

October 9, 2022

6. What Google Reveals — **1 Kings 17:8–16,24; Luke 21:1–4, NRSV**

Patagonia founder Yvon Chouinard recently announced that he is giving away his outdoor apparel company. Worth about \$3 billion, Patagonia will now be owned by a trust that will invest the proceeds in fighting the climate crisis and protecting the environment.¹ A company of this size is a generous gift to the causes close to the heart of the owner. This gift will affect people around the world for generations to come.

Contrast this story with the two widows in this week's study. They also gave a lot, one giving her last meal away, the other giving a couple of coins that she needed to live on. The cost of the widows' gifts was expensive, but not in a monetary way. These gifts alone could not have competed financially with the gift of a \$3 billion company.

The story of the widow of Zarephath has always troubled me. The prophet Elijah travels to a town and asks a woman for something to eat. Her response is that she does not have much food—just enough to make a final meal for her son and herself, and then they will die. Elijah insists on eating and convinces the widow that she will be taken care of if she meets this need; the widow does not seem to have much choice. The troubling aspect for me is that Elijah insisted she give him food, and she did, even though she and her son might be hungry and die as a result! We know the ending of the story and that because she gave Elijah food, the widow had enough to eat.

What happens when life is lived on the margins, needs aren't met, and someone gives away all the food and money they have? Giving from poverty, as the widows did, is very different than giving from wealth. Giving in a situation where there are no choices is very different than giving when there are lots of choices.

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¹ Lora Kolodny, "[Patagonia Founder Just Donated the Entire Company, Worth \\$3 Billion, to Fight Climate Change](#)," CNBC, September 14, 2022.



Mary Ann Weber enjoys reading, drinking tea, and spending time with old and new friends. She lives in Goshen, Indiana, with her husband and two cats. A former editor at MennoMedia, Mary Ann now works at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, in Elkhart, Indiana, and serves on the pastoral leadership team at Benton Mennonite Church in Goshen.

Resources for this session

Salt & Light Videos are great for leader preparation or introducing each weekly session. **Brian Quan**, pastor of Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church, is the presenter for unit 1. The videos are closed captioned, free, and available on [MennoMedia's YouTube channel](#).

URL for session

- Corey Farr, "[Clearing the Temple Courts: What Jesus Did About Systemic Injustice](#)"
- Leo Hartshorn, "Does Mite Make Right?" appears to be no longer available
- [Handout](#) for session 6 small group activity