

October 9, 2022

# The Gifts of the Widows

1 Kings 17:8-24; Luke 21:1-4

The founder of Patagonia, a retailer of outdoor clothing and gear, announced recently that he will donate the entire company to fight climate change. The company is worth more than \$3 billion. Every dollar the company makes in the future will be donated to the cause. This monumental donation will most certainly have a huge impact on the future of our planet, but I wonder how much the personal finances of its founder, Yvon Chouinard, will change.

I had the opportunity to volunteer with a local nonprofit organization that provided help to those who needed it. It was a small, neighborhood-based project, and it was a labor of love. The person running it did it alone full-time (with the help of volunteers), received no income from it, and often paid out of pocket when expenses outpaced donations. This person literally gave everything to help those who needed it more. The organization closed its doors this year because it could not afford to keep up with rising rent costs. It wasn't a multinational organization, and its budget certainly wasn't in the billions. I know, however, that its absence will leave a void for those who relied on it for services.

These thoughts are not intended as judgment about the value of one donation over another. They are intended to help us better understand what Jesus meant when he said, "I assure you that this poor widow has put in more than them all. All of them are giving out of their spare change. But she from her hopeless poverty has given everything she had to live on" (Luke 21:4). We don't have to be rich to give gifts that please God. We do have to be willing to give everything, though, and have faith that God will provide for us when we do.

1. How do you feel about massive donations that come from large corporations and wealthy individuals? Is their impact more significant than the contributions of someone who gives everything she has? Why or why not?
2. What do you think Jesus meant by what he said as recorded in Luke 21:4?
3. In what ways can or do you "give everything" to your church and to other ministries?

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