

Episode: One-Hit Wonders No. 10

Narrator: Poor Widow

Primary Scriptures: Mark 12:41-44, Luke 21:1-4

Story Summary: Jesus observes a poor widow giving her offering at the Temple

Location: Jerusalem, Israel

Time: Circa 30 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Mark 12:43-44

Throughout the Old Testament, the Jews are instructed to be merciful to widows and other vulnerable people. Jesus demonstrated this by raising from the dead the son of a widow of Nain. During his ministry, it is highly likely that Jesus' own mother was a widow. There is no doubt that Jesus had a special place in his heart for widows.

This event takes place at the very end of Jesus's ministry. He is teaching at the Temple in Jerusalem, where the Pharisees and Jewish leaders have made Jesus public enemy number one. They are looking for a way to kill him without arousing the sentiments of the crowds who adore him. One of the reasons the crowds love Jesus is he points out the faults and inconsistencies of the leaders. The people of the crowds are unwilling and unable to do so because the leaders have the ultimate weapon of keeping people from worshiping at the Temple.

Jesus cares about teaching truth. He doesn't care about the feelings and reputation of the leaders. After he concludes a long teaching and confrontation with the leaders at the Temple, he seems to be tired and sits down near the Temple offering area. The offerings are given by dropping them down a winding cornucopia shaped metal horn, which is designed to magnify the sound of metal coins, much like a loudspeaker. Wealthy donors would be noticed and admired as their multitude of heavy coins bounced around noisily.

The leaders and crowds seem to have forgotten God's merciful provisions for people to give as they are able. Jesus no doubt recalls the story of his poor parents only being able to give two doves at his birth. He looks around and sees a religious system that takes advantage of the people it is supposed to serve.

Everybody around him is fascinated by the fine Temple stones and coverings, the extravagant clothes of the rich people in the crowd, and the powerful teachers and leaders, but Jesus is the only one who can see what is truly valuable and important. He sees the pure heart of a widow who loves God wholeheartedly. It is easy to imagine he immediately thought of his own mother. It is easy to imagine he had a smile and some tears at the same time as the widow walked toward the offering area. It is easy to imagine that his gaze caught the attention of those around him and they all turned to see her. It is easy to imagine that he knew his words and her example would be famous throughout all time, while the rich people in the crowd will soon fade away and be forgotten.