

What Jesus Taught About Money

by Zac Poonen

Jesus taught that money is a master that can control us, but we should seek God's kingdom first and keep money under our feet.

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Scripture: Matthew 6:3-4, Matthew 6:33, Luke 12:42, Acts 1:1, 1 Corinthians 10:26, 1 Timothy 6:7

Topics: "Christian Stewardship", "Sacrificial Giving"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of being good stewards of the gifts that God has given us, such as money, time, and relationships. He highlights the need to be saved from self-centeredness, which is the root of all sin, and encourages listeners to work hard and use their resources for the glory of God. The preacher also teaches about the importance of sacrificial giving and giving wisely, ensuring that our resources are used for God's purposes and not wasted on those who are already rich. Lastly, he reminds the audience that we cannot take any material possessions with us when we leave this world, so it is crucial to use our resources wisely during our time on earth.

Transcript

Today I'm going to talk about what Jesus taught about money. Throughout Christendom today, there's a lot of emphasis on giving. A lot of pressure put on Christians in churches, especially through television, and a lot of it is completely against the tenor of scripture, and something that Jesus would not approve of.

When Jesus was on earth twice, he turned out of the temple those who were trying to make money in the name of God, and that's something we must remember. And so we need to understand what Jesus taught about giving, and you cannot understand that until you first understand what Jesus taught about money in general. So I want to speak about what Jesus taught about earning money, saving money, and giving money.

Jesus never taught anything that he hadn't himself done first. Acts 1 verse 1 says, Jesus first did and then taught. He did not practice what he preached, he preached what he had already practiced.

And there he set an example for us, that we must never as Christians talk about something which we haven't done, or which we are not at least attempting to do. That's what it means to be a witness. If we talk about that which we haven't done, we are false witnesses, if you're not even attempting it.

So no man has the right to talk about giving, who is not doing it or attempting to do it in a scriptural way himself. So first of all, what did Jesus talk about earning money, and generally to understand what Jesus spoke about money itself first. I want you to turn to Luke's Gospel chapter 16 and verse 13, which is like a foundation for us to understand what the Bible talks about, teaches about money, what Jesus taught about money.

And it's very interesting to see here, Jesus using the word mammon, referring to wealth in general, it could be cash, it could be real estate, it could be stocks and shares, it could be your car, it could be anything that has monetary value. Money and everything else that has got monetary value, Jesus sums it up in the word mammon, and refers to it almost as if it's a God, a false God, just like Baal in the Old Testament. And he says here in Luke 16, 13, which I think is one of the most fundamental verses on money, we need to understand this if we want to understand what the Bible says about money in general.

He calls money a master, and as an alternate master to the true God. He says no servant can serve two masters. And if you were to ask the average Christian, 90% of them would reply that the two masters in the world are God and Satan.

No, Jesus says the two masters are God and money. No one in his senses would ever think that you could serve God and Satan at the same time. But a lot of Christians do think that they can serve God and money at the same time.

That's the deception. And that's why Jesus highlighted money as the alternate master. Satan is the God of this world.

The Bible says that, the ruler of this world. But the way he controls people to a large extent is through the power of money. And we can see that everywhere, whether it's in business, or politics, or in India, even in marriages.

Money is a very big factor. And just like in the kingdom of God, grace is the great power. In the world, money is the great power.

So Jesus focuses on this one thing as the alternate master to God. And he says, you've got to make a choice. It's something similar to the way Elijah stood on Mount Carmel in 1 Kings chapter 18 and told multitudes of Israelites who were serving Jehovah and Baal at the same time, alternately.

Sometimes they'd go and worship Jehovah and sometimes the idol Baal. And it's amazing that they could see no inconsistency in it. They thought that was okay.

And Elijah was the one man in Israel who stood up and had the courage to stand up and say, choose you this day whom you will serve. If Jehovah is God, serve him. If Baal is God, serve him.

And it's something similar here. If Jesus Christ is God, serve him and live for him. If money is God, live for that and serve that.

But you've got to make a choice and you cannot serve both. And he even went on to say, Luke 16, 13, you've got to hate one and love the other. Apply that to the two masters.

What does it mean? If you love money, whether you know it or not, you hate God. Now that's the truth. We may not like to face it, but it's like facing an uncomfortable revelation the doctor gives us about our

physical condition.

You don't get healed by ignoring it. If you see that's your sickness, if you face up to it, you could probably be cured. But if you don't face up to it, you don't acknowledge the seriousness of it, you may not be cured.

If I love money, I hate God. If I love God, I'll hate money. Now, tell me if you can find some other interpretation for that verse.

Now you'll never hear a preaching like this generally in Christendom today, because it's uncomfortable truth. And that's the reason why many Christians live so shallow, because they're worshipping Jehovah and Beyond, simultaneously or alternately. Christ and money, Christ on Sunday mornings and money five days a week.

And so he says, you've got to hold on to one and then you'll despise the other. What does this mean in practical terms? I don't think anyone would say honestly, I hate money. Where love of money is deep down in our flesh, I haven't even met a beggar who hates money.

A lot of people think it's only rich people who love money. No, have you met a beggar who doesn't love money? It's got nothing to do with your income or your wealth. It's got to do with whether you are a child of Adam.

Every child of Adam loves money. And Jesus came to deliver us from it, not to make us permits and not to say, well, you got to live on bare minimum. That's not the point.

That's a misunderstanding. What Jesus was saying is, don't let money be your master. And when he spoke about hatred in a previous chapter in Luke 14 and verse 26, he even said, you've got to hate your father and mother, not just money, father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters.

So obviously he didn't mean that we must hate them in the way we understand hatred for sin. No, because in another place in the Bible, in Ephesians 5, it says you've got to love your wife as Christ loved the church. And in Luke 14, 26, it says you've got to hate your wife.

So it's when you compare scripture with scripture, you understand what Jesus meant by hatred. In other words, what he was saying was that your love for Jesus and for God must be so great that your love for any human being becomes insignificant. And you love that person through God.

You love your wife through God and then you'll never fight with her. You love your parents through God and then you'll never put them above God in your life. So it's something like, you know, right now in the sky in daytime, if you look out, you can't see any stars.

But you know, stars give a very bright light. Imagine being so powerful, millions and millions of miles away and you'd be able to see that light on the earth. It's a very powerful light that stars give out.

But why is it you can't see them during the daytime? They're there, but you can't see a single star during the daytime because the light of the sun is so powerful that it blocks out the light of the stars. And that's the meaning of the word hatred here. Yes, we do love our parents and our wives and brothers and sisters, but our love for Christ is so great that this word disappears.

And that's how we understand the word hatred here. That our love for Christ is so great that the love for money becomes almost like nothing. In other words, money becomes a servant.

Money is a wonderful servant, but a terrible master. Something like fire. Fire is a wonderful servant.

We use it for so many good purposes in the home, but if it takes over your home and burns it up, it's terrible. And that's what money can do. If you keep the fire in the proper place, on the gas stove, in the fireplace and keep it under control, it's a very useful servant.

But if you are careless and let that fire burn up your house, it's going to destroy you. And money is exactly like that. A wonderful servant, but a terrible master.

And the question you need to ask yourself is, is money your servant or is it your master? It's a very useful servant. The Lord doesn't tell us to give it away, but he says keep it in the proper place. Just like in heaven you read, gold is on the street.

You keep it under your feet. On earth, they put it on your head. And that's the difference between earth and heaven.

And that's also the difference that determines whether you're an earthly person or a heavenly-minded person. A heavenly-minded person has learned, even now, to put gold under his feet. But as an earthly-minded person, gold is always in his thinking, how to make more money.

Whereas a person who is heavenly-minded uses money. He may have lots of it. The streets may be paved with gold, but it's under his feet.

It's not a question of how much you earn. You can earn, like many people in India, a thousand dollars a year. Or, like many here, fifty thousand or more.

But the question is not how much you earn. Not at all. Christians have, through the years, had different concepts on this.

A hundred years ago, people used to think that if you're a Christian, you've got to be poor. Today we've sprung to the other extreme. You see, Christians have this disease called pendulumitis.

We swing from one extreme to another in many areas. Once upon a time, the gifts of the Spirit were all taboo. Now they're everything.

Well, this is all wrong. Jesus told us of a middle way, a narrow way that leads to life. And today, Christians think of, if you're a Christian, you've got to be prosperous.

It's not true. If you're a Christian, how much you earn and how much you own are not the test. The test is this.

Whether you have a thousand or a million, is it under your feet? Are you the master or is that your master? Is that what occupies your thinking or is God what occupies your thinking? You keep money under your feet. In other words, whether you have one maidservant or ten, they are your servants. They don't take over the house.

That's the point. So that's the way we need to see this matter of money. Jesus once encountered a rich ruler who came to him in Luke 18 and who came to him and asked him in verse 18, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And because the age of grace had not yet started, Jesus said, you've got to keep the commandments.

They were under the law those days. And here was an amazing young man who had never committed adultery, verse 20, never murdered anybody, never stolen, never borne false witness in his entire life and always honored his father and mother. Now you'd think such a person is a wonderful person to become a member of your church.

But he was disqualified for Jesus' church. Because even though he had all these good qualities and he sought for eternal life, he had one big disqualification. He loved money.

How many churches are there today that would turn away a person from membership because he loved money? Jesus did. He told him, yeah, you've got all these good qualities and I appreciate them, but you've got one thing lacking. If you want to follow me, in other words, if you want to be a member of my church, you can be a member of the church of the Pharisees without this qualification.

But if you want to be a member of my church, you need this also in addition to those. You should not love money. I'm paraphrasing his words.

In his case, why did Jesus tell him to give up everything he had? He said, go and sell all that you have, Luke 18, verse 22, and give it to the poor. And you'll have treasure in heaven. And then, follow me.

He wasn't like many today pastors and preachers who say, come and give me all your money and follow me. No. Or come and put it in our church.

No. He loved him so much, he said, I want you without your money. I'm more interested in you.

Go and give your money to somebody else and you come and follow me. I wish there were more Christian leaders like Jesus Christ today. Who are interested in people, in their souls, not in their money.

It's so obvious that Jesus was not at all interested in this person's money or how that would help him in his ministry. No. He was interested in that he had a pure, sincere, genuine interest in the person's soul.

And he knew that he'd never be what God wanted him to be until he broke free from the love of money. And in his case, this cancer, I want to call it a cancer, the love of money, was so deeply rooted that, like a doctor says, there's only one way we can treat this cancer. We've got to cut out the whole organ.

Now when a cancer is not so deep, a doctor may say, well, you don't need to cut out the organ in your case because it hasn't spread so much. We can just do a little bit of treatment, chemotherapy or something and preserve your organs. We read in the next chapter of another man called Zacchaeus who also loved money and he only gave away half his money to the poor.

And the Lord said, that's fine. Why this difference? This man had to give away 100%. Zacchaeus had to give away only 50% because the cancer was not so deep in Zacchaeus.

In the case of Mary and Martha, the Lord didn't tell him to give away anything. There was hardly anything there was. This cancer is in all of us, but it's extended to different levels in different people.

And if it's very deeply rooted, then only radical surgery will solve the problem. So it's not that Jesus tells everybody to give up everything. No.

It's a question of how deeply rooted this cancer is. It's the detachment from money that the Lord was seeking to emphasize here. Keep money under your feet.

And Jesus was inviting this man to be an apostle as it were. It's the same words he said to Peter, James and John, come and follow me. This man could have been an apostle, but he missed it because of one foolish decision he took.

He refused to do what Jesus told him to do. Think of how Peter and James and John, as soon as Jesus said drop everything, they dropped it and followed him. But not this man.

I don't know where he is today, but wherever he is, if you were to go and ask him, I'm not here to determine whether he went to hell or heaven. He could be in either place. If he repented at the last minute, after wasting his life in the pursuit of money, he may have got to heaven, but even then he would have so much regret.

Let's assume he did go to heaven and repented on his deathbed. And you ask him today, well you managed to get to heaven. Are you happy with that decision you took when you were a young man, 50 years before you died? He'd say that is the worst decision I ever took in my life.

I wish I had listened to the Lord. I have so much regret as I live in heaven today, that I wasted my life as a businessman when I could have been an apostle. Do you know there are going to be a lot of people like that in heaven? And many others in hell.

Because of one thing, their love for money. In Jesus' own case, when he was speaking to his disciples, one of the greatest truths that he wanted to emphasize to them was how he lived his own life. He lived in constant trust and in touch with the Father in heaven.

And he tried to bring that faith into his disciples. He said, do any of you who are a father, wouldn't you feed your children? Don't you care for your children's earthly needs like food, bread, fish? They want an egg, you give them an egg. Your heavenly Father cares for you much more than that.

A number of times he said that. And we all know that well-known verse, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all the other things will be added to you. That is the way in which God wants every one of us to live.

At the end of our life, whether you live to 80 or 90 or 100, you should be able to say, if you've been a Christian for a major part of that life, this should be your testimony, from the time I was born again. Well, before I was born again, I lived for the world and wasted my life. But from the time I was born again, I decided to seek God's kingdom first.

And his holiness in every area of my life. And I want to testify today at the end of 50 years, after I'm saved and I'm about to die now, this should be your testimony. I have never lacked anything.

God has provided all my needs. He's been a loving Father who's taken care of every need of mine. That should be your testimony.

I was born again when I was 19 and I'm past 67 now. And I can say that my conversion was total. I turned around 180 degrees towards the Lord.

And I can say that from that time, by the grace of God, I've sought God's kingdom with occasional slip-ups. None of us are perfect. But generally, the general direction of my life was to seek God's kingdom.

And I've been through times of poverty. But I can say one thing. I've never lacked.

No. All these years, that word has been true. Seek the kingdom of God first and his righteousness.

And all these things will be added to you. That's how Jesus lived. He didn't live for money.

Here's an example that God gave. The happiest human being that ever lived on earth, when God came to earth as a man and lived just like one of us, He demonstrated to us the way God wanted Adam to live. Not living for earthly things.

Not making the choice that Adam and Eve made in the Garden of Eden. You know, the choice that faced Eve in that garden was, will you choose God or will you choose what He has created? This beautiful tree, which makes your mouth water, which makes your whole being long to have it. Instead of that tree of knowledge of good and evil, put money there.

And that's the choice that faces you and me. Will you choose God or will you choose what He has created? Gold and silver and all the other attractive things that money can buy. This is the choice that we face in every temptation.

God, the Creator, or what He has created. And without knowing it sometimes, we are unconsciously choosing what He has created above the Creator. We need to make a conscious decision.

Lord, I'm going to use every creative thing, but I'm never going to choose that above You. As long as You are first in my life, I can use creative things. That's the way God wants us to live.

Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and these other earthly things that you need will be added to you. My pursuit of earning as much as I can must never be at the cost of seeking God's Kingdom first. I must not be pursuing after money.

I must be seeking God's Kingdom first. And these blessings come as a result of that. Will God take care of our children then? David says in Psalm 37, in verse 25, he says, I'm an old man today and I'll tell you something that I've seen through 70 years of my life.

I have never in my life seen a righteous man forsaken. I've never seen his children having to beg for bread. That's an amazing verse, Psalm 37 and verse 25.

If you want God to take care of your children and your grandchildren, and your great-grandchildren that they'll never be in need, I'll tell you what you should do. Be righteous. Seek God's Kingdom first and put His righteousness as number one in your life.

I guarantee you'll have the best retirement benefits. You'll have no problem whatever your age is. God will take care of you.

This is God's way and God wants you to have that testimony at the end of your life. I spent my life seeking God's Kingdom and His righteousness and that's why it's gone well with me. The second thing I want to share with you is concerning what Jesus taught about saving money.

In the Old Testament, which Jesus knew very well, and which we believe He followed. He followed every bit of the teaching of the Old Testament law. In Proverbs chapter 6, we read what God said through the Holy Spirit in the book of Proverbs, which is one of the finest books in the Old Testament concerning how to be a wise, godly person.

Proverbs chapter 6 and verse 6. It says, Go to the ant, you lazy man. Observe her ways and be wise. That ant has got no chief, no officer, no ruler, and yet prepares her food in summer and gathers her provision in the harvest.

We see there, you know the size of an ant. It's one of the smallest things that you see. And can you think of the size of the brain of that ant? Inside that brain, that ant is thinking what clever people don't think about.

And that is saving for the future. Imagine that ant says to itself, hey there's plenty of food right now, but it's summer time and I know there won't be enough in winter time, so I better not gobble up everything I have right now. Even though I feel like it, I better deny myself and save a little for the future.

I wish human beings would have that sense. That I've got plenty now, but that's not meant for me to just splurge and splash and go and enjoy myself. No, let me just think of the future.

There may be a time may come in the future when I don't have enough. I need to save something. And here is Almighty God through the Holy Spirit saying to you, go to the ant, you lazy man, you thoughtless man, you don't think about the future.

Look at her and learn some wisdom. Who prepares, she doesn't have, she doesn't go for conferences or seminars on finances or any such thing, but she knows how to save. She doesn't attend meetings or services or any such thing, but she knows there may be a time of need in my life and I need to save.

And I would recommend that you do that, dear brother, sister. How did Jesus spend his money? John chapter 13 and verse 29 we read, when Judas was asked to go and do what he was supposed to do, the disciples did not know what Jesus meant. So they thought that he had told Judas to do what he always told him to do.

That is, and from that little sentence you know what Jesus always did with money. It's a little sentence, but there in John 13, 29, buy what you need and give to the poor. That's it.

Buy what you need and give to the poor. So, don't buy what you don't need. If you want to save, you can't buy what you don't need.

If you buy what you don't need, you won't save. It's a very simple principle. The ant knows that.

If I use up everything now, I won't have anything left for the future. So, the principle of buying things is buy what you need. And like the proverb says, cut your coat according to your cloth.

Don't buy with money that you don't have. It's one of the simple bits of advice which even an ant knows, but which a lot of human beings don't know. And that's how we get into debt.

I don't believe Jesus was ever in debt. I don't believe he was a very wealthy person despite what all the prosperity preachers tell us. Jesus was not wealthy.

He was poor. The foxes had holes and the birds of the air had nests, but he didn't have a place to lay his head. That's true.

He lived simply. We read in John 7, 53, the last verse, everybody went to his own house, but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives and slept under the trees. He lived very simply.

And he was not a rich man. But he never was in debt. I can't imagine Jesus going to somebody and saying, Can I borrow some money from you? You know, my Heavenly Father sort of let me down now, and I don't have enough.

Can you please help me meet my need? I mean, Christians may do that, who don't realize that they are insulting their Heavenly Father thereby. But Jesus wouldn't dream of saying that. Is it possible that my Heavenly Father has let me down? Is there a God in Heaven or not? Does he know my need? Don't earthly fathers provide food for their children? This is how Jesus lived.

He was never in debt. He never borrowed. A lot of borrowing comes because we don't save.

We don't think about the future. Joseph told Pharaoh, In seven years of plenty, if you don't save up, I'll tell you when the famine comes, you'll be in need. And even that godless Pharaoh was willing to listen to that wisdom from Joseph.

And that's why when there was a time of famine came, they were not in need. So that's a simple principle that we got to bear in mind. Now there may be times in an emergency when you got to borrow from somebody.

Basically, I would say it's not God's will that you should borrow. Because it says in Deuteronomy 15, even under the Old Covenant, In Deuteronomy 15, verse 6, Here is one mark of the Lord's blessing upon a person. A lot of people say, God's blessed me.

Well, here it says, The Lord your God will bless you, and you will never borrow. You know, that's one mark of God's blessing. He wants to bless you in such a way that you never have to borrow in your life.

But if in some emergency, maybe we are careless and we slip up, we need to borrow, then the New Testament says in Romans 13, verse 8, Oh, no man anything. In other words, if you do end up borrowing, return it as soon as possible. And that's why it's so important, my dear brothers and sisters, in a country where so many people are careless with the use of the credit cards, I would advise you, use a debit card as much as possible, so you know what money you are spending.

And if you do use a credit card, have the discipline to pay it off before you pay any interest on it, so that you are not losing any money. And if you don't have that discipline, stick to the debit card. I would advise you that.

It's a very simple bit of advice, but it can save you and your family from a lot of heartache and a lot of problems in the future. The Lord wants us to save and not be in debt. Jesus spoke about the last days in Luke chapter 17.

He said about the last days being like the days of Noah and the days of Lot. All of us know that expression, like the days of Noah, like the days of Lot. And we think only about the sex and the violence there was in those days, which is also true.

But notice in Luke 17, I want you to look at this verse. In Luke 17, when Jesus spoke about the last days like the days of Noah in verse 27. Luke 17 and verse 27.

It says like in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man. What were they doing? He's not referring to the sex and the violence. Luke 17, 27.

They were eating, they were drinking. What's wrong with that? They were marrying, they were giving in marriage. Go down to the next verse, in the days of Lot.

He doesn't talk about the homosexuality or any such thing there. He talks about the eating, and the drinking, and the buying, and the selling, and the planting, and the building. They were doing things, which all of us do.

But they didn't think of eternity in all this. That was their problem. You can get so taken up with the use of money on this earth right now.

My eating, and my drinking, and my buying, and my selling, and my planting, and my building, that I forget about eternity. And that's the great danger. And that's why we need to be wise and think about the future.

The fact that Jesus had a treasurer, Judas Iscariot, carrying a bag, indicates that he believed in savings. He didn't believe that if somebody gave him money today, I could spend it all today and trust the Lord for tomorrow. That can be a super spiritual, you know, self-deceptive position.

I trust the Lord. No, God expects us to be wise. And Judas' bag was like a savings bank, where you keep it there for future use.

And I want you to show you a verse in that connection in Luke 19, in verse 23. In the parable that we considered earlier, Jesus says to the man who had one mina and didn't do anything with it. Look at this amazing verse, Luke 19, verse 23.

Why didn't you put the money in the bank? You'd get some interest from it. Does Jesus believe in our putting money in a bank and that too in a savings account, so that you'd get some interest from it? That's in Scripture. He believes that we should earn as much as we can without sacrificing our soul, putting God's kingdom first.

We must save as much as we can without splurging everything on ourselves. And then we can go on to giving as much as we can. These are the simple principles of, John Wesley first described them many years ago.

Earn as much as you can, save as much as you can, and give as much as you can. Simple principles of the use of money, and Jesus was the one who taught it. So we come to the third point, which is giving.

What Jesus taught about giving. The very first thing that we need to learn about giving is here in John, Luke chapter 19, sorry, Luke 19. The first ten verses, we read about Zacchaeus.

He was a very rich man. The Lord did not tell him to give up everything like He told the other rich ruler because the cancer was not so widely spread. Zacchaeus said in Luke 19 verse 8, Lord, I give half my money to the poor.

And the Lord didn't say, no, you've got to give all. No, half is fine. So you see, Jesus' rules were not the same for everyone.

If the disease is more widely spread, He may say, give up everything, you love money too much. But in Zacchaeus' case, he gave half to the poor. And Jesus said, that's fine.

But then He returned. What did He give? He gave back money that He had taken wrongfully from others. So when we think about giving, don't just think about giving in the offering box.

What about giving back money which you have taken wrongfully from others in the past? That money that you have in your bank account, which is not righteously yours, you have earned it in some wrong way. You've got to give it back. It's one of the first things that I teach new converts in India.

You've got to give back like Zacchaeus. Otherwise, there's a chain on your leg and you're trying to run the Christian race. You won't be able to do it.

All your clapping and praising the Lord and doing all those wonderful things are not going to help your progress if you're not right in the area of money. If you're wrong in the area of money, you're wrong in every other area. Remember that.

And when He was willing to do that, you know what Jesus 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. But Jesus, 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, like Zacchaeus, 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 was 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 would say, we're okay.

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 chapter 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 say, 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 from 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 a 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 compulsion.

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 in many churches today.

He observed how, not how much. And he said, he called his disciples and said, I want to teach you something. And learn it.

He calls his disciples today and tells them, I want you to learn something. This woman, this widow, has put in more than all that is in that box. Because they gave out of their abundance.

But she gave sacrificially. So that's the second thing Jesus taught. And thirdly, Jesus taught that we must give wisely.

Luke chapter 12, and verse 42, we read Jesus saying, Who then is that faithful and wise steward? You see, we are stewards. That means the money is not ours. It's God's.

There's a verse in 1 Corinthians 10, 26, which says, Everything on earth belongs to God. That includes what's in your bank account. It belongs to God.

He's allowed you to use it for a short period. I'm a steward. And this money that God's given me, I have to be not only faithful, but wise.

That means when I give to God's work or anything, I've got to make sure where it is going. Is it being properly spent? See, I live in India where there are lots and lots of Christian organizations that keep sending letters to the United States and other countries saying we're doing a work here and give us money for this, give us money for this Bible school, we're starting this orphanage, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. I have found in India, I'll tell you, I live there.

Bible schools and orphanages are the biggest rackets, business rackets in Christendom in India. In case you didn't know. I live there and I know, I've lived there for 67 years.

I've traveled the length and breadth of India and I know what's going on. And here I find so many people who have given secretly, who have given sacrificially, who have given faithfully from the West, but not wisely. Without thinking.

They give, believing all these reports which they read and all these photographs. Well, please listen today. Who is that wise steward who recognizes I must not only give secretly, sacrificially, faithfully, but wisely.

I must be wise in where I give. There's a curse on those who give to the rich. I must give where there is a need.

And I want to say to you, it takes a little more effort to be wise in giving. And because we are lazy to make that effort, we just give to ease our conscience. That's not the way to give.

We must make a little more effort to be wise in our giving. I want to say this in conclusion. See, I lived in India and we've also done work in India for 30 years in many of our churches.

Because of all that we saw, that bad name that was being brought to Christ through Christianity in a country where 98% are non-Christian. And where people say, Hey, we know what you fellows are, why you fellows are Christians. Because you want money.

And you fellows can never, your Christianity came from the West. And we say, no, it came from heaven. No, it comes from the West.

You can't live without this money from the West. You can't live without this support from the West. And I say, we're going to prove to you that we can do that.

And that's what we did for 30 years. We want to demonstrate that we don't have the right begging letters here and there to serve the Lord. It's so important, my dear brothers and sisters, by all means support God's work.

But be wise. Make sure it's going where it's being used for the glory of God. Where it's being used for the spread of the true gospel.

Where people are being led to Christ. And where, not where people are lining their pockets. Don't give to people who are already rich.

But give to the poor. That's what Jesus taught. In conclusion, in 1 Timothy 6 we read, 1 Timothy chapter 6, and verse 7. We brought nothing into this world, and therefore we take nothing out.

But during this period, we came, all of us were born without even a stitch of clothing. We brought nothing. And when we go, we won't be able to take one cent out of this world.

But during this period, 70, 80, 90 years, God gives you money. You know why? To test you. When that rich man's barns overflowed with the crops, little did he know that God was testing him with the abundance that he got.

To see what's he going to do with it. The other, he said, Oh, I can build a bigger house now. I can do this, I can do that, all for myself.

But there was another man who multiplied his one mina into ten minas. And he thought, Boy, I can give something to God here. I can give something to my master.

Do you know that when God gives you more than you need, He's testing you? You didn't know it. Usually, you don't know it until the test is over. And, He was testing you throughout your 70, 80, 90 years on earth.

To see what you do. With this, With these little gifts He gave you, like money, time, friendships. Everything God gives.

What are you going to do with it? Are you only going to think of yourself? Then, you need to be saved. You need to be saved from your self-centeredness. Jesus came to save you from that self-centeredness, which is the root of all sin.

You need to be not only forgiven, but saved. So, what shall I say? What Jesus said, No more laziness. Work hard.

Earn all that you can, for the glory of God. No more wastage. Save all that you can.

And, no more selfishness. Give, as God has prospered you. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, It's easy to understand these truths in our mind. And, probably most of us who are clever here have understood. But, I pray that you will help us to apply this in our daily life.

Only you can save us from the love of money. Help us, Lord, each one, to yield ourselves to you, so that you can save us, make our lives fruitful for the glory of God. We pray in Jesus' name.

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