

THE WIDOW'S OFFERING

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: LUKE 20:45-21:9



The Lord looks into the heart of our offering.

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

Beware of outward obedience. – While Jesus was teaching in the temple, He warned the people there about the teachers of the law. Jesus exposed their hypocrisy by showing how they took money from widows and then prayed long prayers for show. This would have been a most serious charge. No wonder the Jewish rulers wanted to kill Him. Jesus was exposing their hidden sinful lives.

Outward appearances are deceiving. - Jesus was sitting next to the place where the offering was being deposited. He then drew attention to a widow's offering. To look at the two small copper coins, one would think it was meaningless amount. But, when we discover it was all she had to live on, we see her great faith in giving it to God.

Even the temple will be destroyed. - While Jesus looked at the heart of the widow, the disciples were caught up with the outer beauty of the Temple building. They failed to understand that the temple was to point to Christ.

Even though some of the stones of the temple were over 30 feet long, Jesus said it would be destroyed. When they wanted to know when these things would happen, Jesus told them a generation would not pass away until these things happened (Luke 21:32). About 40 years later, in the length of a generation, the temple was destroyed by the Romans.

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WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

Mark's description of the widow's offering contains an additional detail. Jesus purposefully sat down opposite the place where the offerings were being placed. He watched the crowd putting money in before He spoke. He had just spoken against the hypocrisy of the teachers of the law who devour widows. Now Jesus used a widow as an example of sincere faith.

Each of us has a choice to make. Will we be like the widow who entrusted her life to God or will we be like the rich men who trusted in their riches? Are we willing to entrust everything we have to God, or is our faith limited to that which does not cost us?

Jesus is present and aware of what is in our hearts. He can see by our actions who or what we really worship. Jesus died on the cross to set us free from the love of money and put love for Himself in our hearts instead. When our hearts are changed by His grace, it is easy to give back to Him because we trust Him with our lives.



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ON THE ROAD TO EMMANUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

Bible Passage: Isaiah 29:13,14

Connecting the passage to Christ:

Jesus quotes these verses in Matthew 15:8,9 to speak of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. Jesus regularly exposed the hearts of the Pharisees. Jesus also frustrated the Pharisees' brilliantly shrewd schemes to trap the Lord.

Questions for reflection:

- What does it mean to honor the Lord with your lips, but have hearts that are far from Him? (It is easy to say that you love and worship the Lord, but much harder to love and live for Him inwardly. Only by the grace of God can we live for God from the heart.)
- How does this passage fit the lives of the Pharisees as described in Luke 20:45-47? (The outward honoring would be their long public prayers. Their corrupt hearts would be represented by the way they were cheating the widows.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.



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ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GOLD

Supplies

gold spray paint and a grouping of every day objects such as steel washers, an old sneaker, a toy figure, a wooden or rubber mallet (to be used like an auctioneers gavel)

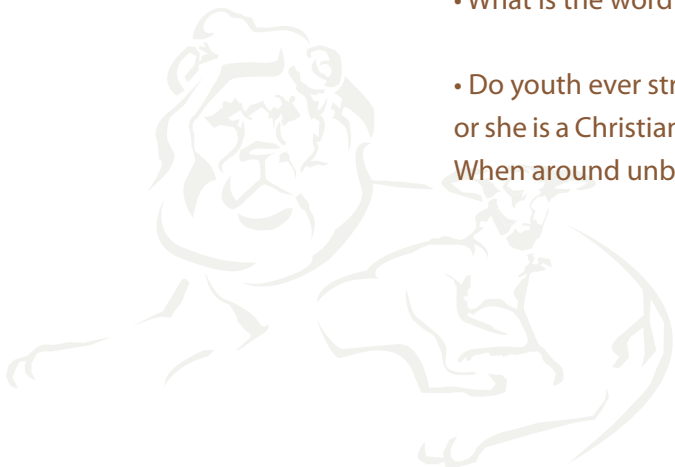
This is to illustrate that outward appearance is not always what it appears to be.

Spray the items gold with the paint. Make sure you really give them a good coat of paint with none of the old colors showing through.

Place the items on a table and then play the role of an auctioneer. Explain to the class that you have some very valuable items for auction and that if they would like to bid on them you will work out payment with their parents. Hold up one of the items and say, "Will anyone start the bidding on this item? Look at it. It is really gold. How about \$4000?"

You should have another teacher object to your auction and try to explain that just because you paint something gold doesn't mean it is worth any more. They should then enlist the help of the class to explain to you that it is still a worthless object underneath. Then ask them the following questions:

- How are these gilded objects like the Pharisees' hearts in Luke 20:47? (They are greedy in their hearts, but they act like they are very spiritual by praying long prayers.)
- What is the word we use to describe their behavior? (Hypocrisy)
- Do youth ever struggle with hypocrisy? (Yes. Sometimes a person will act like he or she is a Christian around Christians. But inside the person is not really a Christian. When around unbelievers people like this act like unbelievers.)



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WHAT WOULD YOU PICK UP?

Supplies:

- one hundred dollar bill
 - one penny
- (If you are uncomfortable about using a one hundred dollar bill, then use a twenty dollar bill.)

The object of this lesson is to show how we are impressed with amounts. Here the class will be drawn to the hundred dollar bill, even though it has no value for them. That is, it does not belong to them. In fact, the penny in its raw form, scrap metal, is worth more than the paper the dollar is printed on.

Place both the penny and the one hundred dollar bill on the floor along with a sign that says, "Look, but do NOT touch." Place them just inside the door where the kids are sure to notice. Monitor their behavior and comments regarding both the bill and the coin. Once all the children have arrived, have them take their seats and ask the following questions before reading the story of the widow's offering.

What did you notice as you came in today? (They are likely to immediately talk about the hundred on the floor and very little about the penny.)

How many of you wanted to pick up the hundred dollar bill? (Watch the enthusiasm.)

How many of you wanted to pick up the penny?

Who would like to take the penny around and show the class up close?

Who would like to take the hundred dollar bill around and show the class up close? (Note the difference in their enthusiasm.)

Read the story of the widow's offering and ask the class how the exercise helps them to see how we are so prone to look at outward appearances. Remind them that the true value of an offering comes not from the amount of the offering, but the spirit and sacrifice with which it is given.



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FAITHFUL WIDOWS

Compare the faith of the widow in Luke 21 with the faith of the widow in I Kings 17:9-16. Ask the class to compare them. How are they similar? What can we learn from the widows?

PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

IN CLASS PROJECT

AN ACTIVITY

Supplies:

pencil and paper

Draw a picture of the poor widow dropping two coins in the box. Draw radiating yellow lines like sun rays from the coins, but color them brown.



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FOR THE OLDER GRADES

COMPARE THE PROPHECY

Compare the prophecy in Isaiah 29:13-14 with the story in Luke 20:45:47 and Matthew 15:1-9.

Draw the class out about how these verses can apply to our lives. Consider the following questions:

What does hypocrisy look like in small children, teens, and parents?

How should we relate to our parents when we see something that might be hypocrisy? (The youth need to remember that parents struggle just as much as anyone with sin. This should not surprise them nor anger them. They should consider praying for their parents' weaknesses and then, lovingly and respectfully, talk to them.)

How can you open up your life to your parents to enlist their help in your fight against hypocrisy? (Our youth need to humble themselves and talk about their temptations and sins to their parents so that they might be helped. Remember, God gives grace to the humble, but He opposes the proud.)

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Not one stone will be left on another. This prophecy was fulfilled in 70 AD when the Romans burned and sacked the temple. It is said that the gold leaf from the various parts of the temple melted and went into the cracks of the rocks which were pried apart to retrieve it.

