

A MACEDONIAN MOMENT

¹ And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. ² In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. ³ For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, ⁴ they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. ⁵ And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.

II Corinthians 8:1-5

⁴¹ Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. ⁴² But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. ⁴³ Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. ⁴⁴ They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything--all she had to live on."

Mark 12:41-44

¹³ When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

Acts 4:13

- I. God's little plumb-line/The widow and her two mites
(Mark 12:41-44)
- A. A woman, a widow, poor. She was an outcast—marginalized, ruled out, rejected, and victimized. The leaders of the day were taking advantage of the very one they were to protect.
 - B. This little widow becomes a mentor to the disciples. She was the holiest thing in the temple next to Jesus himself.
 - C. She was the only one that day that did what He was about to do in a few days' time.
 - D. God sees what men don't see.
 - E. God values things differently than men do.
 - F. The true priest and Lord of the temple sees her and hears her gift.
 - G. There is a contrast between what men perceive to be great and what God perceives to be great. She became the plumb line, revealing everything with which Jesus was finished. (The religious spirit and the now unsafe temple.)
 - H. Her two mites were the travesty of their care for her. (Matthew 23:14 TPT)
¹⁴ "Great sorrow awaits you religious scholars and you Pharisees—frauds and pretenders! For you eat up the widow's household with the ladle of your prayers. Because of this, you will receive a greater judgment."
 - I. She was targeted by exploitation, yet she gave. She was an expert in loss, yet she gave. She was intimidated by the wealthy, yet she gave.

J. Remember, Jesus notices, and sees, and hears what no one else does.

II. Macedonian gifts

A. They gave with abundant joy. (II Corinthians 8:2a)

B. They gave sacrificially and generously.
(II Corinthians 8:2b)

C. They gave voluntarily. (II Corinthians 8:3)

D. They were persistent in their desire to give.
(II Corinthians 8:4)¹

E. These churches were in the midst of poverty and under severe trial. (Philippians 4:19)

¹⁹ And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

III. Macedonian tears/Two gifts of liberality

A. Mary of Bethany (John 12:1-11)

1. Mary's dramatic gesture, which is her portrait in Luke 10:38 -42, is astonishing. She gives a year's worth of wages in an act of extravagant abandon.

2. Her generosity changes the room. All are affected, and Jesus is anointed for his burial. Yet, she is criticized.

B. A sinner generously forgiven. (Luke 7:37-50)

1. This woman's tear bottle was filled with tears of repentance which was worth more to Jesus than all her past mistakes.

¹ Thanks to Keith Seiber

2. Her generosity of love was misjudged and unseen by everyone but Jesus.

IV. Macedonian generosity is about to be rewarded extravagantly!