

# Coach House Church BEACONS

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## THE WIDOW'S OFFERING

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8TH JUNE 2020

Hello, my name is Stephen, and I am presenting today's Coach House Beacon. There is a story in the Gospels that has always fascinated me.

It is found in two places, in Mark 12: 41 – 44 and in Luke 21: 1 – 4.

**I'm going to read the account from Mark: -**

**41Jesus was sitting in the temple near the offering box and watching people put in their gifts. He noticed that many rich people were giving a lot of money. 42Finally, a poor widow came up and put in two coins worth only a few pennies. 43Jesus told his disciples to gather around him. Then he said:**

**I tell you that this poor widow has put in more than all the others. 44Everyone else gave what they didn't need. But she is very poor and gave everything she had. Now she doesn't have a penny to live on.**

This reading is from the Contemporary English Version, and it's perhaps better known as the story of the widow's mite which is what her offering is called in the King James Bible.

The reason I'm fascinated by this story is because I've always wondered what happened to this widow who entered the Temple virtually destitute and who left it absolutely destitute! Did she go and lie down in some out-of-the-way place and wait to die? Did she have a hovel where she could go and wait to starve to death? Did she pick a fight with a Roman soldier in the hope he'd kill her with his sword? (I admit this last option seems unlikely).

I think a problem that I may have had with this story had been based on a faulty view of God, that He doesn't care about us or that He can't or won't intervene. As a young believer I had misunderstandings about God, and, perhaps, am still liable to misunderstandings. There is a science fiction film that I like that is called *The Island*. In one scene, the leading character, Jordan 5, asks who God is because he'd never heard of Him before. He receives the answer that God is the one who ignores us when we ask for something. I think that view may be more common than we realise. I remember how my father used to mock me when I talked about God or prayer. But for him the time came when he desperately needed God, called out to Him, and was answered!

Over the years that I've known the Lord I have come to appreciate that God does care about us, and that He does listen to us when we seek Him. I admit that in my early years as a believer I struggled to believe in God's provision for us in our lives; not because I didn't see it in the Bible, I did. I struggled to believe that He provides today. Most likely this was a hangover from my past atheism and growing up in a family that was opposed to belief in God. So, I think I just didn't believe that God would help that poor widow. But now I believe that God did help her. Jesus certainly noticed her in that crowd, and He knew of her circumstances too.

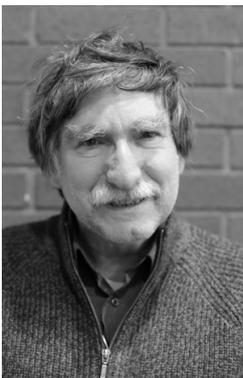
The man who was my first pastor, whose church I started attending when I turned from atheism to Jesus, had served the Lord for most of his adult life. Eventually, when he had to retire because of his age, he knew he would be facing homelessness with his wife because their house went with the ministry; and of course, they didn't have two ha'pennies to rub together. Even so, they went to look at houses for sale-remember they had no collateral and no money! They found a bungalow they both liked, the only problem was that the asking price was £80,000; They walked away. Not long after they were given a cheque for £80,000! This was days before they had to hit the street! God had intervened to help them! They bought the bungalow. Boy was I bowled over! I believe that God did help that widow. I don't know how He helped her, but I believe He did. David said in Psalm 37:25, "I have been young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread". We may not find ourselves in the lap of luxury in this world, but I certainly now believe that God cares for and helps those who are His. And over the course of my Christian life I have experienced His provision. There was a time when my job was in danger. Two "suits" came into my room to assess whether my job was necessary; my supervisor and departmental manager both came in and took them on, and I knew that my departmental manager didn't like me! I stood there looking on as they talked those "suits" out of

sacking me, and all the time I said nothing, and I was aware of God's presence in that room with me! I could relate other examples of this, where God has intervened to provide or to protect.

It says in Psalm 25:2, O my God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me.

May you always know God's provision in your life as you trust in Him.

Amen!



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