



Lord lead us to understand your way of measuring reality, to grasp it so that the world's way of measuring what matters loses its allure and fades into the background. May we value what you value, may we love what you love, and may our hearts break for what breaks yours and may we be rewarded by closeness with you.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This passage comes directly after and can be read alongside Luke 20:41-47. Jesus asks the religious leaders a question, one that turns their earthly “scales” or how they perceive what is true, on its head. He asks them why the Scripture says the Messiah will be David’s son when David calls him “Master”?

Then he calls into the light their current standards of measuring reality and what is true. He is challenging their far too limited idea of the Messiah. The idea that he would behave like other human kings, win their earthly battles and rule with the justice they thought they longed for. He is also challenging their upside down idea of what makes them “acceptable” to their Father: long robes, seats at the head of the table, earthly esteem.

Finally, he calls into the light the twistedness of this value system, which has caused them to treat others with injustice, and take advantage of the weak in their pursuit of their culture’s stamps of approval. (*Luke for Everyone*, NT Wright)

It is after this upheaval of their value system that he reveals another way the Lord’s “scale system” works in a way they don’t expect by esteeming a poor, widowed, woman and her meager gift.

LISTEN

Read the passage three times.

Read Luke 20:41-47.

Write down 10 things that happened or are stated in these passages.

IMAGINE and FEEL

After reading this story a couple times, imagine you are the widow in this passage. Grab four quarters. Look down at your hands and slowly open them to reveal four coins. They are All. You. Have. Feel your stomach rumble in hunger. Imagine the smell of food



invading your nostrils. Are you thinking of what you could be doing with the coins instead? Look down again. Slowly open your hands to reveal your coins. They are the last thing you have. There's no reason to believe you'll come into possession of any coins ever again. You watch someone with plenty give their contribution. It dwarfs yours. Are you wondering if your sacrifice will be noticed? What are you thinking? What are you feeling? Your feet still carry you forward. You place your coins in with theirs. Are you hoping no one will notice how small yours is? Are you hoping someone will stop you? What are you believing? Is your mind scrambling, trying to figure out what you will do? Are you resigned to a slow death of starvation?

Now think about a time in your life when you've felt weak, out of control, utterly unable to do what you know needs to be done, unable to fix a bad situation, unable to redeem what has been lost or destroyed. Forced to accept a reality you don't want to accept and submit yourself to the Lord in that reality - or put another way, commit yourself into the Lord's goodness when things seem really bad all around you. Your experience may not have been like mine, but, did you feel a strange strength that you couldn't explain? An unexpected power holding you up? If you did, you were experiencing for yourself the upside down truth that Paul named as he reflected on his "thorn in the flesh" that revealed "the weakness of God is stronger than human strength." (1 Cor. 1: 25)

I would imagine this is what powered the widow's offering. What propelled her to overcome whatever fear she may have felt about becoming even more vulnerable. It's a mystery until it happens to you. It doesn't make sense when viewed within human limitations.

EMBODY / TABLE TALK

What are the "values" you have never thought to question? Are there things you've esteemed, thinking you were correct that don't hold up in light of the Biblical story? Could you ask someone you're close to if they think there are values you need to reevaluate to better line up your worldview with the Biblical one?

Are you afraid of feeling or appearing weak? What weaknesses are you most afraid of? (If you are in a group, you might be tempted not to name them out loud. Don't worry. It's not required. But it might be the first step you desperately need to take. I can't tell you how many times I've experienced the freedom that comes from simply forcing a fear that seems huge and scary from thriving in darkness out into the light where it shrivels up to a realistic size. Saying it out loud is a powerful tool in dealing with fears.)

What would a person who has completely embraced this "upside down" value system in 2019 feel and think? Do and say? What would a family or MC do and say?

Created by Summer Kelley

