



WEEK THREE REIMAGINE

## LAMENT OF A GIFT

BY HANNAH GARRITY

INSPIRED BY MARK 12:38-44 (*The widow's mite*)

DIGITAL PAINTING

In this painting, I have depicted two coins from the time of Jesus. Two. Two is not enough to live on. Economist Thomas Picketty's new book, *Capital and Ideology* (*Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2020*), details how societies throughout the ages have structured inequality into their/our economic systems. He argues that the economy is not a force of nature. Human ideology shapes the economy. Marshall Steinbaum sums up Picketty's new work: "In his sweeping new history, the economist systematically demolishes the conceit that extreme inequality is our destiny, rather than our choice."<sup>2</sup>

In this text, Jesus agrees with Picketty. An exegesis of this text by Addison Wright<sup>3</sup> establishes that Jesus is actually lamenting the widow's gift. Wright cites Jesus' overall viewpoint on the financial structures of the day, arguing that this cannot be an affirmation of the widow's selflessness. Rather, it must be a lament of the societal structures that cause the widow to give all of her resources to organized religion.

For me, the lament perspective on this traditional stewardship text is transformational. It is inspiring me to engage financially with the Church in a much more personal way. With sudden clarity, I connected the fact that Jesus' Church is the financial ideology I believe in. The hypocrisy that Jesus observes in this text is the same hypocrisy that I have always struggled with as a member of the Church of the present. So, what actions can I take, what questions can I ask, and what conversations can I have to ensure that the Church I am giving to is the Church Jesus meant to create?

— HANNAH GARRITY

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<sup>2</sup> Steinbaum, Marshall. "Thomas Picketty Takes On the Ideology of Inequality." Published on the Boston Review. March 25, 2020. <http://bostonreview.net/class-inequality/marshall-steinbaum-thomas-picketty-takes-ideology-inequality>.

<sup>3</sup> Wright, Addison G. "The Widow's Mites: Praise or Lament?—A Matter of Context." Published on The ATLA Serials. <http://www.pas.rochester.edu/~tim/study/Widow's%20Mite.pdf>.