

“Things Accomplished Among Us” (Luke 1:1)

Selected Reflections From Luke

Giving Out of Poverty

Luke 21

Luke 21 begins with this brief narrative: “Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, and he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. And He said, ‘Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on’.” (Lk. 21:2-4).

There have always been people who give in amounts greater than others. Comparatively speaking, they give more; the gifts are impressive. But they are giving out of their excess, not their poverty.

If a man has amassed a great treasure of wealth, but it only requires about 30% of that total to live, he has excess. If he gives, let’s say, 10% of that excess – there is no strain or sacrifice. He is giving out of his excess.

In the scene Luke records in Luke 21, Jesus saw a poor widow put in “all she had to live on.” First, this expressed her unreserved devotion to the cause she contributed to. Second, it reflected her trust that God would care for her. It illustrates sacrificial giving.

Similar to this, there is the instance over in 2 Corinthians 8, about the Christians in Macedonia, who gave “beyond their means” cheerfully (see also 2 Cor. 9:1-9).

When we give out of our excess, it doesn’t hurt and we may not even feel it. But when we reach deep into the budget and sacrifice, we are imitating the example Jesus commended, of the poor widow’s offering.

Thank you for listening.

-Warren E. Berkley