

# Our Treasure

"Follow Me Only" Series, June 14 & 15, 2025 | Mark 12:41-44

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Are you starting to understand what Jesus really meant when He said, "Follow Me"?

**We have been on a ten-month journey that has shown me that Mark is a masterpiece.**

In the past, I have always compared Mark with the other Gospels.

Mark doesn't have as many of the teachings of Jesus as Matthew does.

He doesn't recall all the events that Luke does.

He doesn't talk about the meaning of Jesus' life the way John does.

Mark, to me, was the Cliff Notes version.

But, in studying the Gospel according to Mark, I have a whole new respect for him. Mark is focused like a laser beam on Jesus—the Son of God and Savior—and the Kingdom of God.

**Plus, Mark sounds Jesus' call to, "Follow Me!" like no one else does.**

"Follow Me!" is one of Jesus' first words in the Gospel according to Mark.

Mark takes us on a journey with Jesus' disciples as they slowly come to realize who Jesus is. He is the Son of God and Savior who speaks with authority so that even the wind and waves obey Him. However, Jesus didn't come to be served but to serve and to give His life for many.

And Mark shows us the disciples' gradually realizing that Jesus claims their obedience. We realize in the process that He claims our obedience, too. And our love. Jesus wants a relationship of love with us that leads to loving obedience that touches every area of our lives.

**And today, our journey ends with a woman with two small copper coins.**

We've covered Jesus' ministry as He called us to community, to Himself, and to His mission.

We've been on the road with Jesus as He taught His disciples what He wanted from them.

We've followed Jesus to the cross, empty tomb, and end of time.

We're ending where we began—with Jesus' call to, "Follow Me." But this time, He is saying, "Follow Me and Me only."

We see that call clearly illustrated in this impoverished widow.

She could easily have been lost in a sea of wealthy people preening for one another.

But she gave a gift that Jesus noticed and pointed out to His disciples. Two small copper coins.

**The United States' small copper coin—the penny—has so little value it is going out of production.**

At one time, the penny was a symbol of frugality. "A penny saved is a penny earned."

A penny was enough to buy a person's thoughts or a few could buy basic, essential things.

But over time, the penny's reputation has changed.

It became more and more expensive to produce, so cheaper metals were added to bring down the price of production.

Then in 2006, the penny became more expensive to produce than it is worth.

Now, each penny costs about four cents to make, making it now a symbol of excess and waste.

So, the government is doing away with it.<sup>1</sup>

**But two small copper coins can make Jesus' call to, "Follow Me" tangible and crystal clear.**

The value of the two small copper coins in today's story is somewhere between two cents and roughly two dollars. It sounds cheap.

But if that's all you have to live on—your whole livelihood—then it is everything you have. Your whole self—undivided and complete.

So, two small copper coins paint a picture of what Jesus wants from us. As you think about these two small copper coins, is what Jesus REALLY is asking of you starting to become clear?

**Jesus shows us the broken human heart in a way we might recognize.**

**In Mark 12:38-40, Jesus paints a shocking portrait of the religious leaders.**

They walk around in long robes, looking to be noticed. And respected. Honored even. Their vanity is remarkable. But the wickedness their vanity hides demonstrates deep brokenness.

Jesus says to beware of them. Their long prayers distract from the fact that they are stealing from widows. The religious leaders are harming a vulnerable group of people God Himself protects. How ironic!

**Then the Temple Treasury was an elaborate stage featuring displays of wealth designed to impress.**

The Temple in Jerusalem handled vast amounts of wealth.

Worshippers brought in dues, taxes, and donations to fund worship in the Temple, to provide the elaborate furnishings and massive sacrifices required by a worshipping nation.

The Treasury itself was located in the Court of the Women.

Thirteen shofar-chests were each dedicated to a special offering. The receptacles that people put their offerings into were shaped like the shofar trumpets made of horns to prevent theft.

When a worshipper approached to make an offering, a priest would verify the gift and direct the person to the appropriate offering box.

All of this was done out loud such that everyone knew what was being given.

That made the Temple Treasury a place to show off one's wealth in front of everybody.

**In the Farmington Valley, we recognize the lifestyle that made Jesus recoil.**

The Farmington Valley is blessed to be a prosperous place.

People here frequently have worked hard, achieved much, and have much.

And some people here in the Valley want you to know that they've done well.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.wsj.com/us-news/penny-us-mint-production-ends-a15bfcfa?mod=Searchresults\\_pos5&page=1](https://www.wsj.com/us-news/penny-us-mint-production-ends-a15bfcfa?mod=Searchresults_pos5&page=1)

We sometimes show our wealth through our homes. Or our cars. Or our stuff. Or our vacations. We don't mind dropping names of people and locations. When Jesus saw that kind of lifestyle in Jerusalem 2000 years ago, he didn't like it.

**That kind of lifestyle reveals human hearts captivated by greed, envy, and pride.**

Greed is the tendency never to be satisfied, always to want more.  
Envy is seeing what someone else has and wanting that, rather than being content.  
Pride drives us to want to be noticed and to think about how other people see us.  
So, it turns out that something that comes naturally to us is actually a big problem.  
Parading our prosperity around reveals sinful brokenness in our hearts.

**These sins attach to our hearts and fill them with poison that threatens our spiritual lives.**

Sins like greed, envy, and pride are more insidious than you might think.  
They aren't just simple acts that we commit and then move on from. Like mosquitoes biting.  
Instead, imagine them being like creatures that latch onto us, put a stinger in us, and start pumping in poison. Poison is consequential; it makes us sick and weak.  
Greed, envy, and pride make us spiritually sick and weak until we get rid of them.  
Jesus was calling out grave sin in the religious leaders. Is that sin in us?  
If it is, we want the Holy Spirit to get rid of it quickly. Because that is not the way to follow Jesus.

**But a widow's two small copper coins showed us how to follow Jesus.**

**In Mark 12:42, a widow gave two small copper coins that had little relative value:**

And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny.  
Two pennies today probably don't give you a sense of the value of those coins then.  
It was perhaps enough money to buy a cup of cheap coffee, not a Frappuccino.  
A Happy Meal, not a Value Meal. It was just enough to buy the barest essential.

**However, the real value of her gift was found in the fact that it was her whole livelihood.**

This was all of the money she had in the world.  
On one level, it was like she had emptied her 401k and pension plan, sold her house, and auctioned off her possessions. She was left with two small copper coins.  
On another level, it was like she brought everything she had to live on. She now had nothing to provide a place to sleep or a meal to eat that very night.  
This was her whole livelihood and everything she had. She gave it all to God.

**It reminds me of the song, "Feed the Birds" from Disney's version of *Mary Poppins*.**

In the movie, Mary Poppins was a mysterious nanny caring for two children.  
Their father, a banker, barely noticed them or anything other than banking.  
Mary Poppins hoped the children would see the things in the world their father missed.

One of the things he missed was the woman outside the cathedral he walked past every day on his way to and from work. She sat there offering sacks of breadcrumbs to feed the birds.

"Feed the birds," she sang.

"Come, buy my bags full of crumbs

Come feed the little birds,

Show them you care"

All it would cost is "tuppence" which means two pennies.

Two small copper coins would feed the birds. But two small copper coins would also feed the woman who was selling the bags of crumbs. That was her whole livelihood, too!

Two small copper coins can mean more than we think. It can be everything!

### **Jesus brought the disciples back into focus and told them to note what they saw.**

The disciples had been in the background with the crowds, watching for some time.

While there, they saw how the Temple leaders refused to acknowledge Jesus, how they were living for themselves rather than God, and how they refused Jesus' call to, "Follow Me" for now.

But here was a poor widow who had done exactly what Jesus wanted.

Jesus wanted the disciples and us to see her and what she had done.

### **She shows us that sacrifice is the real and right measure of our giving.**

Don't misunderstand Jesus here. He is not criticizing giving.

Jesus is actually saying that giving is an essential part of being His disciple.

He clarifies the purpose for giving: we give for God's glory, not our own.

He reminds us of what we give: our best, not what's left over.

And Jesus is saying that what God really wants from us is sacrificial giving and sacrificial living.

What would sacrificial giving and living look like in the Farmington Valley? For you?

## **All Jesus wants is our whole selves—which is what He gave for us!**

### **Walt Disney loved the song, "Feed the Birds."**

Something about it resonated deeply with him. The scene. The sentiment. The value of a small gift. Walt Disney had an undying faith in humanity.

Walt saw it as the emotional heartbeat of the *Mary Poppins* movie and wanted the scene to be well done. Plus, it gave him an opportunity to put his philosophy into action.

Disney wanted Jane Darwell to play the part.

Darwell was an Academy-Award-winning actress with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

But she was living in a charitable home for retired actresses.

Walt offered her the part and treated her like a star.

He sent her script by special messenger and had her picked up by limousine.

After years out of the limelight, she was a star again.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.waltdisney.org/blog/feed-birds-examining-walt-disneys-favorite-song>

It makes a good story. It's a wonderful act of charity. It was tremendously kind. And humane. But for Walt Disney, it was tuppence. Not meaning that he gave his all. Instead, meaning that it was a gesture he could easily afford that made everyone love and admire him more.

**Jesus' gift to us is nothing like that. Jesus' laying down His life is precious beyond compare.**

From eternity, God decided to create us and save us.

The Son of God set aside heaven to come to earth to become one of us.

Jesus suffered the complete rejection of His own creations.

He took the weight of our sin on His shoulders and bore the full wrath of God.

He died on the cross to pay the price for sin so that we might be forgiven, adopted as God's children, given new life, and inherit eternal life.

He gave everything for us. Like the woman who gave two small copper coins.

**How can we not give our whole selves to someone who first gave His whole self for and to us?**

Mark shows us in later chapters that the cross is where we see Jesus most clearly.

From the foot of the cross, a Roman soldier said, "Truly, this was the Son of God." That's when we finally understand what it means that Jesus is Savior and Son of God.

Now we have seen who Jesus is and by extension who God is.

We have also seen beyond a shadow of a doubt how God feels about us.

He loves us! God the Father loves us so much that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

God the Son loves us so much that He gave Himself. For us. His whole self!

How can we not respond by giving our whole selves back to Him?

**How can we not give sacrificially, too?**

We can't ignore the fact that this happened as people were bringing an offering.

Jesus is not saying that giving an offering is bad. Of course, we give.

We give as an act of worship for God's glory; we don't give to get glory or attention.

We give first; we don't make life work and then give.

We give our best; we don't ask God to make do with what's left over.

That's giving sacrificially. That's the right response to God's love. That's the right way to say "yes" when Jesus calls to us, "Follow Me."

**How can we not give our heart, soul, mind, and strength?**

That's the way the Old Testament summarizes God's Law.

It comes from **Deuteronomy 6:4-5**:

***"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."***

Jesus gave His whole self for us; we give our whole self to Him.

God loves us wholly; we love God with all that we are. Heart, soul, mind, and strength.

## What would it look like for us to give our whole selves to Jesus—starting today?

### **This was Jesus' last public teaching.**

Next, He would teach His disciples privately and at the Last Supper.

Then He would teach us all by His example through His trial, death, and Resurrection.

But this episode brings Jesus' public teaching to a close.

It's like a final word from Jesus. It must be important. Somehow, the widow's offering shows us that giving Him our whole selves is what it means to "Follow Me!"

### **Val, a foster mom, brings the widow's sacrificial giving of her whole self to life again today.**

Val is a single person who said "yes" to being a foster mom to a preemie with a feeding tube.

Doctors expected that the feeding tube would be temporary and that he would develop normally, but things didn't go as expected.

Josh required five surgeries. He spent 388 days in the hospital and rehab; some of the time, his survival was touch and go. But Josh hung on and fought through.

Not everyone is willing to take a medically challenged child.

In fact, if Val had thought about it, she would have said "no way." She didn't have time or ability. But through it all, she stayed by his side. She never gave up—not because it was easy, but because she had the support of her faith and her church family.

Now, she says it was the best thing ever. Josh is home, thriving, and adopted with a smile that lights up family gatherings.

Val didn't necessarily set out imitate the widow in Mark 12, but she did it anyway.

In the process, she showed us what giving your whole self to following Jesus looks like!

### **How can you do what the widow in the Temple did and give your whole self to Jesus?**

You might roll up your sleeves and get deeply involved in children's ministry.

Or decide that it's time to restructure your spending priorities to put God first in your finances.

Some of you may hear God calling you to set aside a sin that has been plaguing you. You might fast.

Or raise your children in a way that puts God first. Or share Christ's love at work.

There are so many ways to follow the widow's example and give your whole self to Jesus, but they will all involve listening to God for His prompting, and they will all involve sacrifice.

### **That's what Jesus means when He calls us to, "Follow Me!"**

Leave everything else behind. In love, put Him first.

Following the example of the widow in the Temple Treasury, we give Him our whole selves.

Will you start today?