

A Penny Worth More Than Many

Mark 12:39-13:2

Of course, this widow's faith challenges all of us
She had two coins to her name, so could have kept one
She gave, trusting in God completely to provide for her
But this passage is sandwiched between two others, and putting them together gives us the whole message

What?

Knowing mercy means showing mercy

Judgment for the unmerciful—

12:38-40—The scribes lacked mercy and did not take part in relieving the plight of widows, who were the most destitute of that culture

Worse than that, they robbed widows in some way and made themselves rich by doing it

The strong implication is that God's will is for widows, and any who are destitute, to be cared for

So in terms of degrees of punishment, those who act in this way, who know better, will suffer more

13:1-2—Jesus foretells once again the destruction of the temple that would happen in AD 70

The destruction of the temple represented not just the passing away of the Old Covenant, but it also represented judgment on the unbelieving religious establishment connected with it, including the scribes who devoured widows' houses

The Big Question—How do these passages connect?

In **12:38-40**, Jesus condemned the scribes not just for their neglect, but for their crimes against widows

God expects those who have received His mercy to show mercy to widows and the destitute

In **12:41-44**, Jesus points out a destitute widow, the kind of person the scribes were robbing

The strong implication is **not only to care for such people, but learn from their faith**

Her coins likely wound up in the pockets of the scribes

This makes the actions of the scribes all the more heinous

In **13:1-2**, Jesus graphically predicts **judgment that would fall on the temple**, and by implication all who were connected with it **and all who act in merciless, unjust ways**

So What?

These passages warn us to avoid the example of the scribes

Instead, **practice mercy and justice from the heart**

Jesus "Truly" statement implies several things

Take the truth to heart—Jesus identifies with the destitute, feels compassion toward them and cares for them

Change our attitude—we may need to give honour to the destitute in our own hearts, as ones who can teach us

Put faith into action—form a relationship with someone who is destitute and learn from him or her

Not only can we learn from their experience, but spending time with them is **just the right thing to do**

The final say—James

James 1:27, ESV—Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world

Now What?

Change your attitude to honour the destitute

Consider a relationship with some marginalized person who can teach you about faith