

“More with Your Money”

Luke 12:13-21

Introduction: Pg. ____ (Luke 12:13)

Sometimes we do not realize the benefit of getting outside of our bubble. As a kid, thanks to the sport of basketball, I frequently got outside of my bubble, and mixed it up with friends from different cultures, especially the African American culture in my town. I had the privilege of going down to the Martin Luther King Jr. Center where the music and dress and the swagger and the game was all raised to a different, and what I believed to be, a better level.

That was only the beginning. It's one thing to travel across town; it's another thing to travel across the world.

Have you ever been to a developing nation, a country significantly or severely underdeveloped economically? [Bring a cinder block.]

[Ecuador... Mud roads.... Alleys...]

Have you ever stepped into the home of people who live in a 12 x 12 house that felt more like a room, that consisted of a concrete floor, cinder block walls and a tin roof over their head. That was their life. I can remember thinking to myself: these people really live here. This is their home. Every night when their head hits the pillow at night, this is it. Every meal they share, it's right there. Don't worry about TVs and nice furniture and decorations. It did not exist in that home.

Honestly, it was more reminiscent of a jail cell than any home you or I would ever want to stay in, for one night.

But I can tell you what did exist inside of those four cinder block walls: joy, peace, love, contentment.

FCF: If you were in their shoes, would the same be true of you? That's a serious question for our consideration today. We are going to look at a story that will help us measure the degree to which we are conditioned to chase after the "American Dream." It will be (I assume) a challenging word for us, but I pray and I believe it will be a freeing word for us.

Story

- As Jesus continued to teach and perform deeds of kindness, his popularity skyrocketed.
- The first verse of chapter 12 says: "In the meantime, (PICTURE THIS!) when so many thousands of people had gathered together that they were trampling one another, he began to say...."
- Jesus told the masses what would threaten their devotion to him. He taught them about false teachers (which still exist today), before exhorting them to be bold in the face of persecution.
- And now someone in the crowd makes a request of Jesus. "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me?"

- Jesus immediately follows with a question: "Man, who made me a judge or arbiter over you?"
- But then Jesus took opportunity to tell him what he really needed to hear, rather than what he really wanted to hear. *VERSE 15.*
 - "Take care, [some translations say "Watch Out!"] and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." (v. 15)

- This was a pastoral instruction, delivered by a gracious teacher, full of love, *but* it was also a word of correction.

T: To drive this this point, he proceeds to tell him a parable. A parable is a story that explains spiritual realities by way of comparison. In this parable Jesus invites the man into what we could say is the secret to the generous life...

The Point: Worship your way to giving more with your money.

- The parable begins Verses 16-17. “The land of a rich man produced plentifully...”
 - This man hit the agricultural jackpot! ...so much so that he literally has more crops, and consequently, more money than he knows what to do with... His little barns would not hold all of his crops, so he plans and schemes (perhaps gets a little consulting on the side) and says, “I know the answer to my problem: I’ll just build bigger barns.”
 - Now, is this wrong? Is this dishonoring to God? It’s like asking: is it wrong to get a raise? To land a good paying job? No, not at all.
 - Sin comes not from our circumstances but from the inclination of our hearts to the circumstances.
- His sinfulness is exposed in verse 19... “Soul, you now have it made! You’re set! For years... So much so that all that is in your future is relaxation, exquisite meals, all the drinks you can dream of, and a lot of parties.”
 - He was big ballin... He was high rollin... He was ready to live like a King, but from God’s perspective, he was the King of Presumption!
- Verse 20: **But God says, “Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be? So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”**
- You say, “Well, Pastor Tanner, it is great you are using the story to teach us about doing more with our money and being generous to others, but here’s the catch *Pastor* Tanner, and you really should of thought of this beforehand, because I’m sure I don’t need to pay attention because I’m not rich.”
 - Is that the case? Most every American is filthy rich when compared with the rest of the world. But lets say, you don’t buy that.
 - Is this about being rich and what you will do with your riches? No. Why?
 - Because Jesus is not talking to a man who is Rich. He is talking to a man *who desired* to be rich, which means no one is off the hook.
- Your net worth is irrelevant when it comes to the relevance of this passage.
- It does not matter if you brought in \$20,000 or \$200,000. We all better listen up to what Jesus has to say.

At the outset, let me ask you: **“What is your gut-level response to the call of giving?”** (munson)

- Eager or Hesitant?
- Cheerful or Begrudging?
- Greedy or Generous?

T: Let me give you two principles I believe can lead you to a More Than me lifestyle through doing More with your Money.

I. Covet not the counterfeit god of money.

What is coveting?

- Coveting is desiring what belongs to someone else. This man wanted what did not belong to him (or belong to him yet)
- Coveting flows from a heart of greed.
 - And we all, at some level, struggle to beat down the greedy impulses that lie under the surface of our lives.
 - “Death and destruction are never satisfied, and neither are human eyes.” (Proverbs 20:27, NIV)
 - Are you human? This applies to you. We all want more, and the inherent meaning is: we all want more for ourselves!
- Ex. Baseball Cards as a kid... The toys change.
 - Shoes. Apparel. Jewelry.
 - Technological Gadgets.
 - Experiences and Entertainment. P.
- There’s another issue in play... Coveting endorses the vision that what we have really belongs to us.
- Check his thought process **“What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.” (18)**
- Who’s money is that? This guy thought he owned everything, but in reality, every crop, every \$ of value, even his own life, was not under his ownership. It was on loan to be stewarded (or managed) by him, as gift from God.
- This is the difference between generosity and greed. “
 - **Generosity says: “God gives money. Therefore, my money is his, and I use it to glorify him.”**
 - **Greed says: “I earn. Therefore, my money is mine, and I use it however I please.” (Munson)**
- BUT do you know what the opposite of covetousness is? (Not a trick question here, team) Contentment.
 - **Covetousness says, “I never have enough.”**
 - **Contentment says: “Of course, I have enough.”**

Again, the issue is not the possession of money & material wealth. There’s nothing wrong with making more money. The issue is seeking to find in money what we were made to find in God.

Jesus is trying to help this man see: *Money is a counterfeit god*. He knows that this man, and he knows that we will, try to find the deepest longings for approval, acceptance, fame, comfort, identity, vitality, security, and pleasure through the vehicle of money, rather than through him.

- Identity & Vitality
 - Money brings me an identity and is the path to fulfillment.
 - You make a lot of \$\$, so what?
 - Is that supposed to impress someone? If so, who? If you have an answer to that, I would be curious if you should really want their approval.
 - Oh, but if I can earn a few more thousand, I’ll have life. If I could just get a nicer apartment, I’ll have enjoyment & satisfaction.
 - Jesus said: “a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”
- What about Security?

- I'm all set. I don't have to worry about it. I can relax man... I don't have to worry about a thing.
- What about Pleasure?
 - Not only can I relax, but I can eat and drink and be merry, which *is fine*, *IF* there is no resurrection.
 - This is what Paul said in **1 Corinthians 15:32: If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."**
 - Pleasure, enjoyment, and entertainment is one of the great hindrances to us being rich toward God.
 - Thursday night.. We went to my favorite Asian place in Raleigh (Pei Wei, exact same food as P.F. Chang's but on the cheap.). We didn't hold back. Got an appetizer. Then I got on the plane. I got a water, but she came by with these Cheese its. 0.75oz. 100 calories
 - "Not because I needed it but because it tastes good." - Food, Gluttonous. Money, Covetous.
 - That is the smallest example of how we are driven by the smallest desires for more of what we enjoy, and you can scale that 100 calorie snack up to \$100 purchases or thinking we need a home worth \$100k more.

Do you treasure God more than treasure? That is the question of this passage and that is the encouragement of this, because when you are, you will....

II. Be rich toward God not riches.

What does it mean to be rich toward God? Just look at this story.

- This man directed his money toward himself, toward his own plans. He was not rich toward God. He thought at the level of this life.
- Conversely, those who are rich toward God will direct our money away from ourselves and toward others, away from our plans and toward God's plans. They are thinking beyond this life, to the better life with God, forever. That's what it means to be rich toward God.

Being rich toward God reveals that God is the greatest treasure.

- **Craig Blomberg** says how we handle money is **"the most important test-case of one's profession of discipleship."** And calls **materialism: "the single biggest competitor with authentic Christianity for the hearts and souls of millions in our world today."**
 - Jesus constantly talked about money. He said, he if you want to follow me, You can't serve money and me. You can't have two gods. You have to choose.
 - Well, I don't think we should talk about that in church. After all, that's *my* business what I do with *my* money. (Anyone agree?) You're just like the fool in the story. I don't mean that to sound harsh. It's just the facts according to Jesus.
- Here's what I'm trying to say: There is not an area of our life that is "off limits to Jesus." That includes our \$\$\$.
- Is Jesus worthy of your abilities? Sure.
- Is Jesus worthy of your time? Yeah, I'll give him my time.
- Ok . . . **If Jesus is worthy of your ability and worthy of your time, why isn't he worthy of your money?**
- Devotion is the genesis of generosity. Everything starts with worship.

I would love to be the kind of Christian, and I would love to pastor a church where the primary motivation for giving is not compulsion and it's not even need, it's desire born out of devotion. This is what should compel us to do more with our money!

- Why? Trinity (Bountiful, effusive, abundant, generous)
 - Giving reflects the heart of God.
 - **“Every gift breaks the barrier between the sacred and the mundane and floods the mundane with the sacred. When a gift is given, life becomes extraordinary because God’s own gift giving flows through the giver.” - Miroslav Volf**
- Why? The generosity of God hit its height in the cross of Christ.
 - **“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.” (2 Corinthians 8:9)**

T: The essence of the gospel motivates us, but so does the advance of the gospel.

This is why what we do *every Sunday* is so important. We collect an offering, so that more people can experience the joy of knowing Jesus. The church is God's primary vehicle for his mission in the world. Always been that way. Always will be that way.

I want to encourage every one of us toward **Mature Giving (Where are You?)**

Missing (No Giving) > Immature Giving > Mature Giving > Generous Giving

What does mature giving look like? What describes a mature giver?

- **First:** Don't give God your leftovers. We see this principle in Proverbs 3: **“Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce.” (Proverbs 3:9)**
- Voluntary: Not because we have to, because we want to.
- **Cheerful:** Not because we have to, because we love to.
- **Systematic:** We give on the regular. If you give once or twice a year, that's not super systematic or regular.
- **Proportionate:** The New Testament does not seem to stipulate a 10% gift, but I do see that as a good starting place for consideration. Why? If the people of God contributed a tithe of their income (i.e., 10%) before Jesus came, how could we now, in light of what we have experienced in Christ, seek to give any less? The idea is that we are all contributing together. All doing our part to see Redemption Hill thrive in the mission God has given us.
 - Listen to the words of **2 Corinthians 9:7** – **“Each one must give as he has decided in his heart (Systematic, Proportionate), not reluctantly or under compulsion (Voluntary), for God loves a cheerful giver (Cheerful).”**
- **Sacrificial**
 - **“I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare. In other words, if our expenditure on comforts, luxuries, amusements, etc, is up to the standard common among those with the same income as our own, we are probably giving away too little. If our charities do not at all pinch or hamper us, I should say they are too small. There ought to be things we should like to do and cannot do because our charitable expenditure excludes them.” - C.S. Lewis]**

Which of these is most difficult for you? What will it take for you to move forward toward mature giving.

Missing MIA > Cut eating out? Unnecessary bills? Cheaper purchases? If you are visiting, we really do not expect you to give a dime today. If you desire to, then we will not stop you, but that is not our expectation. But if you call RHC home and you are in the missing category: that's not cool. It doesn't make sense to me. Give something. Start.

Immature Giving > Some of you have never had this modeled for you. Perhaps you've never been taught what it looks like, or you've never considered why giving is so important and how it reflects the heart of God. Hopefully, no one can say that after today.

Mature Giving > First, Voluntary, Cheerful, Systematic, Proportionate, and Sacrificial, which will set you up to be a...

Generous Giving

If you call RHC home, I want to call you to a lifestyle of generosity. More with your abilities, more with your time, more with your joy, and more with your money.

Our membership family actually commits to God and to one another to "steward our time, talents, finances, and spiritual gifts to further the mission of God through the church."

So what step do you need to take?

- Hopefully for many of us, it's just... **"Keep it up!"**
- But many of us probably need to... **"Level up!"**
 - Maybe you need to **Catch up.**
 - Maybe you need to **Adjust your giving.**
 - Maybe God would lead to a **One-time Spontaneous gift**, above and beyond your regular giving.
- What if each person, each family who gives, just gave \$10 more each Sunday through the rest of the year? That would close the gap on our giving by close to \$10,000 and I have a feeling many of us could do more than that. Some might say: I got it for \$5, 10, \$25, or \$50, or \$100.
 - Who's in for **The \$10+ Challenge: Giving above and beyond your weekly giving to close out 2016?** (to close the year)

Conclusion: **God is not after your money. He is after you.**

Do something a little different this week. Setup Offering... I want to invite our ushers to come forward.

Setup **PushPay** - Text **"Medford"** to **77977**