

**Recap of 2/11/24 message by Pastor Steve (Mark 12:38-44):**

As He is teaching in the temple during the passion week, Jesus warns against the prideful practices of the religious leaders and gives us an important truth about God's economy regarding giving.

**Pride:** The Jewish religious leaders loved to feel important. They practiced their religion before men to be noticed by and gain the approval of men. Those who's motivation is self-focused are not bringing glory to God, have received their reward in full (Mt 6), and will receive condemnation during judgement. **Our lives and worship are not about us, they are about loving God and loving others!**

**God's Economy:** Jesus uses the example of a poor widow's giving to highlight the importance of our motivation, the condition of our heart, as we make decisions and take action. We learn several things from this scene. We learn that giving is part of our worship of God. We also learn that in God's economy, the worth of our giving is related to our trust in God's faithfulness to care for our needs instead of the monetary value of our gift. God already owns everything; He doesn't need our money; He will put it to good use, but He doesn't need it. He wants your heart fully devoted to Him. Our giving shows our devotion to and trust in Him. Giving helps our spiritual growth (Php 4:15-17). In the New Testament, we are not commanded to give a certain percentage of our income. Instead, we are commanded to give proportionally to our means (Ac 11:29, 1 Co 16:2, 2 Co 8:1-3), cheerfully and without compulsion (2 Co 9:7).

**Application:** We must always check our motivations. We should follow God's commands because we love Him. 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 tells us that as we build on the foundation of Jesus in ourselves and other people, we figuratively use wood, hay, and straw (wrong motivations and actions) or gold, silver, and precious gems (right motivations and actions). Actions taken with selfish motivations are wood, hay and straw; they will burn up in the judgement (no eternal rewards).

This applies to our giving as well. Our giving should be motivated by our love for God and our love for others. If looking for an amount to start giving, begin with 10% of your income and give it to your local church. Expand your giving from there as God leads. Faithful, cheerful, proportionate giving will change your heart regarding money and possessions; you will find contentment in whatever God provides. Embrace God's plan instead of the "American dream" by giving generously of your time, talents, and treasures to God's purposes.