

away for a rainy day

- Both Paul and Jesus challenge us to the core by encouraging us to give until it hurts and to then rely on God. A principle the Israelites learnt whilst in the desert.

### 3. Questions to consider at home

- 3.1 How does the Apostle Paul and Jesus challenge the Corinthian Church and the rich people of Jerusalem about their giving?
- 3.2 Should we have a base level of giving? If so, what should it be?
- 3.3 *'Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.'* What does Paul mean here? How do we 'sow generously'?
- 3.4 If Jesus or the apostle Paul were around today what would they have to say about the giving of our Church? What would they have to say about your giving?
- 3.5 A close friend confides in you that she doesn't know exactly how much she should give to the church. What principles would you suggest that she follows?



Matthew Street 28<sup>th</sup> January 2024

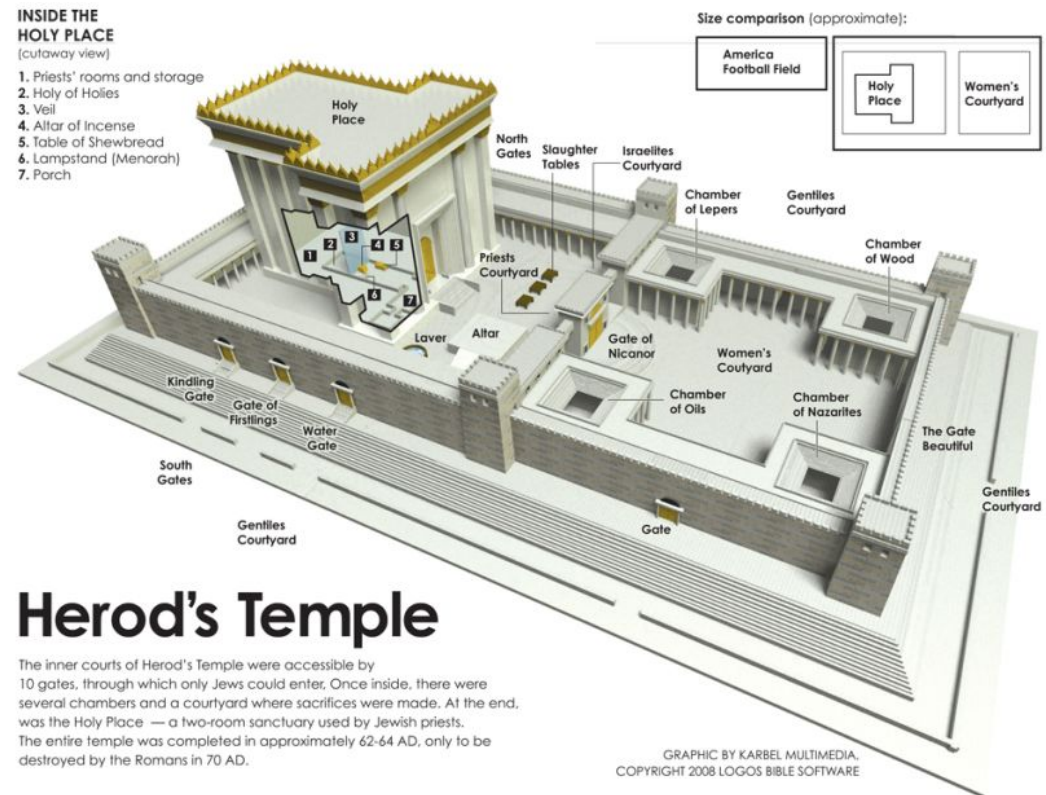


## The St J's Group

### Luke 21:1-4 & 2 Corinthians 9:6-10 - The Temple Treasury

#### Passage, Talk Notes and Questions

Please feel free to take these talk notes home with you and you may wish to find some time during this week to consider the questions below.



#### 1. Talk Passages – Luke 21: 1-4 & 2 Corinthians 9:6-10

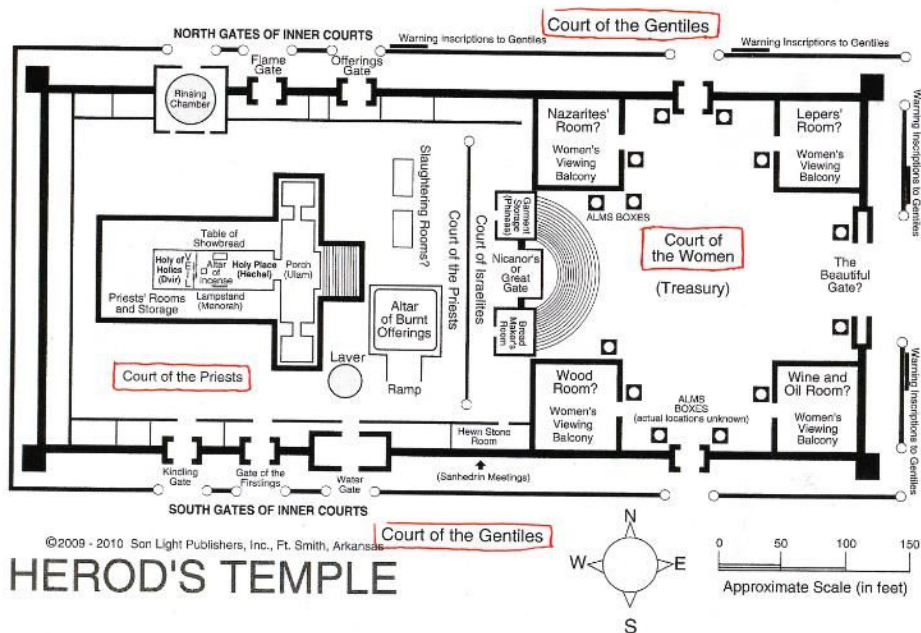
**1** As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. **2** He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. **3** "Truly I tell you," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. **4** All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.

**6** Here is something to remember: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. **7** Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. **8** And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. **9** As it is written: 'They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures for ever.'  
**10** Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.

## 2. Talk Notes

### 2.1 Introduction

- Jesus was probably resting in the Temple Treasury (Court of the Women) within eyesight of one or a number of stone giving jars. 7 of these giving jars were for collecting the 'temple tax' and the remaining six for 'goodwill' offerings.
- It may well have been Monday of that fateful week when Jesus was going to be crucified on the Friday. He has probably just sat down for a rest having spent the morning fielding difficult questions from various members of the religious authorities who were desperate to stick something on him.
- He looks up and notices a poor widow, his disciples are there with him and he spontaneously teaches them about Giving in the Kingdom of God.



shekels. Thus the 'temple tax' represented approximately 2% of the annual wage.

- We might consider that our modern equivalent to the 'temple tax' is Parish Share. Parish Share is approximately £720 per member which equates to £14 per week. The average annual wage in the UK last year was £36,000 thus Parish Share, like the 'temple tax,' represents approximately 2% of the annual wage.

### 2.3 Giving should be from the heart

- 'You should each give what you have decided in your heart to give.' (2 Corinthians 9:7). Paul points out to the rich Corinthian Church that all giving boils down to a matter of the heart.
- In 1 Chronicles 29 verse 14 we read: 'Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.' If we genuinely believe that everything comes from God then any giving we make is only in a response to what God has already given us.
- 'Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury.' (Luke 21:1) Their hearts were hard they were only putting in what they had to. Paul tells the Corinthian church that if they they were not giving willingly from the heart then: 'You shouldn't give because you are forced to.' (2 Corinthians 9:7)
- We need to constantly analyse our motives for giving. Are we doing so out of habit or are we giving from a motivation of our hearts?

### 2.4 Giving should be generous/sacrificial

- Paul reminds the rich Corinthian Church that they will reap what they sow: 'The one who plants only a little will gather only a little. And the one who plants a lot will gather a lot.' (2 Corinthians 9:6)
- If we really want God's Kingdom to grow then we will be prepared to sow time, talents and money into growing God's Kingdom.
- 'This poor widow has put in more than all the others' (Luke 21:3) Jesus is blown away by the generosity of this poor widow. He has noticed that she has paid her Temple Tax but now she now she makes a 'goodwill' offering of two small coins probably lepta the smallest coin in circulation at that time.



- The Apostle Paul who is writing to the rich Corinthian Church tells them: 'Here is something to remember' (2 Corinthians 9:6)
- Both Jesus and Paul want their disciples and us to learn some important principles about Giving in God's kingdom.
  - We should give 'what is due' first as our base level giving.
  - Giving should be from the heart
  - Giving should be generous/sacrificial
  - Giving should make us reliant on God not on ourselves

### 2.2 We should give 'what is due' first as our base level giving.

- Every Jew was expected to pay an annual 'temple tax' which in Jesus' day was probably half a shekel. The temple tax was used for the upkeep and maintenance of the temple. The average annual wage of a labourer in Jesus' day was 80

- Jesus then remarks to his disciples that:

*All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.* (Luke 21:3)

- Jesus challenges the rich, his disciples and us to give sacrificially.

### 2.5 Giving should make us reliant on God not ourselves.

- If we are honest most of us are frightened to give sacrificially because we fear we may not have enough for the future. Paul knew this as did Jesus. Paul reminds the Corinthian church and us: *God is able to shower all kinds of blessings on you. In all things and at all times you will have everything you need.* (2 Corinthians 9:8)
- Most of us, including the rich people of Jesus' day and the rich Corinthian church were deep down unwilling to trust God with their future financial provision.
- How many of us personally or our churches are sitting on large reserves stashed