

THUMB –

- The pandemic of fake spirituality in our leadership
 - It's when we think we are above this stuff that we fall prey to it.

Mark 12:38–44 (NASB95)

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³⁹and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets,

⁴⁰who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers; these will receive greater condemnation.”

⁴¹And He sat down opposite the treasury, and began observing how the people were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums.

⁴²A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent.

⁴³Calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, “Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury;

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- BEWARE
 - Yes... you too.
 - We aren't so spiritual that we can't fall for this stuff.
 - A reason for the warning
- Not every scribe, “the scribes who”
 - We can nurture rebellious, bitter and even self-righteous attitudes when we think we can dismiss all religious leaders for being leaders.
 - “who”
 - Not every.
 - A real danger.
- LIKE to walk around in long robes
 - Not the only time Jesus criticized their apparel.
 - **Matthew 23:5 (NASB95)** ⁵“*But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments.*”
 - What is a phylactery?
 - Aka “tefillin” in Hebrew
 - Small box where they would keep a little scroll with some scripture written on it.
 - Why?
 - **Exodus 13:9 (NASB95)**
⁹“*And it shall serve as a sign to you on your hand, and as a reminder on your forehead, that the law of the Lord may be in your mouth; for with a powerful hand the Lord brought you out of Egypt.*”
 - **Exodus 13:16 (NASB95)** ¹⁶“*So it shall serve as a sign on your hand and as phylacteries on your forehead, for with a powerful hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt.*”

- They target widows
 - “devour widow’s houses”
 - How?
 - They make their living from giving
 - They receive too much
 - **Luke 16:14 (NASB95) ¹⁴Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him.**
 - OT weighs in
 - Poor offerings were less. Doves.
 - Two things – the sacrifice is somehow symbolic
 - God cares for the poor.
 - A strong biblical teaching
 - **Proverbs 14:31 (NASB95) ³¹He who oppresses the poor taunts his Maker, But he who is gracious to the needy honors Him.**
 - **Proverbs 21:13 (NASB95) ¹³He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor Will also cry himself and not be answered.**
 - **Proverbs 19:7 (NASB95) ⁷All the brothers of a poor man hate him; How much more do his friends abandon him! He pursues them with words, but they are gone.**
 - As opposed to say a karmic view.
 - Or any sort of “caste” view.
 - The Bible refutes the exaltation of the wealthy just because they are wealthy.
 - BUT
 - All wealth isn’t bad.
 - Nor is it socialism
 - Nor are the poor victims by virtue of being poor.
 - sometimes laziness or sin.
 - **Proverbs 10:4 (NASB95) ⁴Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, But the hand of the diligent makes rich.**
 - Also Pr 6:10-11
 - Wealth is not a virtue
 - Poverty is not a virtue
- TBN’s target audience
 - I find it endlessly infuriating.
 - So does God.
 - **Psalm 68:5 (NASB95) ⁵A father of the fatherless and a judge for the widows, Is God in His holy habitation.**
 - In that I take comfort.
 - You’d think they are ashamed... they aren’t.
 - These guys LOVE money and boast of their wealth.
 - “God wants us ALL to be rich”
 - But it’s interesting that YOUR path to riches is giving THEM money.
- A problem many pastors haven’t prepared their people for.
 - Pastors...
 - If you died today and the next person to take your spot started to spiritually abuse your people... would they fall for it?
 - You being good only protects them while you are around.
 - Equip them with discernment.

- Not just “trust for the pulpit”
 - ***Galatians 1:8 (NASB95) But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!***
- For appearance sake offer long prayers
 - Praying in public... you’re suddenly aware
 - Stop...
 - Don’t pray so they can approve
 - Pray so they can agree!
 - Inform.
 - Common interests.
 - Stage ministry is dangerous
 - Seriously
 - For me it’s dangerous.
 - Be, don’t look.
 - Don’t even THINK about how you look...
 - Think about how you ARE
 - God is in charge
 - If you don’t get hired/chosen because you wouldn’t fake it... GOOD!
 - You dodged a bullet.
 - You can be trapped in it.
- Lesson for leaders
 - Some pastors are hired because they look.
 - Every answer is calibrated
 - The veneer is always in tact
 - Good on stage
 - Good in meetings
 - Not actually good
 - Quals are character
 - But Pharisees create Pharisees.
 - They are a danger
 - Don’t look, be.
 - Don’t find the balance.
 - There isn’t any balance.
 - It’s the beginning of all manner of issues.
 - You won’t even know WHO is good for leadership
- Imagine the impact this teaching had on the original audience!
 - Pharisees were the best.
 - So godly. So wise. So spiritually deep. I want to be like them.
 - But now they see them differently
 - They are fake... empty... a problem... a DANGER
- God always sees the inside
 - We don’t.
 - Stop thinking you do.
 - ***1 Timothy 5:24 (NASB95) ²⁴The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their sins follow after.***
 - The point is to apply it to your own life.
- “greater condemnation”

- The clout they sought was a greater place of judgment
 - I find it intimidating... you should too.
 - **James 3:1 (NASB95) ¹Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.**
- Then, there is a beautiful moment
 - It's a needed wakeup call for me and you.
 - Jesus sits down, observes people giving and gives commentary on it to show us how God sees our giving.
 - It's awesome!

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- how much did she give?
 - The “two very small copper coins” were two *lepta* (so the Greek text). The *lepton* was the smallest coin in circulation in Palestine and was worth 1/64 of a *denarius*, a day's wages for a common laborer¹
 - Mark relates it to a “quadrans” to his readers who would likely be in the western part of the Roman empire where they didn't use the lepton.
 - Another instance of real knowledge of 1st century events in Israel as opposed to fabrication
 - How much?
 - A denarius is a day's wage
 - Her contribution was 1/64th of that
 - If a day is 8 hours of work...
 - 7 ½ minutes
- many would think less of the widow
 - she probably did too
 - as do you when you give little... most likely
 - And she probably thought much of those big offering from rich people
 - As do we...
 - Jesus completely reverses that.

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- Lesson on how we view rich philanthropists
 - It costs them little
 - If done for press it is valueless
 - With social media this has become a growth strategy.
 - Motive matters to the point of invalidating giving
 - Or any good deed.
- She put in more than all of them
 - Not “any”, all.
 - It wasn't just cute.
 - It was amazing
- Worth isn't as valuable as cost
 - In sacrifice
 - The rich gave without significant sacrifice.

¹ Brooks, J. A. (1991). *Mark* (Vol. 23, p. 203). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

- Perhaps the poor are the biggest givers in God's eyes
 - Pews with rich givers names
 - If it was accurate – it would have poor givers names.
 - Can NOBODY know?
 - Lydia supported the church financially
 - Named women supported Jesus financially
 - No... but I don't want to institutionalize it.
- Overreaction
 - If they discover I'm fasting, I should quit
 - The widow's giving was public.
 - But what if nobody knew?
 - Would my service be the same?
 - Only pray in public.
 - Only give when people know.
 -
- What about the contrast???
- "devour widow's households"
- Vs the commendation of the widow for giving "all she had to live on"
- My thought – this helps us avoid misapplication
 - Bad – ministers after money
 - Also bad – devaluing sacrificial giving
 - The over-reaction to abusers.
 - I feel it too.
 - Beautiful.
 - Where's the balance?
 - I reject money grubbing preachers
 - Without rejecting sacrificial giving
 - Rules on giving
 - **2 Corinthians 9:6–7 (NASB95) ⁶Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.**
 - 1 - It comes from you... not them
 - Leaders – don't compel
 - The rest of us – become generous
- Missionary
 - Does an outreach to put it in a newsletter
- Pastor –
 - Gets hands raised to report it back to the denomination
- Christian
 - Offers to pray for others to take spiritual rank above them
- Jesus is forever focused on our inside issues.
 - Motives.
 - Purpose.
 - Real reasons.
 - He sits and sees it all
 - He sees.
 - Don't look.... Be....
- Final encouragement

- Perhaps your service is hard... costly.
 - Fellowship
 - Reading the word
 - Evangelism
 - We tend to see the size of the gift and not what it cost that person.
- God sees the cost... it's an act of worship

The cents
Phylacteries
Tassels