lack of shelter.
- The boy shared in the multiplied lunch and had far more and far better to eat than if every morsel of what he had brought had gone into his own mouth.
- Mary would have gladly given a hundred years' wages to have her brother Lazarus raised from the dead and reunited with her.

Jesus did not commend their giving because He or God the Father had some need these givers could meet with their generosity.

**Jesus commended their generous giving because it would result in them being generously blessed.**

Jesus said in essence

- **Give with a teaspoon and God will give back to you teaspoons of blessings.**
- **Give with a cup and God will give back cupfuls of blessings.**
- **Give with a bushel basket and God will give back big basketfuls of blessings.**

Give, and it will be given to you. ... For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.

### III. THIS PRINCIPLE IS CARRIED INTO THE REST OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

2 Corinthians 9:6–8 6 But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

Now think back with me over the last two weeks as we looked at the sayings of Jesus concerning stewardship and giving and see if you do not observe the same theme in each one.

<b>Jesus said “lay up treasures in heaven rather than on earth.”</b>	
	<b>Because treasures on earth are destroyed or pass away, but treasures stored up in heaven can be enjoyed forever.</b>
<b>Jesus said, “Be careful about tithing.”</b>	
	<b>Because God promised great blessings to tithers and protection from the demon devourer who would destroy what you already have.</b>
<b>Jesus said, “Give generously, like the widow, like the boy, like Mary.”</b>	
	<b>Because God gives back blessings greater than you give but in proportion to what you give.</b>

Don't you see the consistency of principle in each of these?

**“He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.”**

God wants us to give, not for what He gets from it,  
But because it opens the door to His giving more back to us.

**When we give, God delights in our trust,  
God rejoices in our obedience,  
God is honored by our worship.  
But we are the ones who receive the blessings!**

CONCLUSION: This, my friend, is

**New Testament giving as described by the Lord Jesus.**

<b>Begins with the tithe</b>	<b>Acknowledging God's ownership</b>	<b>Resulting in blessing and protection</b>
<b>Has a focus of storing treasure in heaven</b>	<b>Making the Kingdom of God first in life</b>	<b>Resulting in all needs being met for all eternity</b>
<b>Is generous to the point of extravagance</b>	<b>Giving becomes an act of worship</b>	<b>Resulting in God giving back even more extravagantly that there can be more worship</b>

That's what Jesus says, then and now!

Do you need to come to express your trust, your faith?

Do you need to come to declare your obedience?

Do you need to come as an act of worship to honor the Lord?