

Turning Carnal Cash Into Kingdom Currency

by Glenn Sheppard

Glenn Sheppard emphasizes the importance of transforming our financial practices to align with God's kingdom values through stewardship and generosity.

Duration: 35:48

Scripture: 1 Timothy 6:3

Topics: "Mammon"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of giving and the mindset behind it. He shares a personal story of a friend who is facing financial difficulties and encourages the congregation to consider what they will do with what God has given them. The speaker also highlights the opportunity for evangelism through internet missionaries and the need to reach the billions of people who have not heard the gospel. He concludes by discussing the practical steps to transform worldly wealth into kingdom currency, referencing passages from 1st Timothy and Luke.

Transcript

Chris has entrusted me this morning to speak to you about a subject that is near to the heart of all of us and very special during these days. Now I understand that he has given you six to ten different titles for my sermon, but he finally said it's about you and your money. Now if that makes some of you nervous, repent.

Get right with God, because God loves you and he loves your money. And I'm going to talk with you probably as straightforward as anybody's ever talked to you in your life about your financial business this morning. I wished I had more than just a few minutes this morning to share with you on this general theme.

It was my joy to pastor for 18 years, actually 20 years, all through my college and seminary days and then before I began working with our North American Mission Board. And the full-time vocational pastorate for a number of years. And the one thing that I began to discover and learn over the years was that people get nervous when you talk about their billfold, when you talk about their purse.

You can talk about anything on the face of the earth you want to, just don't bother their checkbooks. I had a deacon at a church that I used to pastor a number of years ago. He came out of the mountains of North Georgia.

When I'd get wound up, he'd get wound up. I'd go to preach and he'd go to shout, Amen brother, preach on! And I liked it, to be very honest. And I would say in passing sometimes, amen to me is like sic'em to a South Georgia bulldog.

One Sunday early in January, where I was pastoring and he was sitting in the congregation, as most of us do, Chris is doing this month and I'm joining with him and he invited me and allowed me the privilege of doing that when he knew I was going to be in this area. I would deal with the subject of stewardship for the year, just to encourage our people. And so I got wound up that particular morning and my deacon started out, Amen, go for it preacher, hallelujah, bless God.

And the longer I preached, the quieter he got. And by the time I finished, he had just grown deaf and dumb. I could see the glaze that went over his eyes.

I met him at the back door and I said, Ben, don't you remember saying amen to me like saying sic'em to a South Georgia bulldog? He said, that's alright until the bulldog gets you by the seat of the britches. And you don't say sic'em to him. Now if I happen to sound like I get you by the seat of the britches this morning, it's alright.

It's not to tear your britches up or your heart up. But I want to talk to you honestly about finances. I want to talk to you out of 50 years of preaching and many years of pastoring and loving the bride and loving the body of Christ.

Now before I do that, I want to just simply give you a brief little report. Somebody walked up immediately this morning and said, hey, how are things going in Nepal? You know, we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the silver jubilee anniversary this year and had the most amazing thing. I've been in faith ministry for 25 years now almost and we were about 8 weeks out before that celebration and literally trying to invest.

It was going to take, because of the gigantic purpose that we were doing it for and all of the people that were coming in, it was going to take \$25,000, \$30,000 to carry this off and do the significant things that had been planned. We had \$100. I said, wow, God you always sponsor what you really call into existence, you pay for it.

So I carried it to my national director in Nepal. We talked via Skype and conversed. Anyway, long story short, I said, Ilya, I think we're going to have to cancel this whole thing.

He said, oh, Papa G, let's just try one more time. Pray and said, you just send word out and ask God's people to obey. Well, I sent out a little email to, I don't know, maybe three or four hundred people.

In less than 5 weeks, we saw \$28,960 come in. And I was just staggered. It was absolutely astounding.

So I want to report that to you. Some of you even shared in that. Thank you so much.

Work in Nepal is going wonderfully well. The work in Thailand is going profoundly well. I'll be leaving in just a couple of weeks, headed back to Thailand.

We're going to be working with a group called the Quran Tribal People. They are up on the Burmese border. We're going to do three conferences for them.

They're in a season of revival. They're having literally not just hundreds, but thousands of people in their villages come to Jesus Christ. We're looking to three conferences with somewhere around 2,000 in each

conference, primarily leaders, most of them the age of these kids on the front row down here, that are the future of what God's going to do along that Burmese border.

And I always say it, but I hope you don't ever think we take you for granted. Thank you for investing in International Prayer Ministries. Now, if you have your Bibles, I want you to turn with me to 1 Timothy chapter 6. I'm going to read verses 3 through 10, and then in a minute we're going to turn to Luke chapter 16, verses 1 through 13.

If I were to title this morning's sermon by title, let me give you the correct one since Chris couldn't remember it. Turning carnal cash into kingdom currency or steps to mastering mammon money. How do you do that? How do you really do that? Well, the writer of 1 Timothy, Paul, admonishes his young friend Timothy very clearly about spiritual leaders and their lust for money when he says, beginning in verse 2 of chapter 6 of 1 Timothy, these are the things I want you to teach and preach.

If you have leaders there who teach otherwise, refuse the solid words of our master Jesus and this godly instruction, tag them for what they are. Ignorant windbags who infect the air with germs of an epidemic of backstabbing and truth is but a distant memory to them. They think religion is a way to make a fast buck.

A devout life does bring wealth, but listen, it's the rich simplicity of being yourself before God, not the wealth of the world. Since we enter this world penniless, we'll leave it penniless. If we have bread on the table and shoes on our feet, that's enough.

But if it's only money these leaders are after, they'll self-destruct in no time. Lust for money brings trouble and nothing but trouble. If you go down that path, some lose their footing in the faith completely and they live to regret it ever and ever afterwards.

That's a pretty harsh word. Timothy is speaking to his young friend, Paul is speaking to his young friend about how to listen to leaders who speak to you about finances. The days we are living in today are days that have been used for cashing in on godliness.

Godliness now I didn't say godlessness, but godliness. The godliness market is hot today. Everybody is getting in on it.

There are booksellers and music makers and dispensers of silver crosses and fish buckles and olive wood lettered openers and bumper stickers and lucky water crosses and pictures of Jesus and everything else that you can imagine that if you will purchase will guarantee you to win at bingo in the next 90 days or so. These are good days for gain in godliness. We live in a society today, especially in our economic circumstances where we go to God more often to try to bribe Him to get us out of a tight spot that we've gotten into because we've not obeyed His commissions up to that point.

These days are also very dangerous that we live in. What you do with money or desire to do with it can make or break your happiness forever. How you respond to the circumstances that God allows to come to your life will determine how your joy level will precipitate and live in the days that are ahead.

Paul makes it very clear what he feels about money and how it can destroy you. Those who desire, he says in 1 Timothy chapter 6 verse 9, those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. So in reality how you feel about money may determine more of your life than what you do with the money because how you feel determines what you will do with your funds.

Now, Paul is warning Timothy about slick deceivers. People like me who might come and talk to you about, hey, will you help us in our mission projects? He warns them about slick deceivers who discover that they could cash in on the upsurge of godliness in the church in Ephesus. When he said these words, and listen, he says, they imagine that godliness is a means of gain.

They are addicted to the love of money. And when you love something, when it's gone from you, you weep bitterly. And I see more weeping today over the condition of our finances than I have seen for years in the altar of churches across America over the condition of the lostness of America.

What you love most you will weep most desperately over. Now, Paul's response was not this, gain is vain. He did not say that.

His response is there is no great gain in godliness with contentment if it has the wrong motivation behind it. If your godliness has freed you from the desire to be rich and has helped you to be content with what you have and you live in obedience to biblical stewardship, then godliness is tremendously profitable. But you see, godliness that overcomes the craving for material wealth produces spiritual wealth and not material wealth so often.

So it's very profitable not to pursue wealth but to pursue God and then take what He gives you and give it back to Him and to the world that has great needs. Now, don't get me wrong, making a lot of money is not the same as amassing a lot of wealth. Big incomes do not have to mean a bigger barn that you live in, a bigger car that you drive, or more luxurious clothes or more jewelry that you wear.

John Wesley said it well many years ago and he lived as a pauper almost. He says, make as much as you can in order to give as much as you can. We've lost that mentality in the church today.

Wanting more money for ourselves is folly if we're not careful. Paul gives three reasons for this when he says in 1 Timothy, we brought nothing into the world and we cannot take anything out of this world. In other words, and I've done this for a long number of years, I have never seen a U-Haul following a hearse.

You can't take it with you. Now, you can send it on for investment sakes but you can't control it. Number two, if we have food and clothing, Paul said, we should be content.

Why? Because no matter which way the market is moving, God is always better than gold. His presence is always more precious than the substantial gain of a 401K. Be content with what you had for He has said, I will never fail you.

I will never forsake you. These are tough economic times, tougher than I've seen in my lifetime. There may be a couple of people here who are on the tag end of the depression.

You are the only people who have ever seen more difficult times than we are entering into today and they may get rougher but these are most difficult times. We've never lived in times like this. The generation of these young people sitting on the front rows and most of us sitting here have never seen days like this and so we are whining and crying.

Why? Because we are afraid that we have lost our security because we've lost our retirement but we've not lost our God. He never fails. He is not going to devalue and His presence is not going to go away.

Now the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, it is said. It is through the craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with grief, Paul describes it as he speaks to young Timothy. The hunger to be rich is often suicidal.

Now what if you do come into a lot of money? What if God does bless you? What if you get an inheritance? What if you get an insurance settlement? What if you get a well-deserved bonus or a raise? Some would say invest and I would agree with them but I want to amend my thoughts on the investment development differently than most people say them today. Jesus and Paul were never against investments. They were only against bad investments, the kind that are not still paying interest in a thousand years.

And there is no investment that any bank in America, any fund in America or any economy in the world can give to you that which will guarantee results a thousand years from now a hundred fold over. But Jesus can. Jesus said it this way, He said lay up for yourself treasures in heaven.

Paul said tell the rich to lay up for themselves a good foundation for the future so that they may take hold of the life, a life which is indeed flooded with the presence of God. You might ask how do I practically do all of this? Jesus said sell your possessions, give them away. Provide yourselves with treasures in heaven that do not fail.

What we do today is we hoard instead of give. And it puts churches and it puts ministry and it puts unreached people groups around the world in a crisis because we stack them up in our barns instead of release them to kingdom currency and transformation. You see the reason that generosity provides a good foundation to the future is not because it earns eternal life but because it shows where your hope is.

Generosity speaks not of your heart but of your confidence in what you are investing in. The word of God says charge the rich not to set their hopes on uncertain riches but set them on God, I Timothy 6.14. We don't earn eternal life, it is a gift of God. We receive it by resting in God's promise but how we use our money confirms or denies the reality of where we are resting.

How is your rest this morning? Resting in the promises of God releases money for missions and makes the soul more sure of heaven. It walks us through the valley of lost jobs and takes us over the peak of despair when everything is collapsed. You see I believe with all of my heart that God wants us in this generation that we are living in to put on a wartime status, a lifestyle that says we understand what we are dealing with and we are ready to fight.

There is a wealth of prosperity and name it, claim it doctrine afoot today. It has been shaped by half truths. These half truths, now listen to me, you have never seen me read before but I don't want to miss a thing this morning.

These half truths say this, we glorify God with our money by enjoying thankfully all of the things He has enabled us to buy. Why should a son or a daughter of the king live like a pauper? Now the true half of this is that we should thank God for every good thing we have according to I Timothy. The false half is the subtle implication that God can be glorified by all kinds of luxurious purchases because we have to keep up with the Joneses.

That is a lie. Luxury is the heart right with God. Lust is the heart seeking the things of the world.

Now Jesus would not have said in His words through Luke in chapter 12 verse 33, sell your possessions and give them away. He would not have said do not seek what you eat and what you drink. John the Baptist would not have said he who has two coats let him share with him who has none.

The son of man would not have walked around with no place to lay his head and Zacchaeus would not have given half of his goods to the poor if they did not understand that wealth was the heart not the billfold. Where is your wealth today? God is not glorified when we keep for ourselves no matter how thankfully we do so. What we ought to be using to alleviate the misery of the unevangelized, uneducated, unmedicated, unfed millions that dwell in the nations around the world.

And I am not just talking about over there somewhere. I am talking about within a two mile radius of Mount Zion Baptist Church. When we withhold all that we have to eliminate the ability to reach these people, we are saying in evidence that many professing Christians have deceived themselves by the doctrine of I need to hold on because I cannot trust God.

God has greatly prospered you, the church in America. You look around a minute. Just take a minute and look around.

Just look. I am serious. Turn around and look at each other.

Reach down and feel the padded pew you are sitting on. Reach out and put your hands out. They are not frozen like they are in most churches in Tibet or Nepal or the cold regions of the world where there is no heat.

We have climate control conditions. I don't have to raise my voice if I talk with a whisper. They control my voice by the mechanism of a sound system.

We have surround sound. Go out and get in your cars and you can drive comfortably a hundred miles or eight hundred miles today. Then you can do it with an abundance of funds because if you don't have the cash you can put it on a credit card.

We are the only nation on earth that has had that in human history in the abundance that we have it. And yet what we are doing today is we are panicking because the economic downturn has snatched the rug out from under us. You see, we literally have been baptized by a doctrine of health wealth and prosperity.

We have brought bigger and more houses, newer and more cars, fancier and more clothes, better and more meat and all manner of trinkets and gadgets and containers and devices and equipment to make our lives more fun. And what I want to suggest this morning is that we take what God is allowing to come to us, what has come down the pike and we shift out of the clothing of the luxury of our lifestyles and put on the mantle of the warfare lifestyle and attack the very gates of hell with a sacrificial life today like you have never attacked the gates of hell in all of human history. I mean a lifestyle that is unencumbered with the non-essentials.

I don't mean a primitive simplicity. I mean a wartime effectiveness. I mean a Spartan commitment to maximize everything for what? For the Kingdom of God to come in America and in the nations of the earth.

It sure has gotten quiet in this place this morning. A glad-hearted, Christ-like austerity that can see His imminent victory and will make any sacrifice for the joy of being on the cutting edge of God's Kingdom will have the very prominent presence of the joy of the Lord and they'll overflow whether they have a job or

whether they have a house or not. I listened to a man yesterday, a man who has pastored for many, many years, a man who entered into a life of faith just a few years ago.

I listened to him as he stood with an abounding, overflowing, abundant joy and told a group of people, my wife and I have lost our home and everything this last year. And they have. I've walked with them through it.

They're waiting on foreclosure. They soon will be kicked out of their home. But I saw a man with greater joy than I have seen in the 45 years that I have known him.

As he said, I have discovered the joy of living in the shelter of God's covenant-keeping grace. He says, I don't know where tomorrow is going to take me, but I know who's going to take me there. I don't know where I will live, but day before yesterday someone came up and offered me a three-bedroom, two-bath house, no rent, just pay the utilities.

And he says, I can afford that. So when I'm kicked out, I've got a place to go. He's beginning to learn to strip down to war-style living.

You see, there is a war going on. Many of us do not realize this. All talk of Christian rights to live luxuriously as a child of the king in the atmosphere that we live in today is hollow rhetoric, especially since the king himself was stripped, battered, bruised, beaten, and finally died naked on a cross.

I want you to test yourself. I'm taking the test for Glenn. I'm not preaching at you.

I'm talking to us. Hear me with all of your heart. I want you to test yourself this morning.

Where do you fit into the three levels of Ephesians 4.28, which says, Let no thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his hands, so that he may be able to give those in need. Level one, you can steal to get. Now, you say, I wouldn't think of that.

Are you tithing? If you're not, you're stealing from God. Are you giving when the Holy Spirit tells you to? You say, but I can't. I've got car payments.

My SUV that I bought for \$49,000 will be taken away if I don't make the payments. I can't tithe to my church. There's a second level that I want you to look at.

You can work to get. Oh, I like that. That fits the American mentality.

Give to get. Get all you can, can all you get, sit on the linch so nobody can take it from you. That's the mentality that we live in today.

You can either steal or you can work to get. Of course I believe in the work to get. That's the right mentality, you say.

There's a third level, though, and it's the deep biblical level. It's what Paul was talking about there in Ephesians when he said, so that you may be able to give to those in need. You can work to get in order to give.

You see, you get to give to get, to give to get to give. Do you see the difference? Some people get to give. Some people get to give to get.

But it always has to be give to get to give to get to give to get to give. What are you going to do with what God's given you? Now, there are some people sitting here this morning, some of you have lost jobs. Some of you, like my friend, and he is a dear friend, he will be thrown out of his house somewhere between now and June 1. It's in the process.

The foreclosure is already done. He's had to declare himself bankrupt of everything. He can't make it any longer.

It's all over with. His credit is ruined. But boy, his joy is overflowing.

Do I advise you to go to that extreme? No. I advise you that while you have it, you obey God and you get to give in order that you bless others. Too many Christians live on level 2, working to get and to keep.

Almost all of the forces of our culture urge us to live on this level. But the Bible pushes us relentlessly to level 3. God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance. Why? So that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work.

Paul said it in 2 Corinthians 9. That's level 3. Enough for us, abundance for others. That's what John Wesley was talking about. Make all you can, give all you can.

Ask God. See, God is not opposed to wealth. God is opposed to wealth that you think is yours, that you hold on to, that you control.

Abraham was the richest man of his day. He was the Bill Gates of his day. Bill is the richest man on the face of the earth today.

Abraham was that. And Abraham was considered a friend of God. God did not need a rich friend.

God owns the cattle on a thousand hills. The psalmist says the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof and they that dwell therein. It's not a matter, if you please, listen to me now, it's not a matter of whether you have a lot or have a little.

It's a matter of your obedience to the one who has your heart. And if you have a lot, you'll be biblically obedient to God. Stewardship will be a normal way of life.

You ask the Lord for divine directions. Oh, if I had another two hours with you this morning, I'm going to take just a minute and give you a couple of practical dimensions. But you see, what we need to do is with over two and a half billion people in our world today that are outside of Jesus Christ, over two-thirds of those who have not had a viable Christian witness in their culture, if they are to hear, then God commands us, the command, it's not an option, it's not a suggestion, commands us that we are to empty our hearts until the world is evangelized.

This is the first generation in human history that has been able to do this. A group of campus crusaders a few years ago dreamed up the idea of having internet missionaries. Now I want you to know they have 3,600 today.

They're seeing 5,000 people, 10,000 people a month come to Jesus Christ. And you can go on Google Earth and find the little globe, and that globe when it first started a few years ago was turning very slow, but every time one of those missionaries reported a new convert, they'd put a yellow dot and the globe would then turn very slow. Today it's beginning to spin faster and faster.

I pray that because of the sacrifice of the church in America in its divine destiny today, it will begin literally to spin to a dizzying pace. But it's going to cost us everything. See, I'm not asking you this morning just for a tithe, I'm asking you for your heart.

You bring your billfold to the altar and you don't bring your heart to the altar and you'll go away bitter. But if you come, as Paul said, and present your body a living sacrifice, what happens is God gives you a new heart. Then you give out of the joy and the delight of giving.

You see, a \$100,000 salary does not have to be accompanied by a \$100,000 lifestyle. And for those of you who that makes nervous a little bit, I want you to understand something. I realize today a \$100,000 salary is not a gigantic salary anymore in our culture.

For many of you it might be, for some of you it won't be. For some of you who are retired, you say, oh, if I could just have half of that, I could make ends meet. That's neither here nor there.

You can say \$50,000 or \$25,000. God is calling us to be conductors of or conduits through which His presence, His grace flows, not cul-de-sacs where we pull up and park and live in resting Zion. Our great danger today is thinking that the conduit that we have been called to be has to be lined with gold.

Copper is sufficient. I'll assure you may the Lord continue to release unprecedented favor in our nation. May He continue to speak into our hearts in such a way in these desperate days of financial crisis that we begin to say, God, not my will but Thine be done.

But it's going to mean that some of us have to put on a warfare lifestyle. We're going to have to say, God, I dethrone money. I enthrone You.

And you say, how do you dethrone money? How do you stomp on money? How do you take the lust out of it, the greed for it? How do you capture that? How do you turn carnal cash into eternal currency? How do you make master of mammon? You give it away. You give it to the king of kings and you let him take the things out of it. You let him disperse it to the world.

Now I want to ask an honest question and I don't have time to do all I'd like to do this morning, but I want to ask an honest question. I've spoken to you pastorally this morning out of a heart that loves you very deeply. How are you dressed and what are you willing to do? Your church is not the only one.

Everywhere that I go. Our ministry has suffered this year more desperately than we... Do not hear this as an appeal. I made a condition when I came with Chris.

I said, Chris, I'm going to be in town. Would you just let me preach if you need me? I'll be glad to. No offering, no nothing.

I don't want a thing. I don't want you handing me any money. I want you to listen to God and hand God money.

I want you to say, God, I want to put off the adornment of the wealth and the luxury of my lifestyle and I want to put on the adornment of the glory of God and I want to get caught up in my area of stewardship to my church, to my missions, to a missionary that I'm committed to. God, I repent. I'm sorry.

I have been hoarding and holding on to things. Now, if we begin to do that, your church and multiplied hundreds and maybe thousands of others across metro Atlanta and across the United States of America

will have turned a corner. You say, well, what if we don't hold on to something for tomorrow? Are you going to trust God for tomorrow or are you going to trust something for tomorrow? It's a pretty penetrating question.

I know. I've had to live there. I understand.

I really do. If God does not make provision, when we got to the point of getting ready to do the thing in Nepal, I said, God, I don't know that we should even think about it. Why should we? Let me tell you about it.

I sent a little word out and I want you to know something. \$9,000 came from a woman who used to be a Muslim in Shelbyville, Tennessee. I've never met her.

I've never seen her. I've yet to meet her. Her husband is an active Muslim today and she gave everything that she could dig out of three purses in cash to one of my friends and they delivered it to us and it came like that.

God touched their heart and she unshackled what she was burdened by. Oh, I'll tell you how we ought to do this thing this morning. The invitation ought not to be just an invitation for you to come here and bow.

Some of you ought to come here and lay money down, lay billfolds down, lay checkbooks down, lay your heart down, lay your children down, lay the wealth of the luxury of your security down and say, God, I refuse to be mastered by mammon any longer. I will conquer it. It is Yours, God, it's Your problem.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/22/SID22254.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/glenn-sheppard/turning-carnal-cash-into-kingdom-currency/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net