



07.18.10/ Mark 12:38-44

Materials Needed

bag of jellybeans, or some other small “countable” candy

Opening Activity

Pass out jellybeans to the children in differing amounts. For instance, one child gets 20 beans, another 10, and another only 3, etc. Ask the children to give you back two. See how many each child has now.

Discussion

We all gave the same amount of jellybeans (2). But for those of us who had less to begin with, giving 2 jellybeans made a big difference in the amount they had. For those of us with 20 beans, we might not notice the loss of just 2 nearly as much. Tell the children that we are going to hear a story that Jesus told about people that were given different amounts of money, just like we were given different amounts of jellybeans.

Read Mark 12:38-44

“And in his teaching he said, ‘Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces and have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, who devour widows’ houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.’ And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him and said to them, ‘Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.’”

Question 1

The scribes were the religious teachers during Jesus’ day. Many of them were prideful and arrogant about how important they were and about the influence and wealth they had. Do you think God likes that kind of attitude? Why or why not? *In James 4:6 we read that “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” God did not like how the religious teachers were acting. They had no reason to boast about the things they had, or the positions they were in. All of their blessings had come from God, not from themselves.*

Discussion

Of all people the religious teachers should have known how to live according to Scripture. But although they did all the “right things” out in public when others were watching, Jesus could see that their hearts were not doing God’s will. In private they were cheating the poor and not living a sacrificial life for God. It’s easy to live for God when we know that others are watching, but what about when we are alone and no one else sees? Why is it more difficult to honor God with our private thoughts than it is with our public words? *We want other people to like us, so when we know other people are watching, it is easier to do the right things. But when we are alone and no one sees, we might think that we can “get away” with something and no one will find out what we did.*

Question 2

Whose gift required more sacrifice? *The widow is the one who gave sacrificially. Even though the actual amount was less, she gave all that she had, instead of giving just a portion.*

Discussion



We can give sacrificially with our money, just like the widow did. Brainstorm about some other ways can we give sacrificially to God? *There are obviously many possible answers. We can give our time towards helping others (helping our brother or sister clean their room). We can give of our possessions (cooking a meal for someone who is sick). We can also give our talents (helping a neighbor to fix a leaky roof).*

Wrap Up

This passage shows two very contrasting pictures – those who are sincere in their worship of God (the widow), and those who only do it on the outside for show (the scribes). The scribes were trusting themselves, but the widow was trusting God to meet her needs. Each of us is tempted to serve and trust ourselves, just like the scribes. It's the sin in our hearts that causes this. But when we trust Jesus instead, believing that he destroyed our sin when He died on the cross and came back from the dead, we are free to trust GOD instead! Isn't that wonderful news?! Jesus frees us from trusting ourselves when we believe in Him. As the group closes in prayer, ask God to help you see Jesus more clearly and for the strength to trust in Him. As Him to make us all more like the widow. Pray for the desire and opportunity to give sacrificially of our time, money, and talents to help those in need, and in so doing, worship God.