

## TWO-FACED OR TWO COINS: OBJECT LESSONS OF FAITH // LUKE 20:45-21:4

*From the series, The Gospel of Luke*

On the Wednesday of the Passion week, Jesus continues to confront the religious leaders who oppose him and the crowds who follow him, still teaching in the last days of his earthly ministry.

**Main Idea: We love and honor God by giving ourselves completely to him.**

This idea is illustrated by the three categories of people gathered at the temple:

### 1. The religious leaders

The scribes were experts in the law, the ones who transcribed the word of God, and were respected teachers in the temple. They sometimes served as political diplomats, historians, and adjudicators. They strongly opposed Jesus from the early days of his ministry and conspired to put him to death because he has pointed out their character flaws—their desire for attention and honor, their cheating of the vulnerable, their hypocrisy.

Those of us in the church today run the risk of becoming like the scribes—becoming more concerned with appearances and places of privilege, of doing the right thing with the wrong motivation. Many of us are experts in the word of God, but we must be vigilant to avoid hypocrisy and to avoid what is merely superficial.

### 2. The crowds

While Jesus was not condemning every wealthy person, he was speaking to the natural tendency of those who try to be self-sufficient. The issue is a matter of the heart. Do we give and serve as a matter of routine? Do we have a spirit of pride? We have nothing that God needs. When we can admit this, God has us where he wants us and where he can use us.

The widow mentioned in this passage sacrificed out of her lack, out of her emptiness. She, like a number of the widows mentioned in Luke, serves as an illustration of virtue, demonstrating that we are to love with everything we have, with all of our resources and all of our being.

While many in the crowd might have been interested in what Jesus was saying, there were also many who were ambivalent. And it is this kind of ambivalence that Jesus mourns (Luke 19:41-44).

### 3. The disciples

Mere days before his crucifixion, Jesus is still teaching his disciples. Like them, we are susceptible to the patterns of the scribes and of the crowds. Like the disciples and the religious leaders, we are being asked, “Who do you say that I am?” Jesus must be messiah, savior, and lord. Will we be hypocritical? Or will we be wholly devoted?

Are you willing to be a nobody for Jesus? Are you willing to give all?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What might tempt us to focus on the superficial like the scribes? How can we guard our hearts against hypocrisy?
2. Do we struggle with self-sufficiency? How can we more fully rely on God?
3. What does it look like to give ourselves to God on a daily basis?