

# Spiritual Riches Through Faithfulness With Money

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen's sermon teaches that faithfulness with money reflects our spiritual richness and relationship with God, emphasizing humility and obedience as keys to receiving grace.*

**Duration:** 1:17:42

**Scripture:** Romans 13:8

**Topics:** "Financial Stewardship", "Spiritual Discipline"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being faithful with money and living within one's means, highlighting the dangers of greed and the need to be generous towards God and others. It draws parallels between biblical examples like Achan, Gehazi, Judas Iscariot, Ananias, and Sapphira who faced consequences for their unfaithfulness with money. The speaker shares personal experiences of financial discipline and spiritual growth, encouraging listeners to seek spiritual riches by being faithful with finances.

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## Transcript

So we'll begin with the verses we've been memorizing these past few weeks. We'll start with the first one. We'll go quickly through them.

The first is a promise from Romans 6.14. Let's say it together. Sin shall not be master over you, for you're not under law, but under grace. And now make it personal.

Sin shall not be master over me, for I am not under law, but under grace. Dear brothers and sisters, keep confessing that to the devil, no matter how many times you fall, until a day comes when that becomes real in your life. Okay, the next is a commandment.

Let's say it together. Jesus said, He who has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him.

John 14.21. It's very easy when we sing songs of praise to God, like we did this morning, to fool ourselves that we love Jesus Christ. It's a deception. You know whether you love Jesus Christ when you go out from this building, and whether you obey God or not at home.

If you love your wife as Christ loved the church, if you submit to your husband as the church is to Christ, you bring up your children in the fear of God, you don't cheat or tell lies or steal in your place of work, you keep the commandments, you forgive your enemies, love them, bless them, then you love Jesus Christ. Otherwise you're in a deception. And you can't have his commandments unless you read the Bible.

If you don't read the Bible, you don't love Jesus Christ, because how will you have the commandments? Okay, the next verse. God causes all things to work together for good, to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose. Romans 8.28. That's not a promise for everybody.

The check is in the name of those who love God, who want to fulfill his purpose. Every single thing, small and big, will work for their good. That's why we give thanks.

Next one. Jesus said, every careless word that people speak, they shall give an account for it in the day of judgment, for by your words you'll be justified, by your words you'll be condemned. Matthew 12.36 and 37.

As I said, here's a verse that most Christians do not believe. They keep on speaking careless words, day after day after day after day. They don't believe.

They don't believe that one day, every single word they have spoken, they will give an account for it in the day of judgment. That is why I say, even if you speak one careless word, ask forgiveness from God, and from the people you spoke it to, immediately. That's the only way to get out of it.

The next is a promise. The Lord is my helper. I will not be afraid.

What will man do to me? That's something that takes out all fear from us for the future. Hebrews 13.6. The next one, a commandment. If you forgive others the wrongs they have done to you, your Father in heaven will also forgive you.

But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive the wrongs you have done. Please remember that all your life. And don't wait till your deathbed to forgive people.

Forgive immediately. Matthew 6.14.15 And the next is a promise. God is faithful, let's say together, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation will also provide a way of escape so that you may be able to endure it.

So we can never say in any situation that's becoming too much for me. Then we are saying that God is a liar, you are unfaithful. But no, God is faithful.

Never, never, never. Maybe we are not finding the way of escape. There is a way of escape in every situation.

If we humble ourselves and take up the cross and die, there is a way of escape. And God will control the pressures that we face, that they never become too much for us. That is our faith in God.

Provided we are seeking to live in God's will. Okay, then another commandment, which we saw last week. Let's say it together.

In everything give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5.18 We are going to make it personal. In everything I will give thanks, for this is God's will for me.

In everything I will give thanks, for this is God's will for me in Christ Jesus. These promises and commandments, brothers and sisters, the whole purpose of it is that we learn to walk like we put our left foot and right foot and left foot and right foot and left foot and right foot walk and that is how we progress with a promise and a commandment and a promise and a commandment we move forward in the Christian life. Okay, the verse for this Sunday is let's say it together.

The Lord Jesus says, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in your weakness. 2 Corinthians 12.9 It's a very familiar verse. Many of us have heard it.

Let's say it again. The Lord Jesus says, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in your weakness. 2 Corinthians 12.9 Even if you can't remember exact words, if you remember the concept and the truth, that's the important thing.

Okay. We read about grace just now. Thank you.

You can turn it off. In the Living Bible it says, My power shows up best in weak people. The weaker we are, the more we can have God's power.

The humbler we are, the more we get God's grace. Grace in the kingdom of God is exactly equal to money on this earth. People have a lot of money on this earth, can live very comfortably.

Others just scrape by, survive, and some die because they don't have enough money to take care of themselves. Now you translate that concept into God's kingdom. Those who don't have grace perish.

Those who get a little grace just scrape by in God's kingdom. Somehow or the other they survive. Most of the time defeated by sin, getting up, defeated, getting up.

That's like a beggar living in the slum. The exact picture of a beggar living in the slum in the kingdom of heaven is a believer who is defeated and getting up and defeated and getting up and defeated and getting up, scraping by and complaining and murmuring because he's not getting grace. He's getting a little bit, just a little bit, just like that poor man in the slum getting a little bit of money and sometimes he has to starve.

You would never want that, to live like that physically. I want to ask all of you, why do you want to live like that spiritually? When you'd never dream of you or your children wanting to live like that in a slum physically. Most believers are living in a spiritual slum because they're not getting enough grace.

There's grace and there's abundance of grace. Compare it with money in the world. There are people who have little money and plenty of money.

And there are people who have plenty of money who waste it, who have access to plenty of money and don't take it. Children who have inherited something, a large fortune from their parents but don't know how to use it. They waste it.

And there are lots of people like that who, it says, don't receive the grace of God in vain. It says in 2nd Corinthians 6. And so there are riches and there's grace and abundance of grace. Riches of grace.

I want to show you in Ephesians chapter 1. It speaks here about the, there are different type of riches and I want to show you, it says, speaks about the riches of His glory in Ephesians 1.18. And in chapter 2 verse 7, it says here that in the ages to come, that is in eternity, God wants to show the surpassing, it's not just

riches, surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. Do you know that in eternity God wants to make each of us a demonstration to the rest of the world that's going to be in heaven, whoever's there. And each case by case, it'll be like a case study.

Here is a man or here is a woman and the Lord says to all people in heaven, I want to show you what He was when I found Him. The gutter that He was in and see what He became before He ended His life. See how much He could do for me before He ended His life.

See what the riches of my grace could do in Him. Remember this, my brothers, you're going to be a case study in heaven and the Lord's going to be able to show to other people I hope He won't have to show, here's a person who just crept by because he was always complaining about other people instead of working out his own salvation with fear and trembling. I'll tell you this, one of the ways in which the devil keeps us defeated is by always showing us the faults of other people, maybe in the church.

Yeah, he'll show you all the faults of people in CFC and well, you'll be you'll be in the gutter yourself. So I decided that, I mean, when I was young I didn't have the wisdom, but now I have. I say, I'm not going to let the devil make me live in the gutter.

If there are people in the church who are hypocrites, let them be hypocrites, it doesn't make the slightest difference to me. Jesus sat for 30 years in the synagogues of Israel, Nazareth, surrounded by hypocrites. It never polluted Him one bit.

He didn't judge them, He didn't worry about them, He lived His own life before God, and that is my example. I can live in a synagogue full of hypocrites or a church full of hypocrites, and it will not affect me one bit. Jesus is my example.

If He could live 30 years without being without becoming impure, I can live. I believe that. That's the way to live.

So make sure that you yourself are going to be a trophy of God's grace one day. He wants to show forth, it says, in the ages to come, not just the drops of grace you got, but the exceeding riches of His grace and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. I want to make it personal.

Make it personal. That in eternal ages, God wants to take me up and show me to the universe and to the angels what He could accomplish by giving me riches of His grace which I received and received and received. And it's very simple.

We know that one law for receiving grace is to humble ourselves. God gives His grace to the humble. The humbler you are, the more you get.

If somebody's got more grace than you, one reason is he's humbler than you, whether you believe it or not, whether you like it or not. He is humbler than you. And that doesn't mean more gifted.

So very often, unfortunately, in Christendom, we evaluate people by gift. If somebody can preach well or sing well or do something well, we think he's great. That is stupidity.

Because Jesus said there are people who do miracles in His name. Miracles. To whom He will say, get away from me.

Go to hell. I don't even know you. But He'll never say that to a man who lived a godly life.

He will never say to a godly man on the final day, oh, you never did any miracles. Get away from me. No.

It's the one, it's in Matthew 7, 22. Somebody says, we did miracles in your name. We cast out demons in your name.

Get away from here. You lived in sin. It's very important, brothers and sisters, in our day when Christendom has become so corrupt, to understand what are the true values in God's kingdom.

What is going to matter in the final examination? What are the subjects that are going to come up in the final examination? Study for the subjects that come in the final examination. Just like you tell your children. That's what I tell you.

Study for the subjects that are coming in the final examination. Not gifts, but grace. Humility.

The character of Christ. Not healing and miracles. There's enough written in the scriptures to show us that that will not qualify you for God's kingdom.

So don't pursue that. That is only something God gives to serve us, to serve Him on earth. If God gives it to us, we use it.

If He doesn't give it to us, He's not going to ask us why we didn't have it. It's so relaxing for me. God's never going to ask me, why didn't you heal all the sick people? I say, Lord, you never gave me the gift.

Why didn't you do a few miracles, open some blind eyes and things like that? I say, Lord, you never gave me a gift. But He can certainly ask me, why didn't you overcome sin? That was not a gift. You just had to humble yourself.

I know what's going to come in the final examination. And I'm studying for that subject. I'm not wasting my life pursuing subjects that are not going to come for me in my final examination.

Grace is the important thing. The exceeding riches of His grace. And I told you also about the riches of His glory.

There are riches of His grace and riches of His glory. Both are mentioned here. We saw that, the riches of His grace in chapter 2, and verse 7. And it also, a number of times, for example, Philippians 4.19. It says, My God will supply all your need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4, verse 19. My God will supply all your need according to His riches in glory. There are riches of grace and riches of glory that we can have.

How do we get them? I want to show you a verse in that connection which I want to speak about today. And that is in Luke's gospel. In chapter 16.

There are laws in God's kingdom. You know, every day we are obeying certain laws. The laws that God has put into this earth.

Unconsciously, we obey certain laws. The law of gravity, for example. We know that water always falls down.

And that's a good thing. Because we know we follow that law. We keep a cup under a tap and we know the water will come into the cup.

Following a certain law. It doesn't go up. In the same way, there are many, many laws we are unconsciously following.

And here is a law. Luke chapter 16, and verse 11. It's talking about riches, how to get riches.

We just saw that the true riches are the riches of grace and the riches of glory. Luke 16, 11, Jesus said, If you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you? So you see a law there. I don't know whether you see it.

How we handle earthly wealth is going to determine how much of the riches of grace and glory we get. It's not just humility. Humility is one law.

God gives his grace to the humble. But the riches of his grace, it says here, If we are faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, then God will give us the true riches. Verse 14, But the Pharisees who were lovers of money scoffed at all this.

I hope nobody here is scoffing at it. They scoffed at it saying, Why should we be worried about that? We use all the money God gives us. And we are wealthy because we know the Bible so well.

And everybody in the synagogue respects us. That was the foolishness of the Pharisees. Go and ask those Pharisees in hell today if they regret that they didn't listen to Jesus.

Turn with me to the Old Testament. Here is a verse the Pharisees should have read. Because they studied the Bible.

You know when we read the Bible, we have a tendency to skip over verses that are uncomfortable. So the Pharisees probably skipped over this. Deuteronomy chapter 8 You shall remember the Lord your God for he is the one who gives you power to make wealth.

Do you recognize that? It's God who gives us the ability whatever money you have today whatever you have earned, whatever you have inherited Deuteronomy 8.18 says Always remember I want to encourage all of you Always remember It is the Lord who enabled you to earn or inherit what you got. Don't ever attribute it to your cleverness, your smartness your ability or any such thing. Or I had a rich dad.

There are many people who had rich fathers whose wealth was wasted. They got nothing as an inheritance. We have so many things to be thankful.

I believe a truly rich person, if he is a godly person would be on his face before God and say, Lord, everything I have is what you have given me. I would never, never, never dream that I got this because of any other reason except that God gave it to me. Do you think the Pharisees read that verse and meditated on it? No.

How many Christians recognize it today? If they did, they would be humbler people. I think of a lot of young people. I remember seeing CFC when we started 40 years ago.

We were a bunch of poor people. Nobody had a car. Not one.

There was one scooter in the whole church. But things have changed in Bangalore. And, you know, software boom and so many people earning Imagine people earning a hundred thousand rupees a month.

Are they lucky? They may think so. If they are not becoming spiritual, if they don't recognize that it is God who has given me this ability, if they don't remain in humanity, I tell you that which you think is so good for you will destroy you. It is my duty to tell you that.

The Bible is full of warnings of people who are covetous, who wanted things that they wanted more than they had. That is covetousness. There is a verse in Colossians 3 which says Colossians 3 It says here If you have been raised with Christ Seek for the things that are above Don't set your mind on the things of earth but set your mind on the things above.

This is a true Christian who lives with his feet on the earth but his mind on things above. That's how Jesus lived. His feet were on the earth.

He worked hard as a carpenter to earn his living. He helped other people. He washed people's feet.

His feet were very much on the earth but his mind all the time was on things above. In other words, he did his earthly work with a heavenly mind. Everything he did was with a heavenly mind.

Therefore, he could handle money properly. He never loved it. And then it says Verse 5 Consider the members of your earthly body dead Dead to immorality that we can accept Impurity, we accept that.

Passion, evil desire No problem. And greed Is greed in the same category as immorality? Supposing I were to tell you, you're an immoral person You'd feel insulted. But if someone said, you're a greedy person always wanting more more money People don't think of that in the same category as immorality But the Bible puts it in the same category In fact, it doesn't say immorality is idolatry but it says greed is idolatry You may look down on those others who bow down before idols But you who tell other people don't bow down before idols, do you have an idol in your life as well? Greed is idolatry That means I'm bowing down before money and saying I want you I bow down before you You are my God You will run my life.

You tell me go here, I'll go there You tell me go there, I'll go there You tell me, I'll sacrifice church, fellowship everything for you Do you know how many people there are who will go to a place to make money, who are not bothered whether there's any fellowship, church, anything Oh, my idol is there I must bow down before that, never mind if there's a church or not Okay, watch them after four or five years and see what their condition is, see what the condition of their children will be.

And then they'll say, oh brother Zach, please pray for me, please pray for my children, they've all gone astray Well, you reap what you sow You can't do anything about that, that's a law in God You reap what you sow.

You've got to be wise I mean, if you had never been in CFC all these years I can understand, but you've heard for so much for so long Greed is idolatry There are enough warnings in scripture to tell us about that Do you know that when the children of Israel went into the land of Canaan it was the place where God wanted to take them He didn't want to just take them out of Egypt A lot of people talk about the Israelites' redemption from Egypt The Christian world always speaks about redemption from Egypt The blood of the Lamb and baptism in the Red Sea and all that But I say that was only the beginning We preach about entering into Canaan Entering into Canaan and killing the giants, that was God's purpose And when they entered into the land of Canaan, see that mighty victory with which they

began I want you to turn to the book of Joshua These things are written for our instruction In the book of Joshua we read Joshua chapter 6, they went into Jericho and I don't have time to read the whole story but

we read they blew the trumpet and marched around the city and the whole walls of Jericho fell down and they defeated that land they overcame it but Joshua had told them be careful that you don't take any of the gold or expensive things here in Jericho don't touch it because God has commanded that must be all given to the Lord don't touch it but we read that there was one man this is the first sin that happened after they entered the land of Canaan you read in the next chapter in Joshua chapter 7 when the people were defeated they won a victory in Jericho with a big city they went

to a very small town and they got thrashed and they were defeated and Joshua it says in verse 6 chapter 7, 6 tore his clothes and said Lord what happened why did we fail and the Lord said get up there is somebody in your midst who has sinned verse 11 therefore I consider the whole of Israel has sinned somebody has taken something which I said you should not take and so they threw lots and we read that they finally got a hold of Achan verse 18 Achan the son of Kermai was taken and Joshua said to Achan my son tell me what did you do don't hide it from me and Achan said yes it's true I have sinned I know the Lord said that we shouldn't take anything from this city but when I saw a beautiful dress from Babylon Shinar is Babylon a beautiful Babylonian dress and I saw 200 shekels of silver

lying there in a tent and I saw a bar of gold 50 shekels in me I coveted them I thought nobody is looking I took it and I concealed it inside my tent under the earth you know what they did it says in verse 5 they stoned him with stones and they burned them with fire who all verse 24 Achan his sons his daughters why do the children have to suffer well it unfortunately happens you have a covetous father I mean don't you see in the world even today a drunken father don't the children suffer sure even the wife suffers if the father is a drunkard here it says they were all killed and they learnt a lesson now I want to tell you something interesting in the next chapter onwards when they went into Canaan the Lord said ok now onwards you can take anything you want it's all yours it was just a

test it was just a test if only Achan had waited he could have got a lot more than he got from that little one tent only in Jericho God said don't take anything he gave them the impression that that's going to be the command all during your battle in Canaan but it was not he was just testing them and very often he's testing us when he asks us to deny ourselves something because if you do you don't know how much he'll give you I've seen that in my own life every servant of God has seen that in their life he tests us see whether you will grab it let me show you another example in 2nd Kings these are examples written in scripture 2nd Kings in chapter 5 you know the story of Naaman a leper and somebody told him he had a servant girl from Israel who said hey there's a prophet in our land who

can heal the sick so Naaman went to Elisha's little cottage with a letter from the king and when he came to Elisha's cottage he stood there and Elisha didn't even come out says in 2nd Kings 5 verse 9 Naaman came with his horses and his chariots can you imagine this Syrian general coming to this little hut of a prophet of God and he thought like in Syria all the false prophets would bow down before him he thought this prophet of God would come out and raise his hand and smite him because he's a big man just like many preachers who will always fawn over the rich people do a lot of things for rich people which they'll never do for the poor those are not servants of God they are servants of the devil any man who fawns over rich people and doesn't care for the poor I will clearly call him a

servant of the devil not of God any day and that need not be a servant of God only it could be a believer if you find you're more attracted to the rich people than to the poor people my brother you're going the wrong direction be careful where you end up finally when you die but Elisha wouldn't even come out of the house I like that some of these Old Testament prophets they're real heroes of mine here this general

comes to his house and he doesn't even come out to greet him if it was some poor man he came Elisha would have come out but not for this man we need servants of God like that today I tell you they're very rare and Naaman came with his horses and Elisha just sent a messenger told Gehazi go and tell him to wash in the Jordan and Naaman was furious verse 11 beautiful I wish there

was a video of this Naaman furious this prophet won't come to see me doesn't he know who I am I thought he would come and stand and call him the name of the Lord and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper no no no you don't know God and you don't know his true servants anyway he did what he was told to go and dip in the river and he was healed I said boy he's really a man of God I got healed my flesh has become worse 14 just like that of a little child then he came back to the man of God again that's one good thing about some of these heathen people sometimes even Christians haven't learned to be grateful to those who have served you and whose service blessed you you got something you got healed from some leprosy in your family or in your life this man was so proud to come back

and say boy even though he didn't come out of the hut at least let me go and thank him I can send a message to him say thank you very much he returned to the man of God and then Elisha came out and Naaman said now I know there's no God in all the earth but in Israel so here's a present I got a gift and here's another mark of these really godly men as the Lord lives before whom I stand right now the Lord is here I will take nothing from you why did Elisha say that Elisha wasn't working how was he supporting himself he needed food and clothing and how did he live what an opportunity to get gifts from him he could have survived for 10 years with Naaman's gifts no I will take nothing you know these are the men you must read about these men these are the true servants of God in the Old

Testament and these are the true servants of God today because Naaman was an unbeliever and a true servant of God does not take a cent from an unbeliever that's why we don't pass a bag around in a church I'll tell you why we don't pass an offering bag around there could be somebody here whose life is not right with God he has got no right to give money to God go and take it and use it on yourself there could be an unbeliever here he's got no right to give money to God sorry we don't want your money that's the danger of passing a bag around because you're collecting from Naaman's and from a whole lot of other people like that Elisha said I'll take nothing what did Jesus say go back to that verse he who is faithful with unrighteous wealth will get the true riches we want the true riches in

our church I want the true riches in my life from my earliest Christian experience when I was born again I said Lord I want the true riches in my life and you notice another reason why Elisha had discernment about this man Naaman said ok you won't take anything he urged him he said I won't take anything and Naaman says yeah I know all these full time workers they just put a little pressure they'll take it just trying to act spiritual and say I don't want to so Naaman urged him oh come on take it and some preachers would have yielded ok if you insist I'll take it not Elisha he said sorry I don't want it I don't want any of it are you refused make such men your examples and Naaman said ok let me take some earth from here so that I can stand on this earth and worship the Lord and listen to

his compromise now this is very interesting this is what Elisha could discern before he spoke it a man of God can discern people just by looking at their face looking at their eyes and looking at their manner of speaking Elisha could discern this guy is not only an unbeliever he's a compromiser he says yeah the Lord is the true God see what he said now I know there is no God he said that in verse 15 in all the earth but in Israel but I hope verse 18 the Lord will pardon me when I go with the king of Syria into the house of the God Rimmon to worship there and he leans on my hand I have to bow myself before that idol otherwise I'll

lose my job I don't want to give up being a general in the army otherwise the king will sack me he may kill me so I hope the Lord will pardon me Elijah said

Elisha said go just like God told Balaam you want money go you want to worship that idol you say one on one hand the Lord is the only true God and then you don't want to lose your job so you'll bow down to the idol it's like today people who sing praises of God in the church and then in the office and they collect money to do some puja to some idol they'll give that money okay I'll contribute towards that puja I don't bow down before you but here's some money to worship that idol go ahead what is the difference between such Christians and this man and what does Elijah say go you think you're going to get the riches of God's grace in a thousand years no sir no he who is faithful with unrighteous man you know you may say when you're in my office if I don't if I say all that they'll cause me

trouble I won't get promotion my boss will get upset that's exactly what Naaman thought I won't get my promotion the king will get upset Elisha knew that but it says in verse 20 he wasn't bothered about all that he wasn't bothered whether Naaman bowed down to a hundred idols he said behold my master has spared this man we didn't even ask for money this fellow came and offered it and my master just let him go my master has let this man slip through his fingers without even giving any money I will run after him and take something from him we have a picture here of two types of Christian workers today one is Gehazi and when Naaman saw Gehazi running after him and he said hey is everything ok he said yeah everything is ok except that my master sent me you know once a man is covetous he can

begin to tell lies easily have you noticed that in your life you're greedy for something you'll compromise a little and tell a little lie or sign a slightly false statement so that you can make some profit from it but my master sent me saying hey we two bible school scholars have just come you know what are called sons of the prophets those days the school of the prophets is what we call a bible school today all the false prophets in Israel came out of the bible schools then and now please remember that not a single true prophet in the old testament came from the school of the prophets they were trained by God in remote places hidden from public view but from the school of the prophets people came out with the certificates and degrees and they were the false prophets then and today so he

said there are some bible school scholars have come two young men and we need to support them we need to give them free education same type of stories they write in false reports to America and all today it's exactly the same please give us a little money and two changes of clothes for these young students and they said sure don't take one talent I'll give you two talents and again Gehesi said no no no but he urged him and Gehesi said ok if you insist I'll take it so typical of today it says there I'm not pretending he urged him and he found two talents of silver verse 23 in two changes of clothes and gave them to servants and they carried them before him you know the servants carried all that stuff there was so much stuff and just as they came to the hill Gehesi said don't come anymore I

don't want Elisha to see you you can go home now just give me the money and all the clothes you know this is the same thing happening today exactly the same and he took it and went and hid it somewhere in his house and he came with a holy face verse 25 and stood before his master and said praise the lord Elisha you think you can fool a man of God you think you can but God gives his servants discernment I tell you they may not tell you what they know about you but they know a lot more by just looking at your face he says where have you been oh I didn't go anywhere he said didn't my heart go with you I saw everything that you did is this a time to receive money verse 26 clothes from these people I'll tell you something you not only got his money you also got his leprosy verse 27 not only

you but your children forever he got it immediately why are these warnings written in the Old Testament of people who claim to be servants of God I think yes see everybody who runs after money doesn't get leprosy but Gehazi claimed to be a disciple of Jehovah it's those who claim to be disciples of Jesus who get into more problems if they are unfaithful in this area it's written for our instruction and one day little Gehazi's little six year old boy comes to him and says daddy I got a little patch on my hand I don't feel any sensation there what is it what will his father tell him when your children suffer because of your greed what are you going to tell them leprosy is a terrible thing we read I don't have time to show you there is the story of Balaam also so many examples like this what

is the problem of Balaam money you read that in numbers 22 to 24 rich king Balak called him to come and curse the Israelis he said I got to pray about it he prayed and he was in touch with God and God said don't go so he told the king told the king's servants tell the king I can't come can you imagine what a man he was when he began I've seen servants of God like this who started so well you see them 10 years later 20 years later they are just like any other useless person tell the king I can't come God told me not to come you know what king Balak said I know how to catch all these full time workers he sent more servants and said I'll give you more money and I'll give you honor oh Balaam said really then I got to pray about it a little more and he went back and he prays about it you know

what God said Balaam I know what's in your heart I'm not going to stand in your way, go and he goes and you know how an angel stood before him to try and stop him even the donkey had more spiritual light than Balaam can you imagine what is the lesson there that when you love money and you are greedy you become so blind that a donkey has got more light than you that's what I learned from that that a donkey can see God and you can't and he destroyed himself finally you find Balaam became a sorcerer and he was killed these are examples in the old testament when you come to the new testament you find right in the midst of Jesus church, Jesus church had 12 people and 8% of them were crooked thieves, rogues can you imagine a church where 8% are thieves stealing from the offering box imagine if

you had a church here with 8% of people sitting here that means there are 500 people here, 40 of them are stealing from the offering box and are stealing God's money that's Jesus church you'll never find, I think one of the lessons I learned from that is you'll never find a perfect church on the earth and if you want you can come into a church and concentrate on the Judas Iscariot and destroy yourself or you can concentrate on the 92% who are really living for God and not bother about the 8% I say 8% because that's a simple calculation 1 out of 12 is 8% and Judas Iscariot he wasn't like that when he began we read in Luke's gospel in chapter 6 that Jesus prayed all night the only time in the scripture where we read Jesus prayed all night, he may have done it other times but it's mentioned

once in scripture that Jesus prayed all night, Luke 6 verse 12 he went to the mountain alone and he spent all night in prayer and whenever you read that Jesus prayed you go to the next verse you know why he prayed for example it says when Jesus was being baptized he was praying, the next verse is you know what he was praying for the anointing of the Holy Spirit which he got so here also when you read he prayed all night you go to the next verse you know what he was praying about when day came he called his disciples and selected 12 he had many disciples, at one time he had 70 then he had to pick out 12 from them how to pick out 12? there were probably more than 70 how to pick out 12 from all these people they are all claimed to be my disciples they are all saying the right words it's not

easy and one can say why didn't Jesus just pray for one minute and the father could rattle off 12 names 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12 it doesn't even take one minute why did he have to pray all night to get 12

names he was a man he was a man just like us on earth he had given up his prerogatives as God and so the father treated him exactly like he treats us do you know how in the old testament God revealed his will by speaking sometimes audible voice because God was outside but in Jesus case God was inside the Holy Spirit was in him and in our case when we are born again God is within so he speaks from within and it says in Romans 12,2 by the renewing of your mind you prove the perfect will of God and so the way we find God's will today is by proving it that means I toss it around in my mind

is it this or that, is it this person or that person is it this person or that person and it takes a long time to get 12 names it is not like the old testament way where God just rattles off names no, and Jesus lived like us and that's why when we seek to do God's will we may think the old testament way is better it's not because it never makes us grow you know if you always have to tell your children brush your teeth, change your clothes, have a shower it's alright when they are three years old but if you have to tell your 25 year old also that brush your teeth, go to bed, change your clothes, there is something wrong with them so that's why God treats us say hey listen you should be growing up I shouldn't have to tell you everything now God treats us like grown ups in the new covenant

and so from within, that's how Jesus lived that's why he had to pray all night father is it this or that, I think of all these 500 names and he finally took all night to get 12 you think he made a mistake? not at all and Judas Iscariot was one of the 12 name that he got after praying all night there was no mistake there it was not just picking out any 12 he called 12 and named them apostles Simon, Andrew, Philip he lists the whole lot and finally it says in the last part of verse 16 and Judas Iscariot who was not a traitor but who became a traitor when you read that little word became you learn something, when you read somebody became a leper does it mean he was always a leper?

No he became a leper, he became a traitor that means when he was selected he was as whole hearted as Peter or James or John and I believe, that's my theory I can't find it in scripture but it's like Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7, I give my opinion as one who has sought to be faithful I believe that Judas Iscariot was God's original choice to write the epistles which Paul finally wrote, because Judas Iscariot was the smartest cleverest, probably the only post graduate among the 12 he was a sharp man, very clever man how do I know that?

Because he could live with 3 and a half years with those disciples and they never discovered he was a crook you got to really be a smart clever man to live for 3 and a half years and others don't even discover that you're not a crook don't you think he was smart? Because in the last supper when Jesus said, one of you is going to betray me, everybody didn't look at Judas they looked at themselves, Lord is it I? with all the faults of the disciples they had one good quality, they decided to judge themselves but it also shows that they couldn't believe that Judas Iscariot was a crook but the crown, you know it says in Revelation 3 take heed that no one takes your crown there's a verse like that in Revelation 3 be faithful, make sure nobody takes your crown the crown that was meant for Judas Iscariot, Paul got he got his own plus Judas Iscariot's he wrote the epistles you know if you don't do the work God planned for you when you were born I don't know whether you believe this before we were born, he formed us in our mother's womb with certain qualities and abilities I believe that with all my heart that God gave me some abilities when I was in my mother's womb not for myself, not for me to make money or to become great in the world he gave me abilities that I could serve him with those abilities and you come out of your mother's womb and you can spend your life doing what God wants you to do or living for yourself now I'm not talking about full time Christian work God calls one in a thousand to full time Christian work 999 must serve God in their secular job so in your secular job God's called you to fulfill a certain purpose for him but you may not fulfill it you

can miss it most people miss it because of greed they are longing for something God doesn't want them to have and that's how you can miss God's will and it says if you are greedy who will give you the true riches, the riches of God's grace the riches of his glory, the riches of being able to fulfill God's plan in your earthly life, you can miss that all completely because of greed because you want this and you want that ok, God won't stop you what do we read? did Geheze get paralyzed as he was running after Naaman? no, not at all, God doesn't stop anyone you take your scooter to go and commit adultery with somebody your scooter will not get a puncture, I'll tell you that it will take you safely there and bring you back Geheze did not get paralyzed when he was running after Naaman and Achan did not get a heart attack when he went and stole all that money no Judas Iscariot didn't get a heart attack or a stroke when he was stealing money from Jesus' bag the judgment all came finally God doesn't judge immediately have you read that verse in Ecclesiastes?

I want to show it to you it says in Ecclesiastes chapter 8 have you all got Ecclesiastes? right in the middle of the Bible, Psalms, Proverbs Ecclesiastes chapter 8 and verse 12 sorry, verse 11, Ecclesiastes 8, verse 11 because punishment against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are fully given to do evil but I know that although a sinner does evil a hundred times and may even lengthen his life still I know that finally it will go well only for those who fear God and fear Him openly and it will not go well for the evil man because he doesn't fear God so because God doesn't punish immediately you don't get a stroke or paralysis or leprosy all immediately, it does not mean that there will be no judgment it finally came to Achan, it finally came to Gehazi it finally came to Judas Iscariot when he kept on taking you see, that bag, he was a treasurer nobody gave money to Judas Iscariot they gave it to Jesus they were blessed by Jesus' ministry and they said, we want to give some money Jesus said, he's a treasurer, give it to him and he collected and it was not his money at all it was like church money but he took from it and took from it and took from it why didn't God stop him? why didn't Jesus stop him?

God's ways are not our ways why doesn't God kill all the crooks and the terrorists and the suicide bombers before they go and bomb others God's ways are not our ways he allows sometimes evil to mature before he judges it I remember one instance I don't want to give any details many years ago where in one of our churches a brother who was like an elder there was taking advantage of the poor people in his church he urged them to give him money I can't imagine that somebody would it was a group that started before we met them and then they came to our meetings gradually and he would encourage them to come and bring fruits and vegetables in his house regularly and even to give him money and he lived in a much grander house than all the people in his church he wasn't working, he was a full time worker living off others and then he came to us came to our conferences, appreciated the things but he never changed his ways he was a full time worker before he came and he had these few people meeting with him before he came it was like a group that came to us, he liked it but he didn't change even after he heard the things we heard in our church and I found he was exploiting thousands and thousands of tens and twenty, thirty, forty thousand, one lakh from somebody and finally I came to discover it and removed him from eldership and one of the things I said to the Lord, I tell you I asked some of those people when I went there I had an individual interview with all those brothers in that church and I said, why didn't you tell me all this long ago instead of waiting so long and what they said to me really humbled me they said, Brother Zak, you've always taught us to submit to elders without questioning I said can't you complain against an elder?

Sure you can the Bible says even two or three people can complain against an elder and you should have done that and I came home from there to my home in Bangalore, I tell you I wept, I said Lord these poor people trusted me and they got swindled by this man I said why didn't you show this to me earlier and the

Lord said a word to me I'll never forget He said if I had shown it to you earlier you would have removed him immediately but my long suffering is more than yours I wanted to give him another chance and another chance and another chance till finally when I felt the time had come to remove him that's when I showed it to you I learnt there why God, Jesus did not remove Judas Iscariot from treasurership you know you go through some real life situations in your life and you begin to

understand the Bible then I understood that our human long suffering is much shorter it's pretty short suffering, not long suffering God's is long suffering many many O's in that long and that's how He is patient and if some of you sitting here are doing things that you know are wrong watching pornography in secret doing unrighteous things with money or certain other things cheating on your wife or husband or I hope not or fooling around in some other way in your place of work don't think God is not watching He is long suffering but a day will come when He will judge and when He judges it will be severe so severe that Gehazi gets leprosy and Balaam is killed and Judas hangs himself and there are many many stories like that in Christendom yeah these are warnings one more Acts of the

Apostles Acts of the Apostles the way it began is like the entry to the land of Canaan Acts chapter 2 is like the walls of Jericho falling down and the mighty power of God being manifest but soon after Jericho there was Achan and soon after the day of Pentecost there was Ananias and this time with his wife Sapphira the first sin that God judged in Canaan related to money the first sin that God judged in the early church related to money and you know it's something which Ananias and Sapphira tried to conceal from the Apostles but Peter was like Elisha when Ananias there was a big queue line of people coming putting their money here and going one by one and when Ananias came put the money and went Peter said come back hang on I got to say something to you why did you tell a lie to the Holy

Spirit how did Peter know did Peter go with him to the registration office to find out how much the land was sold for I'll tell you something when God is moving mightily in a church he gives discernment to the leaders which normally most people won't have Ananias and Sapphira I mean what is the sin that they gave half the sale of the property to God have any of you sitting here sold a property and gave half that money to God ever if you met a brother here who said I sold my property and gave half the money to God boy say what a man half the sale value he gave to God you think Ananias is a whole hearted person that was not his sin his sin was pretense he pretended because the others were coming and giving everything they were selling their property to give to the poor and others were

giving everything and Ananias just stood in the queue to get the honor of I'm also giving everything but he wasn't actually giving everything hypocrisy that's really the sin that was judged there and I say Ananias' mistake was that he joined such a church if he had just lived at home he would have lived a long life but he joined the wrong church if there was a church like the Corinthian half hearted wayward and backslidden type of church in Corinth and Ananias had joined that church he would have made him an elder in Corinth he is fit to be an elder but in the Jerusalem church he is killed that is why I always say my brothers and sisters if you are not serious about your Christian life find a church which is backslidden wayward where the pastor loves money go there, you'll be safe it's

dangerous to go to a church where the preaching is powerful this presence of God is there, conviction of sin and you are not serious you are not a whole hearted Christian, you are not a whole hearted disciple of Jesus you are covetous, greedy and you want to claim the honor of being whole hearted that's exactly the sin of Ananias and Sapphira the way we handle money is so important let me give you a little bit of advice first of all recognize your boundary how much do you earn God has drawn different circles around different

ones here some earn more, some earn less stay inside your boundary that's the first advice I'll give to all of you okay, don't envy another person whom God has drawn a big circle around him, he's given him a lot of money I don't know I wouldn't say it's God's blessing

some people think a lot of money is God's blessing they say Jesus blessed me go and ask the Muslims how the sheikhs in Saudi Arabia were blessed with million times more than you have who blessed them or the rich businessmen in India who worship their Hindu gods who blessed them with money million times more than what you have don't be deceived by these preachers who say that Jesus blesses us with money that's exactly what every religion says our God, and there are many many gods has blessed us with money no I don't know why God gives some more and some less I'll tell you this, for a Christian when he has far more than he needs it's not a blessing it's a test what are you going to do with it that's how I've seen it it's a test as to what are you going to do now now that I've given him so

much, what are you going to do with it and most people fail the test if you're faithful with unrighteous men you'll get a lot of riches, spiritual riches and when I see a lot of people who don't have spiritual riches who don't have the abundant grace of God or who had it once upon a time you see them 20 years later and they're not worth listening to they cannot lead you to a more godly life you know that something happened along the way they became unfaithful with money if all of you sitting here imagine if all of you sitting here were faithful with that boundary God drew around you to stay within it there's a verse in Ecclesiastes 10 and verse 8 which says, if you break through a boundary wall God has put around you you'll be bitten by a snake so don't break through he who breaks through

a wall, a serpent will bite him Ecclesiastes 10 verse 8 that's a warning, when God's put a boundary around you stay within it, what does that mean? in plain simple terms it means live within your income and God gives you more you can buy more things greed is to say I'm not satisfied with this financial circle God has drawn around me I want more that's how you suffer and that is very often the reason why people borrow I'm not talking about emergencies medical emergencies, suddenly you have to pay some large amount of school fees or something that cropped up you didn't anticipate and you have to quickly go and borrow it's not a sin it's a sin if you don't try to repay it over a period of time, at least attempting to repay it month by month you're okay the Bible doesn't say don't borrow, the

Bible says don't owe anybody anything Romans 13 verse 8 so there is a difference between don't borrow and don't owe anybody anything so I see it like this, God is very realistic he knows that there are certain situations where people are stuck and they need to borrow but don't owe anybody anything repay it as soon as you can and if you're in debt for a long time and you're not in any effort to repay it time has come for you to sell some of the gold in your house don't wait for the price of gold to go up make sure your conscience is clear by repaying your debt God will take care of you and it's those who are faithful to live within the circle when they are small God gives them such tremendous riches I'm not speaking from theory, my wife and I were very poor when we were married, so poor we

couldn't even afford house rent it's true but we decided we'd never buy anything we couldn't afford we would continue like that 2 or 3 years because I'd given up my job and the devil would harass me and saying what a fool you were to give up your job and another thing I decided I would never use my spiritual gift of preaching even then, I had it even then to make money so I would go to the villages and I'd go to the students who couldn't take that much money to give me and I'd say, Lord, this is the place you called me and so we struggled and I tell you, I became rich, spiritually and God knew when to relieve me from that he kept us like that for 2 or 3 years then slowly, little by little he expanded the circle but still, even when our

4 children were going to school we had to be very

tight with our finances so I'm not speaking theory when we couldn't afford certain things, we didn't buy it, simple if we couldn't afford buying new clothes, we wouldn't buy new clothes I didn't feel that I have to buy new clothes for my children's birthday every time, no when your clothes wear out, whether it's your birthday or not, we'll get it and I didn't feel that we should celebrate my children's birthday, we never celebrated it among our family we did, that's it I'll tell you why, I didn't have the money and I feared God more than getting into debt simple, many things like that I decided it's more important to get spiritual riches than to do all these things and today, I'm 70 nearly 76, 75 and a half years old I've never been in debt for a single day by the grace of God even when

it was tough, I said okay but fortunately I had a wife who was willing to live by that standard dear brothers and sisters be faithful, live within your income one day God will give you more if you're faithful but more than that, in that process you would have become a spiritually rich man or a spiritually rich woman, why is there so much spiritual poverty among so many believers I know, they're not faithful with unrighteous mammon one of the great burdens I have is Lord, we need more anointed ministry in our churches why don't we hear it people are not faithful with unrighteous mammon it's a simple law stay within your income and learn to be generous according to your ability don't be stingy, tight fisted no, open your palm don't be generous towards yourself be generous towards the poor

we decided in our home I'm not making this a law for other people we decided that we would not ever unnecessarily waste money on things you know all these people who always go out to eat at this restaurant, that restaurant, this restaurant we couldn't do it so what, we're still healthy probably healthier than if we had gone around eating everywhere else yeah we couldn't afford it we don't regret it today, so what if I didn't taste all the restaurants in Bangalore what have I lost what would I have lost if that was my goal let the rich do all that let the rich think all this money is mine, I can spend it as I like I never felt like that I thought of the words of Jesus in John 17 10 father, all that I have is yours and the father said ok, all that I have is yours I want to say to you that

many of you may be missing God's riches because you have thought all that you had was yours if you learn to say today my lord, all that I have is yours, tell me how to spend it let me not waste it on unnecessary things yeah, go out and have a meal outside when you want to give your wife a break from cooking, but not just because you have a lot of money learn to live simply and if you have extra, give it to God give it to the poor be generous, God will be mightily generous to you I can tell you from my experience many of you are missing something which could have made you exceptionally wealthy by now are you spiritually poor?

I am not trying to condemn anyone I hope you hear God saying to you my son, my daughter come up higher come up higher from the low level you are living right now don't be deceived that wealth is everything my wealth is everything, God says seek that, let's pray Heavenly Father we want to live for you and glorify you as individuals, as a church we know that you said there are only two masters God and money on this earth and we want to serve God and not money we want to make money our slave help us each one in Jesus name, Amen I just want to mention, have you got those two booklets? can I just there are two booklets out there on the table which we just published one is called 50 Marks of Godly Men and to balance it out is 50 Marks of Pharisees the purpose of we want to sell these together

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