

# The Vincennes Voice

“...The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight...” (Matt. 3:3)

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## LESSONS FROM A POOR WIDOW

Larry R. Ping II

One of the lesser-known, but well-loved characters of the New Testament is the poor widow encountered in Mk. 12:41-44. She does not occupy much “page space” in the Bible, but there are significant lessons stemming from her example.

**1) God Considers The Attitude With Which We Give As Much As He Considers The Amount Given.** Some might say he considers the attitude more than the amount. Think about the amount this widow gave — two mites, or small copper coins. Historically, we can estimate the value of this offering as very, very small and minute. She was doing this as the “rich people” were offering large sums. Yet, Jesus championed this widow’s offering over those of the rich folks.

Paul’s pen alerts his readers giving is to be done “cheerfully.” We are not to give “grudgingly” or “out of necessity” (II Cor. 9:7).

Whatever amount we determine to give (“as we have been prospered”) is to be given gladly and willingly (I Cor. 16:1-2). Remember Paul’s words, “But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver” (II Cor. 9:6-7).

**2) God Is Well-Pleased With Sacrificial Giving.** In relation to the giving in this story, Jesus said “Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.” The widow most certainly gave sacrificially. She gave, and then gave some more. The rich givers gave very little in

comparison to what they had. Recall our text of Jesus says, “beheld how the people cast money into the treasury.” Jesus noticed, and will notice the same today.

On this day, we need to know God is not expecting us to give all in terms of financial giving. But He does demand and deserve our cheerful and sacrificial giving (Matt. 6:33).

Think of it this way. If Jesus were to be with your congregation next Lord’s day as the offering is being taken, what would He notice about you and me? Good for some, perhaps scary for others.

In the end, consider some words of the wise man. “He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor” (Prov. 22:9) and “The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself” Prov. 11:25). May we be a modern-day version of the Mk. 12 widow!

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# DERIVING AUTHORITY & ACTS 15

Larry R. Ping II

Many wish to point out the Church of Christ was founded by Alexander Campbell in the 1800's. Some even venture to say Mr. Campbell and other restoration preachers instituted the "Direct Command, Apostolic Example, Necessary Inference" way of deriving authority. Both assertions are wrong, very wrong.

**Acts 15** is a splendid and shining example of how the apostles and early leaders of the Lord's Church solved doctrinal problems of the day. Granted, such problems were not as plentiful at the time, but they rose nonetheless.

The issue at hand was "Should Gentile converts to the Lord be circumcised?" Some were saying yes, others no. Hence, the occasion of the meeting in Jerusalem to solve the issue. Please take notice of how they solved the issue.

## **They Made A Plea To A Direct Command**

**Or Statement Of God.** More specifically, James did so in Acts 15:13-21. He made reference back to the writings of Amos 9:11-12. In other words, God had already stated He was opening salvation to the Gentiles (having made no mention of the need of circumcision).

**They Made A Plea Based Upon An Apostolic Example.** Paul and Barnabas made mention of the fact of the "signs" and "wonders" God had done "through them among the Gentiles" (Acts 15:12). The apostles were permitted to do these to illustrate the Gentiles were now part of God's plan without the need for circumcision.

**They Made A Plea Based Upon Necessary Inference Or Forced Conclusion.** Peter did so in Acts 15:7-11. He drew from his experience with Cornelius in Acts 10, how they received the Holy Spirit, how there was no distinction made between he (Jews) and

them (Gentiles) and that they were saved exactly as they were. The forced conclusion was Gentiles could be saved without the need for circumcision.

**They Made A Plea Based Upon The Silence of God.** They simply and plainly pointed out they had given "no instruction" on the subject at hand (**Acts 15:24**). Therefore, no troubling or harassing attitudes should arise as a result of these false teachings.

It is getting more common to hear "people of God" discount the importance of deriving authority for all we say and do (Col. 3:17) in the same ways the 1st century Christians did. I am not ashamed, nor will I be made to feel ashamed for doing Bible things in Bible ways.

On this day, let us each strive to be sure we are authorized to do what we are doing. Let us be content to act as the brethren in **Acts 15** and find the right answer to the issue. It may be a "harder" road to follow, but the end of this road is wonderful and peaceful!

## FIRST CITY CHURCH OF CHRIST

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## MEETING TIMES (EST)

### SUNDAY

Bible Study – 10:00 am

Worship – 11:00 am & 3:00 pm

### WEDNESDAY

Bible Study – 7:00 pm