

Make Money Your Slave

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being faithful with money as a reflection of our faithfulness to God. It highlights the need to be wise and generous in handling finances, to avoid being conceited or placing hope in uncertain riches, and to prioritize God's kingdom first. The teaching stresses the balance of enjoying God's blessings while being rich in good works, ready to share, and generous to the poor, following the example of Jesus and biblical principles.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 8:18, 1 Timothy 6:17, John 13:29, Romans 13:8, Proverbs 3:9

Topics: "Faithfulness in Finances", "Generosity and Stewardship"

Description

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Transcript

By thinking of how you can become the man God wants you to be, I think there's a lot of disappointment in God's heart with many, many born-again children of His. And it's not just, you know, we thought in the first, in the earlier message of how we stand before the Lord empty-handed and feel we've wasted a lot of our life. But that's just thinking of ourselves personally.

Man is basically a selfish creature, so we have to appeal to his selfishness, in a sense, to make him yield himself to God, saying, hey, listen, you're going to miss out in eternity. You're going to have regret in eternity. But when we look at the broader view, not just think of selfish, or what I'm going to miss out in eternity, think of what God is losing in the church, because we are not what we should be.

That's the broader view. It's something God wants to do on earth through His church, and He wants to do it through human beings, and that we let Him down. It's a great tragedy, what has happened throughout human history.

You read that the churches, people like Paul and Peter and all planted powerful, mighty men of God. And yet, Paul tells one of those churches, the best church he planted, I think, was Ephesus. And, he spent three years there, more than he spent anywhere else.

And when he's about to leave, he calls the elders together in Acts chapter 20, Acts 20, he calls the elders of Ephesus in verse 17. He was in a place called Miletus, and he sent for the elders in Ephesus to come to him. I don't know how many there were, maybe four or five elders, I don't know how large the church was, maybe a couple of hundred people perhaps.

He calls the elders of Ephesus, and he tells them his example, how he lived, how he testified, how zealous he was, it says in verse 31, for three years, every night and every morning I preached to you. Now, if that is literally true, Paul preached 2,000 sermons, imagining listening to 2,000 sermons of the Apostle Paul, or even if it was 1,000 sermons in three years, day and night he preached and they saw him shedding tears. What was he shedding tears for? Nothing for himself, he was concerned about God's church.

It's an amazing thing when a man has such a concern for God's church, that he sheds tears that people are not responding the way they should, like Jesus wept over Jerusalem. When we come in fellowship with Jesus' heart, there will be tears, grown men will shed tears, because there were tears in Jesus' eyes when he thought of God's people drifting away, Jerusalem backslidden. And Paul had that too.

He says, I admonished each one of you with tears. He felt sorry how the Lord's work would suffer, how they would miss out personally and God's work would suffer. Many of God's prophets were like that.

You know, Jeremiah once said, I want you to turn to Jeremiah, and he was a man who preached fiery sermons. He says, when he preached, verse 8 of Jeremiah 20, verse 8, Jeremiah 20, verse 8, each time I speak, I cry aloud, I proclaim violence and destruction. Because the word of the Lord has resulted in reproach and derision all day long.

They made fun of him, even though he was God's prophet. And if I say I will not remember him anymore, his word is like a fire in my bones, I can't hold it. And yet, every side I hear people whispering terror on every side, denounce him.

Yes, let's denounce him. All my trusted friends are watching for my fall. But the Lord is with me.

It's a great word, verse 11, whenever we are opposed by others to say the Lord is with me, verse 11, a dread champion. Therefore my persecutors will not stumble and prevail, they'll be utterly ashamed. And in an earlier chapter, he says how, I think it's chapter 15 perhaps, well, I'm not able to find that verse, but he says, if you don't listen to me, I'll weep for you.

That's how David to Paul was. But turning back to Acts chapter 20, he looks at these people for whom he has wept and preached and prayed. And he says to them, finally, I'm going now.

Verse 29, it's a very important verse, a place where Paul had preached for three years, poured out his heart, preached hundreds of sermons, wept, they saw his compassion. And he says, I know that after my departure, verse 29, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Those savage wolves were waiting outside the door and they couldn't enter because of one man, Paul.

God's work throughout history has very often been done by one man. It was one man, Enoch, it was one man, Noah, who saved the whole world. In the Old Testament, it is very often one prophet turned Israel back to God, Elijah, one man.

It says in Elijah's time, you know that verse where the Lord told him there are 7,000 men in Israel who have not bowed down to Baal or kissed his idol. But those 7,000 men couldn't bring the fire down from

heaven. 7,000 men, not one of them could bring fire down from heaven because God would not approve of them.

But they had not bowed down to idols. Their testimony was negative, like the testimony of many Christians today. I've not bowed down to Beal.

No, I haven't done this, I haven't done this, I haven't done that, I haven't done this. I don't go to the movies, I don't drink, I don't gamble, I don't play cards, I don't hit my wife, I don't do this, I don't do that. What in the world do you do? You know the list of 100 things you don't do, 7,000 people who don't do all those things.

But one man, Elijah, you know what his testimony was, his testimony was not I don't do this. He says in 1 Kings 17, as the Lord God lives before whom I stand, his testimony was positive. I stand before the Lord.

One man turned that nation towards God. And it was one man that kept the wolves outside, and the wolves were waiting outside in Ephesus and Paul's time saying, well, Paul's not going to be here forever, once he's gone we can easily get in. And these other fellows are, we can run over them.

Isn't it sad that the devil says like that about many a church? He's just waiting for that one man to go, and then he can walk right in. That's why Paul was burdened that the next generation there should be people like Timothy, others who did not seek their own. And not only the wolves would come in, he says in Acts 20 and verse 30, from among your own selves, think of these five elders sitting in front of Paul and says, from you brothers who heard and seen me, some of you will draw disciples after yourself to make your own little group.

It's happened in many churches. It happened in this church. It happened in Ephesus.

But that didn't hinder God's work. God's work still went on. It's gone on for 20 centuries.

So what if some people draw disciples after them and pull off and start another group? Let them do it. Paul would still have a Timothy. Timothy went to Ephesus later on to try and do something there.

Be a man like Timothy. Be a man like Paul. That's my challenge to you.

Don't be like these wishy-washy elders who are seeking to get a following for themselves, seeking to get a name. I want a group that's my own. And if I can't get enough prominence in this church, I'll pull out and start another group on my own and be the sole leader there without any Paul to come and tell me what to do.

I don't want Paul's interference here. Okay. God bless you, brother.

We're not in competition. Paul was not in competition with anybody. But do you think God will bless a work like that where these elders draw away disciples after themselves and the wolves are going to get after them? Sure.

But isn't it a wonderful thing if God can find in every generation, in every country, in every state, men whom he can depend on, who do not seek their own, who are not seeking to exalt themselves, who are not dominating people, and above all, who are not interested in any gain for themselves. The world is full of people who seek gain. Yesterday I was speaking about Babylon and Jerusalem.

And I was saying that Babylon is a place of business and the principle of all businesses. How can I get the maximum gain for myself? It's spending the least amount of effort and time and money. It's the principle of all business.

How can I get maximum gain for myself and my family? Every business in the world operates like that. And when that spirit comes into Christendom, where an elder is seeking honor for himself, may not be money, but some honor, it's Babylon. Whereas Jerusalem, I said yesterday that it's a place of sacrifice.

If you went into the temple, the first thing you see is blood, blood, blood everywhere, because the altar is there, where they were killing the oxen and the sheep and the goats and all. What you see is blood. The choice between Babylon and Jerusalem is a place of business or a place of sacrifice.

Unfortunately, the church has become a place of business for many people. Pastors who profit from the earnings of poor people sitting in their pews and taking their money saying, I have to do God's work, you must support me, and God will bless you, because I need to buy this private twin-engine plane to travel. I don't have time to wait in lines in the airport through security check and all that to go.

Lord's work needs urgency. I need a twin-engine plane to take me immediately. I go and get into the plane, go and come back.

Who's going to pay for it? You folks. God will bless you if you do it. There's a racket going on.

What did Jesus do when he saw people making money like that in the temple in his time? He took a whip and chased them out. It's the only time he did that. See that example in John chapter 2. It's mentioned in Luke also, but there are some details here in John chapter 2 which are not mentioned there.

John 2.14, he found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves. Now there were people selling oxen and sheep and doves in the marketplace in Jerusalem. Perfectly legal.

You go to that seller and say, are you making profit out of selling these sheep and doves? Sure. How can I live if I don't make a profit? I'm not doing a social service here. I'm running a business.

You go to Jesus in his carpenter shop in Nazareth and say, Lord Jesus, do you sell your tables and chairs and all at cost price? That means whatever you spend on the wood, that's all you charge your customers? Jesus said, no, I have to add a commission to it. Otherwise, how will I support my four brothers and two sisters and my widowed mother at home? It's perfectly right to add a commission to your work. Otherwise, no business will run.

Business is not charities. Jesus wasn't running a charity in Nazareth in his carpenter shop. It's perfectly right.

But not in the house of God. That's the difference. In the marketplace in Jerusalem, sell as many sheep and doves as you like.

And run your business and get your commission and support your family. But when you bring that into the house of God and say, here, I follow that same principle the businessman follows in the world, it's Babylon. And Jesus, it says here, listen to this.

Have you ever meditated on this verse? He made a scourge of cords, John 2.15. He told his disciples, hey, go and get me some bits of rope, wherever you can find it. And they're going together and wondering,

what is the master want rope for? And he sits down there and he sees them. Can you imagine this going on? I've never seen it in a movie of Jesus.

Jesus sitting down and making this whip of cords. And the disciples wondering, what's he doing? And when he's made it nice and strong, he chases out all those sheep and doves and turns the coins of the money changers. This is the meek and gentle Jesus.

He doesn't go to them and say, will you gentlemen please remove your money from the table, money from here. No. He turns it.

He's so furious. This is how God looks at anyone who tries to make money for himself in the house of God. Or who looks at anyone who tries to build up his own reputation.

Whether you're building your financial kingdom or your reputation is the same thing. He'll chase you out. The house of God is not the place for you to gain something for yourself.

That is Babylon. Go and do that in the marketplace. I won't stop you.

Go into politics and get a name for yourself. Go into the scientific field and invent something, get a name for yourself. But don't come to the house of God and try to gain something for yourself.

And yet as we look around in Christendom, that's what we see. Everywhere. And that's why the church is in such a pathetic state.

We saw the danger of humility. There's a danger of pride. I want you to speak a little bit about the danger of money.

Turn with me to Luke's Gospel and Chapter 16. Luke's Gospel, Chapter 16. It's a very important verse.

Verse 11. If you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth. Mammon is an Aramaic Greek word for wealth.

Mammon. If you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth. Or I'd say money which has got nothing to do with God's work.

You have not been faithful with money. Who will entrust the true riches to you? So what do you learn from that? That God sees whether a man is faithful with money. He's watching.

His children. To see whether he can commit true riches to that person. What are true riches? Likeness to Jesus Christ.

God will make a man more like Christ. He's faithful with money. The anointing of the Holy Spirit.

In his ministry. Those are true riches. Why do we hear so many boring sermons? On YouTube and in churches.

Hundreds and thousands of boring sermons. I know the reason. Even if you don't.

Those guys are not faithful with money. The anointing of the Holy Spirit is not there. Even though they speak of being filled with the Spirit.

What are the true riches? Thirdly, revelation on God's word. I don't mean intellectual understanding of God. I mean revelation.

When God shows you something from a verse. That you never saw before. And that nobody else saw.

Oh wow! Is that what that verse says? Sin shall not have dominion over you. No sin can rule over me. Imagine getting revelation on that.

That anger cannot rule me anymore. Sexually dirty ways of thinking cannot rule me anymore. No sin can rule me.

Bitterness, complaining, grumbling. Sin cannot rule over you. Romans 6.14 It's one thing to read it.

You can memorize it. But it's quite another thing to get revelation. Those are the true riches.

And when people don't get the true riches. I know the reason. Whenever I hear a boring preacher.

I know that guy is not faithful with money. I don't need to know anything about his private life. He is not faithful with money.

Because if he were. God would have given him the true riches. The anointing of the spirit.

Revelation on God's word. Increasing likeness to Christ. He would have got all that.

So dear brothers. You want to be the man of God. God wants you to be.

Be faithful with money. And he goes on to say in verse 13. No, let's go to verse 12.

If you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's. Who will give you what is your own? You got to understand that verse. What is another's money? You think you earned it by your hard work.

God says no, it's mine. You thought it was yours. It's one of the great revelations I got.

When I was working as a naval officer. Earning a lot of money. The Lord said it's not your money.

It's mine. I thank God I understood that at a very young age. I tell you how I learned it.

There was a person who was converted from Catholicism. He would come to me and say. Brother Zach, can you loan me some money.

I'll return it next month. So I obeyed the scripture which says. Give to everyone that asks of you.

I was 23 years old. Next month he'd come and say. Oh, I'm sorry brother, I couldn't return it.

Can you give me some more. I'll return it next month. Sure, give to everyone that asks of you.

I'd give it. Next month the same old story. And I had the same words.

Give to everyone that asks of you. And from him that borrowed. Borrow if you turn not away.

I give it. He got such a lot of money from me. Never returned it.

And later on he was transferred somewhere else. And I heard he was gone into drinking. He had backslidden.

When I heard that. Then I wrote him a letter. I said hey.

If you're gonna take my money and give it to the devil. With all your alcohol, drinking alcohol. Then you better return it.

I can give it to somebody else. And he got so angry with me. He said.

Those priests never harass me like you are harassing me for money. I said okay. Keep it.

Then I went to the Lord. And I said Lord, what did I do wrong? I obeyed your verse. Give to everyone that asks of you.

That's when the Lord gave me a revelation. That was not your money. You thought it was yours.

And you could give it away. And I got a picture in my mind. Supposing somebody else had given me 5,000 rupees to keep.

Rupees is Indian currency. And somebody comes to keep. It's his money.

And somebody comes to me and says. Hey Zack, I heard you got 5,000 rupees. Can you give me some of that? And I say oh sure.

How much do you want? I wouldn't do it. I would say hang on. It's not my money.

Somebody else. I've got to ask him. That's what the Lord taught me.

All the money in the world belongs to God. Including what I earn as my monthly salary. I must know that first.

Then give to him who asks of you. I must ask the owner. I did not ask the owner.

And that's why I kept losing money. You remember when the devil quoted a verse to Jesus. The devil can quote a verse to you.

Give to everyone who asks of you. But when the devil quoted a verse to Jesus. Jesus said it is also written.

I had to say it is also written. 1 Corinthians 10.26 Everything on earth belongs to God. Nothing is mine.

So when I put both verses together. I get the truth. The whole truth is not contained in it is written.

It is contained in it is written. And it is also written. So.

That which is another's. Money is God's. I need to recognize that.

Who will give you that which is your own? What is my own? What do I inherit? Nature of Christ. That's for me. So if I recognize what is another's.

And say Lord this is yours. God will give me what he has planned for me. Which is the nature of Jesus Christ.

The anointing of the Holy Spirit. And revelation on God's word. So it is very very important.

If you want to be the man. God wants you to be. Be faithful with money.

Verse 13. No one can serve two masters. He will hate the one.

And love the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. So according to that.

I must hate wealth. I need to understand that properly. Earlier on in Luke 14.

He said you must hate your father and mother. And your wife and children. What does that mean? It doesn't mean I got to throw them away.

So when he says hate wealth. It doesn't mean you got to throw it away. Just like you don't have to throw away your father and mother.

And your wife and your children. What does it mean to hate your father and mother. And wife and children.

Relative to your love for me. The Lord says. And explained in Matthew 10.

If you love them more than me. Compared to the scripture of the scripture. You are not worthy of me.

So the word hate. Used in Luke 14. Verse 26.

Is in relation to the love for Christ. In other words. In relation to Jesus Christ.

Who is like the bright shining sun. When the stars disappear. And the sun rises.

In the same way. Your love for your family members and all. Must fade.

When you see your love for Christ. In other words. Christ's love is supreme in your life.

In the same way. Your money fades into insignificance. When you see Christ.

You don't have to throw it away. You can keep it. It's very useful.

Money is very useful. Money is very useful as a servant. But not as a master.

Just make sure it doesn't become your master. Money is a very useful servant. But a very cruel master.

On earth they put crowns on people's heads. Gold is on people's heads. Do you know there is gold in heaven? Where is it? Under our feet.

If you have learned to put gold under your feet. You are ready to go to heaven. Because there gold is under people's feet.

If gold is on your head. You need to work it out and bring it down below your feet. That's the mark of a God-fearing man.

He doesn't throw away his gold. He keeps it under his feet. It's good to have a servant at home in your business.

If you have a servant. You can do a lot of work with that servant. And if in your business you employ ten servants.

Oh, you can do so much more. So if you earn a lot of money. It's like having many servants.

But don't let any of them become your master. Very important. You cannot serve God and money.

So how to determine who is your master? Easy. Here is God. And here is money.

God calls me and money calls me. Who do I respond to? Here is one man who says, Zack is my servant. Here is a chap who says, No, Zack is my servant.

Okay, test. Both of you call Zack. Hey Zack, come here.

Who do I go to? I am his servant. Very easy. And when I hear the call of God and the call of money.

The one I respond to. Is The one whose servant I am. So does that mean that You know we have some wrong ideas about God.

That God always wants his people to be poor. If you have an option for two jobs. The lesser one.

The one where you get less salary. That must be God's will. These are the crazy ideas that people have.

That God is a spoiled sport. Who is here to ruin you. And make your life as miserable as possible.

God is a loving father. If you had a loving father and you asked his opinion. Dad, I have got an offer for two jobs.

Both equally good. One has got more salary and one has got less salary. What will your dad say? I know what I will tell my children.

Take the one with the higher salary. Sure. Cost of living is going up.

Why should you take the lower salary? You can provide more for your children. There is nothing wrong in having a little comfort. So I don't believe that If you choose the lesser salary you are spiritual.

If it is at the cost of spiritual things. Then it is. Not otherwise.

See in the Old Testament. This is what Moses said. In Deuteronomy chapter 8. They had wandered in the wilderness.

For many years. And then God brought them into the land of Canaan. And Moses is warning them.

When you get into that land. Deuteronomy 8 verse 9. A land where you will eat food without any scarcity. In which you will not lack anything.

A lot of people have migrated to the United States. Something like coming from The wilderness to Canaan. Financially.

Eat food without scarcity. Verse 9. Lack nothing. Financially.

And when you are eaten. Verse 10. Satisfied.

Don't forget to thank the Lord. And There is a danger. When your finances increase.

Verse 13. When your bank account increases. And it multiplies.

That your heart will become proud. And you will forget the Lord your God. Who brought you there.

And don't say. Verse 17. That my power and my cleverness.

My ability. Enabled me to get this job. That's why I got selected for this job.

Because I'm clever. I'm smart. Not like those other guys who got rejected.

And that now I'm earning this salary. But you shall remember. Verse 18.

It is the Lord your God. Who gave you that ability. To earn that money.

Don't ever forget that. My brothers and sisters. Maybe you grew up in this country.

Maybe your parents migrated here. In order to earn more money. Live better.

But don't ever forget those words. In Deuteronomy chapter 8. Many people who live here. Their ancestors migrated here.

There's nobody in this room. Who originally lived in the United States. Before 1500s.

There was another tribe living here. Yeah. Don't forget.

That it is God. Who enabled you to earn. And honor him.

And so. The Lord told them. To pay their tithes.

In the Old Testament. Deuteronomy 14. And verse 23.

Do you know that they were permitted to eat. Of the tithe. The tithe was not money.

The tithe was. Food and. Sheep and all that.

They could eat it. Themselves. Many people don't know that.

It's one of the provisions. That the Lord said. You can go.

To go to Jerusalem. And you can eat it. You shall.

Verse 22. Deuteronomy 14. You shall surely tithe.

All the produce. From what you sow. And comes out of the field.

And you shall eat. In the presence of the Lord. Your God.

At the place. Which he has chosen. To establish.

His name. Eat. The tithe of your grain.

And eat. The tithe of your wine. And your oil.

And eat. The firstborn of your flock. So that you may learn.

To fear the Lord. Your God. Always.

And. I like the Living Bible. Paraphrase of this.

Verse. The last part. The purpose of tithing.

Is to teach you. To put God. First.

Always. That's the last part of that verse. The purpose of tithing.

Is to teach you. To put God. First.

Always. Did they understand that? No. They just gave that tithe.

And said. Okay. My obligation to God is over.

Now I live for myself. In the New Testament. There's no command to tithe.

Because the Bible says. Everything is God's. And what does it mean to be faithful with money? It's different from being righteous with money.

Righteous is the lowest level. Faithfulness is more than that. There are three levels with money.

Unrighteous. Righteous. Faithful.

And he was not just talking about righteous. There are many people in the world. Who are righteous with money.

What does that mean? That means. I pay back all the people. I've cheated in the past.

That's righteousness. Like Zacchaeus. He made a list of all the people.

He. Had cheated. And he went back and paid four times.

Because he had a sharp mind. That calculated interest. And he said.

I took it from them years ago. By this time. They would have got two or three times.

Okay. That's to be on the safe side. Let me give them four times.

Of what he took. Can you imagine this? Zacchaeus going to these houses of people. And saying.

Hey. I cheated you. Some years ago.

Here's four times. The news gets around. That Zacchaeus is giving four times.

And some people say. I wish Zacchaeus had cheated me. I would have made more profit.

I just put it in a bank. And. There were a lot of other people.

Who Zacchaeus didn't even know their address. Where are they today? They moved. He didn't say.

Oh well Lord. I don't know their address. I'll keep it.

No. I'll give it to the poor. That's why he said.

Half my goods. I'll give to the poor. There are lots of people.

I don't know. I don't know where they are. I can't keep that money.

It's not mine. I cheated other people. But I don't know where they are.

I give it to the poor. Or I say. Today you can give it in the offering box.

If you have cheated somebody. You don't know where he is. Put it in the offering box.

Because. 1 Corinthians 10.26 says. Everything on the earth.

Belongs to the Lord. All the money on earth. Belongs to the Lord.

And so. If I can't give it to this person. Whom I cheated from.

Who was temporarily guarded from God. I give it back to the original owner. The original owner is God himself.

That's why I say put it in the offering box. Because everything on the earth. All the money.

All the earth contains. Belongs to the Lord. That's what the New Testament Christian recognizes.

My money is not my own. So. First righteous.

I give back all that I've cheated. And I don't get into trouble. I don't get into debt.

Because Romans 13 verse 8 says. Owe no man. Anything.

It doesn't say. Don't borrow. You got to read it exactly.

It says. Owe nothing to anyone. There's a difference between the two.

There may be circumstances. Where a poor person. I mean people have got plenty of money.

Don't need to worry about it. But there are many people in the world. Many God's people are poor.

And they suddenly are hit with a big hospital bill. Or some sudden expense. For their children's education or something.

They temporarily need to borrow. And that's permitted. But don't remain in debt.

Pay it back as soon as possible. That's the meaning of. Owe no man anything.

The Holy Spirit is exact in the words he uses. So that's righteousness. I first of all.

Pay back all the people I've cheated. And then. I. Give back whatever I borrowed.

As early as possible. And it doesn't matter. If you're not able to.

We must try our best to pay back every month. I remember a man wrote to me. In India.

And said Brother Zach. Poor man. He was an extremely poor laborer.

He said I somehow in my olden days. I borrowed 30,000 rupees. I don't know what for to drink or whatever it was.

He says now. How can I pay it back? 30,000 rupees is a massive amount of money for me. So I told him.

Can you pay back 10 rupees a month? I'm sure you can pay back 10 rupees a month. It'll only take you 250 years to pay back the whole amount. Just keep paying 10 rupees a month.

Now you're not going to live 250 years. You may die in 20 years. But God will see your heart.

That you wanted to pay it back. And it'll be accounted. As if you had paid it back.

That's the God I serve. He was so happy. He was released.

Till then he was paying back nothing. Because the amount was so huge. So I said pay back what you can.

Show God that you want to stay out of debt. That's righteousness. And I want to clarify that.

A mortgage on a house is not a debt. Because if you put it in a balanced house. And the money you borrow is equal.

There's no debt there. If you die your wife can sell the house. And there's no debt.

A loan for a car is not a debt. If you've insured it for the same amount. Debt is where you borrow something.

Maybe foolishly to go on a vacation. I would never borrow money to go on a vacation. I'd rather sacrifice the vacation.

Vacation is not essential. It's not like a medical emergency. Or an educational need for our children.

There's so much foolishness in this area of money. I tell you. People borrow money to go on a vacation.

Can you think of anything more crazy than that? My wife and I were very poor for many years. I think we had one vacation in about 20 years. We didn't suffer.

I tell you we didn't suffer. Believe it or not. We enjoyed ourselves thoroughly.

We'd visit our parents. That was our vacation. You know, the grandchildren would go there.

Spend a couple of weeks there. And a couple of weeks with her parents, my parents. That was our vacation.

The rest of the time we just enjoyed each other. But you wouldn't borrow. No, I mean if you can afford it, sure.

Do what you like. But remember. All your money is God's.

Don't ever forget that. So faithfulness is recognizing all my money is God's. Now I have to use it the way God wants me to use it.

Can I use it to buy a little ice cream? Ice cream is not essential to live. But you think God wants us to use it for that? I'd say yes. I mean, not at my age.

It's not good for health. But for your children. Yes, certainly.

Because it says in what rich people should do with their money. Shall I tell you what the Bible says rich people should do? Did the early church have rich people? They certainly did. Because Paul writes to Timothy saying some instructions for rich people in 1 Timothy 6, 17.

Instruct those who are rich in this world. And I think a lot of that applies to a lot of people sitting here. I come from India and I know all of you are rich.

Instruct those who are rich in this present world. Number one. Don't be conceited.

Don't be proud because you are rich. Very, very possible. And don't fix your hope on these uncertain riches.

The stock market can crash. Don't fix your hope on these things. Banks can crash.

The value of money can go down. Things can get expensive. You may lose your job.

Don't fix your hope on uncertain riches. Fix your hope on God, your loving Father. If you seek His kingdom first, He will add everything to you without any lack.

And listen to this. He richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. That's why I said you can have ice cream.

He doesn't give us things just for survival. I like that. The Holy Spirit specifically used that word.

God's not against you having a few luxuries. I'll tell you that. If you need two cars in your house, get them.

Otherwise maybe your wife won't be able to move around if you're not at home. God has given us richly all things to enjoy, but something more. It doesn't stop there.

Learn to do good with your money. Be rich in good works. And be generous and ready to share.

And then you'll have a great foundation for the future. So the scriptures, the New Testament is so balanced in its teaching. But if you're faithful with money, you'll get true riches.

And God wants men of God who have got the riches of heaven and who can communicate that to others with the anointing of the Holy Spirit. It all depends on faithfulness. So there's a lot to say on that, but let me just show you one verse and then we'll finish for the time.

John 13, verse 29, is a verse from which the Lord gave you revelation on how we should spend our money. It doesn't appear as if it's a teaching on money here, but you know Judas Iscariot was about to go and betray Jesus. And Jesus told him, verse 27, John 13, 27, at the Last Supper, Satan entered into Judas Iscariot and Jesus said to him, what you're going to do, do quickly.

None of the other disciples knew why he said this to him. And listen to this. This is the verse I was thinking of.

Some were supposing that because Judas was the treasurer, he had the money box, Jesus was saying to him, buy the things we need off for the feast or else give something to the poor. Why did they think like that? Because all the three and a half years that they had seen Judas as a treasurer, whatever Jesus told them, the principle was two things. Buy what you need, give to the poor.

That's all. So from that I learned that that is how Jesus spent his money. Even when he was a carpenter.

And after all, when a lot of people gave him money because he was in the Lord's work, buy what you need and give to the poor. Now what do you need? Maybe you need three cars in your house. Or four if you have two children who are working.

Don't decide what other people need. Decide what you need. I don't even have one.

I had one for a while. I don't need one now. So what you need is an individual thing according to each person.

We are not here to judge another. Buy what you need and don't be a busybody in other people's matters. Maybe you need a five bedroom house.

Go ahead and get it. Maybe you can afford it. Maybe the other guy can only afford one bedroom house.

Okay. Buy what you need without judging others and remember to help the poor. And in this matter of giving to the poor, I come from a country where we have a lot of poor people.

And I'll tell you something. The wisdom we have learned in helping the poor in India. Every poor person would love to get money.

And wherever a poor person sees, this can happen here too. Oh here is a generous church where people are taught to give. They get attracted to that church like flies.

And they come and that's the way the devil can destroy your church. It's happened. It's happened in many places in India where foolish missionaries kept giving because the people were so poor.

And what was the result? When the missionary finally left that mission station, there was no church. There was not one godly man to continue the work. They were all people who came to the mission station to get money or to get an education for their children or to get medical treatment or some earthly benefit.

So in this giving to the poor also, one needs wisdom not just generosity. This is the example I use. Love must fill your gas tank but wisdom must be in the driver's seat.

Don't put love in the driver's seat. You may do many foolish things. Your heart must be filled with love but let wisdom drive the car to go where it should go.

So in the handling of money, there is a great need for wisdom because you can ruin people by giving them money. We need to give wisely. And there is a lot more to be said.

God will give you revelation as you continue. But if you want to be a man of God, remember this, be faithful with money. Many people in the Old Testament and New Testament have ruined themselves.

Balaam, Gehazi. Gehazi could have been the next prophet after Elisha. He could have got a double anointing from Elisha.

Instead he got leprosy because he went after money. Judas Iscariot. I believe personally Judas Iscariot was the man who could have written the Epistles because he was the most scholarly and clever in the world.

But he lost his crown. Paul got it. Many people have lost their crown through unfaithfulness in money.

So be careful. God has a great ministry for all of you. But if you are to fulfill it, it will never be fulfilled until you are absolutely faithful with money in some of the ways which I have spoken today.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, please help us to take seriously Amen.

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