

THE WIDOW'S PENNY
MATTHEW 22:15-22; MARK 12:38-44

Do you ask your teachers questions? Probably your teacher is very glad if you do. But you know, teachers ask a lot of questions too. The books of Matthew and Mark have some special things to teach us today from God's Word.

One day a lawyer who was also a Pharisee, a teacher of the Jewish religion, came to Jesus testing Him and asking this question; "Master, which is the greatest of God's commandments?" Jesus answered, "You must deeply love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second most important commandment is that you must love your neighbour as much as you love yourself." Jesus said all the other commandments in the Bible came from these 2 or depends on these 2. If we really obey these 2 great laws of God we will be obeying all the other laws too and we will be doing everything the Bible tells us to do. Jesus said the Jewish leaders were not what they tried to make people think they were. That is, they pretended to be good when they were not very good at all. They actually stood on the street corners and prayed long loud prayers in public so that people would think they loved God and talked to Him a lot. But really they were not good and did not want God in their hearts to be the boss of their lives at all, for they were unfair and cruel to the poor. Jesus said that they would be punished at the judgment day. Then Jesus went into the court of the temple where the offering boxes were. He sat down and watched as people threw in the money they were giving to God. He noticed that many rich men gave a lot of money. But He also saw a poor widow who gave just 2 small copper coins equal to only one penny. Then Jesus called His disciples and told them that her penny meant more to God than all the bags of money given by the rich men. For those rich men gave God only a little but kept most of their money for themselves. But the poor widow kept nothing. She had given the only penny she had. She gave all she had out of a heart of love for God.

What do you think about the men who prayed long prayers but did wicked things? Maybe they fooled some people but they did not fool God. God knows everything we do and everything we even think. The Bible says that God knows what is in our heart. He knows not only what we do but also what we would like to do if we thought we could get away with it. No wonder God says we are all to be blamed for being bad. He knows we will never get to heaven by being good ourselves.

Do we really love God and other people as much as we love ourselves? But God says we can still go to heaven even though we are not as good as we should be. How? Not by what we do but by what Jesus Christ did for us when He died on the cross. If we believe that Jesus died for our sins and love Him for doing that and ask Him to live in our hearts and lives, we will be God's children and be with Jesus in Heaven when we die. And He will help us live a better happier life here on this earth too. You can read today's Bible lesson for yourself in Matthew chapter 22 verses 34 to 40 and in Mark chapter 12 verses 38 to 44.