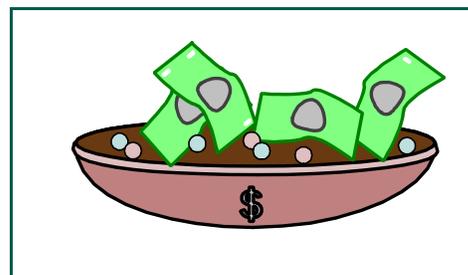


Jesus Speaks of Taxes & Offerings

Mark 12:13-17, 41-44

"Aw! Do I have to do it?" This is something a student might be tempted to say about a math assignment. It shows a lack of understanding that doing that math assignment can help you grow in your understanding and abilities in math. Math assignments can be very beneficial!

"Aw! Do I have to?" may sometimes be the attitude of a Christian towards giving offerings in church. If so, then it shows a lack of understanding that giving offerings can be very beneficial for our faith. It can be a means through which God strengthens our love and trust for Him. As you study this lesson, take a close look at the attitudes being displayed in the hearts of the people both toward God and toward their offerings.



Prayer

Dear Lord, Please help us to see all the blessings You have given us. Help us to respond to Your gifts with thankful and loving hearts. Help us to grow in our fear, love, and trust of You. Amen

The Story - Mark 12:13-17, 41-44

Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, to catch Him in His words. {14} When they had come, they said to Him, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and care about no one; for You do not regard the person of men, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? {15} "Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?"

But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, "Why do you test Me? Bring Me a denarius that I may see it." {16} So they brought it. And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?"

They said to Him, "Caesar's."
{17} And Jesus answered and said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that

are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

And they marveled at Him.

(41) Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. {42} Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans.

{43} 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; {44} "for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood."

Outer Aim - We should fear, love and trust in God above all things. (Fear – stand in awe of, give glory to, respect, hate evil for God's sake)



What the Story Tells Us - Discuss the following questions and their answers.

1. How were the Herodians and Pharisees trying to trap Jesus?
2. How were their words hypocritical?
3. Who is "Caesar?" What do we owe to "Caesar?" (Rom. 13:7 will give you more clues.)
4. Did the Jews want to obey God in this command?
5. What should we render to God? (The 1st Commandment with Luther's explanation can answer this.)
6. Jesus was reading the hearts of the hypocrites. Were they showing fear, love, and trust to Jesus? How were they showing a lack of fear? Lack of love? Lack of trust?
7. What is a widow?
8. Were widows able to get jobs in Jesus' day, or did they have life insurance policies? How were widows taken care of in Jesus' day?
9. Jesus was reading the hearts of the widow and others who gave their offerings. Were most of the gift-givers in the temple showing God He is first in their lives? How can you tell?
10. How did the widow show fear for God? How did she show love for God? How did she show trust in God?
11. The widow showed that God was the most important one in her life. Who had worked this faith in her heart?
12. Do you think she ever broke the 1st Commandment by worrying? Were there times when she disobeyed God's commandments? Who had forgiven her sins? Who had made her faith strong?

Inner Aim - We fear, love and trust in God. He saved us from sin, death and the devil. Our offerings are a fruit of our faith in God.

What God's Word Tells Us - Answer these questions together.

1. In the Old Testament, people often gave bulls, rams, lambs, goats, etc. as their offering. What happened to these animals?
2. Did these sacrifices pay for their sins?
3. Of what were these sacrifices supposed to remind the people?
4. Besides gifts given with love and thanksgiving, the animals given were a reminder of God's love and sacrifice of His Son for us. Who has given us all that we have?
5. Does God need our money? Explain your answer.
6. Why do we give offerings?
7. Do our offerings ever buy God's favor and our forgiveness? Who only could buy God's favor and forgiveness for us?
8. Jesus did this by buying us back from sin, death and the power of the devil. What price did Jesus have to pay for our forgiveness? (2nd Article – explanation)
9. How can our offerings be a reminder of Jesus' sacrifice for us?

Your Turn - The following passages show what our attitude toward giving should be.

Malachi 3:9b-12

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

Matthew 6:8

1 John 4:19

Mark each example below if it is a correct (YES) or an incorrect (NO) attitude to have in giving offerings.

YES NO

___ ___ I committed a really bad sin yesterday. I better put some extra money in the offering plate to make up for it.

___ ___ I sure have a lot of bills this week but I know God will provide for me. I won't let the pile of bills keep me from giving my offering.

___ ___ Oh, no! Here comes the offering plate! I better put some money in or people will think I'm stingy.

___ ___ I want to save my money for a new bike before I put an offering in the plate.

___ ___ Maybe God will love me more if I give Him a big offering.

___ ___ God has given me so many blessings, I'm glad to share my money with the Nigerian and Indian orphans.

___ ___ Just think, Jesus paid for all of my sins. I want to say "thank you" to Jesus with my offering.

___ ___ I hope people saw how much money I gave in my offering.

Your Turn Again - Use the explanation to the 2nd Article below to fill in the cross. The numbers will help you fill in the correct words

from

Jesus
has redeemed me...
purchased and
won me...

not with

not with

but with His

The Second Article
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What does this mean?

I believe that Jesus Christ...has redeemed me...purchased and won me from all (1) sin, from (2) death, and from the (3)power of the (4) devil, not with (5) gold or (6) silver, but with His (7) holy, (8)precious (9) blood and His (10) innocent (11) suffering and (12) death.

You Finish the Story - We know the widow trusted in God to provide for her needs. Often our gifts to God come in the form of kindness and help to other people. In this way God often provides for the needs of others. Bear this in mind as you think of the following:

What happened to the widow when she went home that day?
How did she get food?

Passages

The First Commandment
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You shall have no other gods.
What does this mean?
We should fear, love and trust
in God above all things.

Psalm 33:8 - Let all the earth fear the LORD; Let all the
inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.
(We should fear God.)

1 John 4:19 - We love Him because He first loved us.
(We should love God.)

Psalm 124:8 - Our help is in the name of the LORD, Who
made heaven and earth. *(This is the God we trust.)*

Hymn - TLH #442 v. 1-2 (WS #788 alternative)

Lord of Glory, who hast bo't us
With Thy life-blood as the price,
Never grudging for the lost ones
That tremendous sacrifice;
And with that hast freely given
Blessings countless as the sand
To th' unthankful and the evil
With Thine own unsparing hand;

Grant us hearts, dear Lord, to yield Thee
Gladly, freely, of Thine own;
With the sunshine of Thy goodness
Melt our thankless hearts of stone
Till our cold and selfish natures,
Warmed by Thee, at length believe
That more happy and more blessed
' Tis to give than to receive.

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, We could never buy Your forgiveness or favor. Jesus was the only one who could buy us back from sin, death and the devil. Please help us to give our offerings with faith-filled, cheerful hearts. Please help us to remember each time we give our offering that Jesus bought us with His holy, precious blood and innocent suffering and death. Let Jesus' sacrifice be what fills our hearts and lives with love and gratitude for You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.