

"What Jesus Really Taught about Money"

Mark 10:17-25 (As Jesus was setting out for Jerusalem) And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.' " And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth." And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God."

TODAY: Two people: 1st, a rich young man: Their actions Jesus uses as examples.

First the rich young man:

- A very good question: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?"
- A great question, asked in a great way: earnestly, humbly (vs. 17 "ran up and knelt before him")!

NOTICE vs. 21 "Jesus... loved him..."

- First, the Lord challenges the young man's assessment of him: "Why do you call me good?"
- Then, the Lord challenges the young man's assessment of his own qualification for eternal life "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you *will* have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."
- This challenge leaves the man "disheartened" and "sorrowful".

TODAY: Two people: 2nd, a poor (old?) woman.

On the Tuesday of "Easter Week," Jesus was people-watching: sitting opposite the offering box!

Q. Why did he sit THERE?

Mark 12:41-44 And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

- She gave "two mites" (Greek: lepta) 1/64th of a day's wages. "A loonie" by today's standards.
- Mathematically, she gave very little. (She was one small coin up from giving the smallest gift possible.)
- Proportionately, she gave more than anyone else they saw contributing. ("more than all those" → "everything she had, all she had to live on")

Q. Why did the Lord sit THERE? Because he was primarily interested in people's relationship to God.

NOTES:

1. **Our relationships to God and to our money are directly related to each other.**
Can you see why this is?

- Our love for God requires us to give up control of our lives.

QUICK REVIEW OF LAST WEEK:

ACTIONS:

- Whole-heartedly accept what the Bible says about God owning you.
Psalm 100:2 "Serve the Lord with gladness..."
1 Corinthians 6:20 "Glorify God in your body."
- Whole-heartedly present your whole life to God.
Romans 12:1 "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice..."

- Our money is our power to control our lives. (Although our ideas about our own control of our lives might be as much an illusion as the concept of randomness!)

NOW BACK FOR A MOMENT TO THE RICH GUY...

- The man went away "disheartened" and "sorrowful". Why? Because he "had great possessions." (vs. 22)

- **SO NOTICE:** The man's great wealth did not help him in his quest for eternal life. In fact, it hurt him.
Mark 10:23 "How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" How difficult, exactly? Basically: impossible!

2. Wealth can be a serious disadvantage to a right relationship to God and lack of wealth can be a definite advantage.

- Jesus referred to this disadvantage in connection with the rich young man, but the poor widow demonstrates the advantage of lacking wealth.
NOTICE: It didn't cost her much time or effort or money to give everything she had. It cost her a loonie! The only thing it cost her a lot of was ... *what?*

(Actually, we don't know her motivation. We're left guessing.)

- Here's a guess: It took a lot of faith in God's ability and willingness to look after her.
- If this guess is correct, then her donation illustrates that our relationships to God and to money are related: Hence → **Matthew 6:24** "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

Relationship with God ↔ Relationship to money, in every life.

(And this is a much bigger deal when you have a lot of money!

Picture a rich man and a poor man standing looking at each other. One of them says, "I'm glad I'm not you!")

BUT NOTE: Christianity is not against wealth, *per se* → **1 Timothy 6:17-19** As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

ACTIONS:

- a) **Learn to think biblically about your money.** This is a part of "loving God with all of your mind."

Romans 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Which follows **Romans 12:1** from last week! We have to put off what the world teaches us in order to accept and act upon what God teaches us!

e.g. What it teaches us about our sexuality, our relationships, our use of time, our use of our money -- and just about whatever else comes to mind whenever we seriously consider becoming more committed to God).

For example:

- **"Pay yourself first!"** → **No! First you pay God.**
Proverbs 3:9-10 Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.
- **"Don't ever do what you can't afford to do."** → **No! Sometimes you SHOULD do what you can't afford to do!**
2 Corinthians 8:3 For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means...
- **"Tithing is not practical for many people these days."** → **No! Tithing IS the practical thing to do!**

A WEST LONDON CRASH COURSE ON TITHING

What IS tithing?

- Tithing is the practice of giving the first 10% of one's income to God.
- Tithing is a biblical practice → **Genesis 14:19,20; 28:20-22; Deuteronomy 14:22-29; 26:1-15; Malachi 3:6-12; Matthew 23:23**

Who or what gets that money?

- the church you belong to. (Perhaps you are not entirely in agreement with how your church is spending its money. Think a bit about the "church" that the widow was giving her money to! "Herod's Temple" !!!)
- the other ministries that God leads you to support.
- the needy people that arise in the course of living life. (Think of what it actually cost the Good Samaritan to be so good!)

What is the purpose of tithing?

- Collectively, it funds the work of God.
- Personally, it is an acknowledgement of God's ownership of our money.
Proverbs 3:6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

THEREFORE, it is extremely practical! Great things happen when we acknowledge God.

So the first 10% of what you earn goes to the Lord (to the funding of the Lord's work) and the remaining 90% funds the life that God means for you to live. (So with the 90% we also need the guidance of the Bible. In a way, more so!)

b) Use your money to live biblically.

- We honour or dishonour God by our use of our money.

Mark 12:30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'