

The Love of Money - Part 5

by Zac Poonen

Jesus teaches that salvation comes when a person's attitude to money changes, and that we should give to God what belongs to him, secretly and sacrificially.

Duration: 9:17

Scripture: Matthew 6:3, Luke 19:9-10

Topics: "Stewardship", "Generosity"

Description

Salvation comes when a person's attitude towards money changes, reflecting a heart transformed by Jesus. Jesus seeks to save those lost in the love of money, just as He saves those lost in sin, emphasizing the need for acknowledgment of one's lost state. Giving is highlighted as a crucial aspect of Christian life, emphasizing giving back what rightfully belongs to others before giving to God, giving to the poor, and giving sacrificially with a cheerful heart, all done in secret for God's honor alone.

Transcript

He said, salvation has come, verse 9. When does salvation come? When would Jesus say? I mean, we would say salvation has come to somebody who says, Lord Jesus, come into my heart. He says it when a man's attitude to money has changed. Okay, you said, Lord Jesus, come into my heart.

And Jesus would say, well, I'll wait on that. Let me see what's your attitude to money. Are you willing to give back what you've taken wrongfully from others? And are you willing to exactly say, hey, the guy lost some interest, so I better pay back the interest too.

I'll pay back four times what I took. And Jesus says, boy, salvation has definitely come here. It's interesting to see that.

The only time when Jesus said publicly, salvation has come to this house, was when a man's attitude to money changed. Would Jesus be able to say to you, salvation has come to you, on the basis of that? And he went on to say, the Son of Man, verse 10, has come to seek and to save that which was lost. I was reading this passage once.

And I was saying, yes, we all say we are lost. And the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost. But, in what context did Jesus say this? Here was a man who was lost in the love of money.

Do you believe that a man who loves money is lost? Here's a man who was lost in the love of money, and needed to be saved by Jesus, just like a man who was lost in sin. It's in that context that he said it. And I realized when I was a young Christian, I said, Lord, I've got to be honest.

I love money too. Every child of Adam loves money. And I'm in that boat myself.

And you came to seek and to save the one who is lost. That's me. Save me, Lord.

Do you believe that anyone other than Jesus can save you from your sin? No. Have you ever asked him to save you from the love of money? Because that's another way of getting lost, according to this verse. And I said, Lord, I want to be saved.

But he never saves anyone who doesn't acknowledge that he's lost. Why didn't he save the Pharisees? They wouldn't acknowledge their loss. They'd say, we're okay.

Jesus said, oh, well, I didn't come for you healthy people. He was sarcastic. I came for these poor people who acknowledge their loss.

Now in all of us sitting here, who do you think the Lord will save from the love of money? I'll tell you. Those who will acknowledge, Lord, I love money. I want you to save me.

I'm lost in it. I know I've said it so many times to God. And the Lord heard my cry and delivered me.

Only he can deliver you. Don't think that you can save yourself from the love of money. You won't be able to do it in a hundred years.

But Jesus can. And he saves those who acknowledge it. The second thing I want to say is, where do we give? Luke 20, verse 25.

Somebody asked him, should we pay our taxes? And Jesus said, give to Caesar, Luke 20, verse 25, what is Caesar's and give to God what is God's. Now from that verse, can you tell me whether you should give to Caesar first or to God first? Well, it's not a tough question. It's very simple, really.

If you get rid of all our preconceived ideas, the answer is in that verse. You can't give to God, if you haven't given to Caesar from your wealth, what belongs to him. If you haven't paid your taxes, don't put that money in the offering box.

God said, I don't want it. Do you know that? That you can't give to God money that you have that doesn't righteously belong to you, that belongs to the government or belongs to somebody else. God doesn't want it.

He said, I don't want somebody else's money. Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar. So when you think of giving, give back first to those whom you have wronged, money that's not yours.

Give to the government, pay your taxes, and then give to God. That's what the Bible teaches. And then, in John chapter 13, Jesus spoke about who else he gave to.

We saw that verse already, John 13 and verse 29. Give to the poor. He always spoke about giving to the poor.

There's a curse in the book of Proverbs on those who give money to the rich. When you give, do you think of giving to the poor? That means give where there is a need. That means we've got to be alert to see where is the need.

I must give there. Why give where there is no need? A lot of people give where there is no need at all. They're foolish.

So those are the people to whom Jesus said we've got to give. Now I want to tell you what Jesus taught about how we should give. First of all, in Matthew chapter 6, Jesus said we must give secretly.

Again, he said in Matthew 6, verse 3 and verse 4. When you give to the poor, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. So that when you give to the poor, what you give will be in secret. Here is the first principle in giving.

As far as possible, don't let anybody know what you gave. It must be between you and God. And your Father who sees in secret, Matthew 6, verse 4, will reward you openly.

Why is that so important? Because God, you know, there's a lot of giving in the world which is for honor. You know, you can make it known to people that you're giving so much and get some honor out of it. And that's how they were doing in those days.

And Jesus said, if you give like that, you won't get any reward. Why do you give? What's your motive? That's the important thing. Is your motive honor for men? Are you giving to God because you're grateful for what he's done? Or are you seeking to get honor from people? Motive is very important.

Are you doing it because you want to do business with God? Because you heard of some testimony of somebody who paid a tithe and he got a promotion in his job. Or he won a lottery or something after paying a tithe. Is that why you're giving to God? We're not to do business with God.

He's not a businessman. He's our Father. And so that's the first thing.

Do it in secret, seeking God's honor alone. The second thing is Mark chapter 12. We must give sacrificially.

Mark chapter 12 and verse 41. It's the story of the widow giving her mite. Jesus sat down opposite the treasury or opposite the offering box.

Do you believe that Jesus sits opposite the offering box? Watching each person give? He did it then. And he's the same yesterday, today and forever. And not only that.

I want you to see this. He did not observe how much people put in. He observed how they put it.

And there's a world of difference between observing how much people put and how they put. In the Old Testament the emphasis was how much. What's your income? Are you giving 10% of that? Not in the New Covenant.

In the New Covenant, how do you give? 2 Corinthians 9 verse 7 and 8 says, Not grudgingly, not out of compassion. For God loves a cheerful giver. One who gives cheerfully.

And God, not only cheerfully. It says here that the Lord was seeing how much sacrifice there was in their giving. He saw a lot of these people come and put a lot of money in.

A thousand dollars into that offering box. And he wasn't impressed. Imagine Jesus not being impressed when a man puts a thousand dollars into the offering box.

I mean a lot of churches people would be so impressed they'd make that man a member of the board. But not Jesus. He was different.

He saw a widow come along and put two cents. He'd make her a member of his board. A person who gives two cents, where in the world do you find a church where somebody puts a widow like that as a member of the board? That's how Jesus is.

Jesus is so different from what we see.

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