

GOD'S PLAN FOR SOWING & REAPING

Jesus taught His disciples in this first public preaching campaign in His generation about how to keep our hearts free from the worry and striving entanglements of the cultural values of the world. He teaches in this 'Sermon On the Mount' preamble about the direct correlation between the things we collect and invest in to what our heart is connected to. Our heart will remain tied to whatever we place our value in. His call to us today is to participate with Him now to build His seen and unseen Kingdom, both now and into the ages to come.

I. INVESTING OUR TREASURES INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

- A. **Matthew 6:19-21** *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*
- B. Our IHOP-Miami Family is entering into uncharted territories. There is a fresh sense of grace and favor from the Lord to build! We are currently entering into three short-term phases in our corporate assignment in our region.
 - a. **Building the Corporate Altar-** We are currently ministering to the Lord about 12 hours weekly w/ Live Worship Teams. We are setting a goal of building towards 24 hours by the end of this calendar year.
 - b. **Calling the City Church To Participation-** We will be hosting a regional conference in November with the help of Director and Staff from The Prayer Room- Dallas. Our goal will be to invite other singers, musicians, and intercessors to partner with us to establish a daily/continual altar of worship and prayer. (You will hear much more about this soon.)
 - c. **Strengthening & Organizing Our Corporate Church Expression-** We are prayerfully considering the best use of our current building space to continue fellowship, worship, discipleship, and corporate ministry for this growing Church family.
 - d. **Relaunching Our Forerunner School-** We are working as a Team to prepare our Forerunner School for February 2024 to include practical and systematic worship and musicianship training, along with our biblical training and equipping.
- C. **Matthew 5, 6, 7:** In context to the ancient world, including in Jesus' generation, treasures and wealth consisted in clothes or changes of raiment, as well as in gold, silver, gems, wine, lands, and oil. Not much has changed today in most cultures. We value the things that we can purchase and hold in our hands.
- D. Jesus is not saying to forsake wealth and increased finances. He is simply saying to us to consider what we will exchange our resources in this life for. We will either purchase/exchange our resources for temporary materials or eternal materials. Temporary means they come to an end and do not get multiplied into the ages to come. Whatever we exchange and purchase from the Kingdom of Heaven will remain ours forever...AND will be multiplied to receive even greater.
- E. Jesus says, *"...lay up for yourselves treasures..."* God loves to give to us MORE.
- F. If our experience of the Kingdom of Heaven message has not affected every area of our lives with full provision and abundance, we are limiting the full power and provision of God's Kingdom. The Kingdom of Heaven causes more than enough to be received; in our health, finances, spheres of influence, thinking patterns, etc.
- G. The culture of the world values whatever can be experienced through the **5 human senses** (*taste, sight, touch, smell, & hear*). The primary pursuit for happiness is based on what we can receive and collect for

ourselves. The perspective of the Kingdom of Heaven is to use whatever resources we have received to serve God in love and to bless others around us.

- H. When we live our lives to give away our lives we will be rewarded with God's eternal life in Christ.
- I. **Matthew 10:39** *If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me, you will find it.* (NLT)
- J. The culture of the world outside of Christ rarely values the collection and pursuit of hidden and unseen treasures of life like joy, peace, kindness to our neighbor, faithfulness in relationships and work commitments.
- K. **Galatians 5:22-23** *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law (requirement/restriction).*
- L. **Romans 14:17** *for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*
- M. **Foolish Treasure vs. Wise Treasure:**
 - a. **Foolish-** Jesus calls it foolish for us to invest our time, heart, and money to collect and value things that are guaranteed to be stolen, lost, rusted, and eaten by insects, etc. These things might be nice and enjoyable, but they are temporary.
 - b. **Wise-** Jesus calls it wise for us to invest and store our treasures in Heaven where there is a guaranteed promise that these treasures will be safe and they will not perish or rust away. They are eternal and will last forever.
- N. **Matthew 6:22** *"The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.*
- O. Our heart and our money will always follow the sustained gaze of our eyes.
- P. What we set our eyes on will fuel the emotions of our heart. It's that simple! There is a spiritual battle for the soul of the Church of Jesus Christ. Most of the time we stop short in the battle for our hearts by standing in a defensive position. There is a greater resource available that will enable us to engage the heart offensively by fueling our hearts with the light and beauty of Jesus Christ.
- Q. **Matthew 6:31-33** *"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'" ³² For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your Heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things (food, clothing, etc.) shall be added to you.*

II. EXTRAVAGANT LIVING & GIVING

- A. We make a commitment to a simple lifestyle, pursuing an overflowing, free heart, in the area of money which is critical in a time when many will be pursuing the building of their "own kingdoms"!
- B. Many have lived lives of overspending to the point of being in debt. Maybe you have found that your debt has locked up your ability to give extravagantly. We must learn to be responsible and disciplined in our finances. Recklessness and inconsistency is not an expression of faith. Faith grow through faith-ful-ness!
- C. **Matthew 6:6-** *"But you, when you pray, go into your room (closet/secret place), and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."*

III. BIBLICAL MODEL FOR GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS

- A. *“Commonly in a revival / movement of God / building of the House of the Lord, the leader(s) will spend more than anyone else to see the revival flourish. They set the standard of extravagance of devotion and worship and resource and sacrifice. Leaders must learn to set the pace. This is part of what it means to become a living sacrifice. Not that the leader ends up with less but that the leadership must give radically.”*
(Kirk Bennett)
- D. **Malachi 3:10** ¹⁰ *Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,” says the LORD of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.”*
- E. **Tithe** (Heb. *ma’āsēr*)- *tenth; the tenth part of a whole*
- F. **Law of First-Mention:**
- **Gen. 14:18-20** *And Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High, brought Abram some bread and wine. ¹⁹Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing: “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth.²⁰And blessed be God Most High, who has defeated your enemies for you.”*
- G. To tithe is to trust God directly with 10% of our money. God will release financial blessing on all who tithe. When we give 10% of our income to God, we discover that 90% with God’s blessing will go further than 100% without God’s blessing. Some say that they cannot afford to tithe. The truth is that we cannot afford not to tithe. God gives us \$100, and we give \$10 back to Him.
- H. Tithing is an act of entering into a financial covenant with God. If we bring 10% of our finances to the Lord, He will *“pour out a blessing...”* He will meet our needs with more than enough.
- I. **Malachi 3:10**- When we short-change God we rob ourselves. This relationship is far more than a one-way agreement! It’s a partnership. God is saying in essence, *“Come work for me & I’ll pay you really well.”*
- J. We are going to lose all of our personal earthly possessions at some point before Jesus returns anyways (**2 Pet. 3:12; Rev. 13:17**). Don’t hold on to those things so tightly.
- K. *“He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose!”* **Jim Elliot**
- L. This is a life infused with power. This is a growing reality for me and my family.
- M. **1 Timothy 6:6-10**- *“Now godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. ⁸ And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*
- N. **Deuteronomy 8:18**- *“...for it is He who gives you power to get wealth,...”*
- O. Determine what amount of the money that God has entrusted to you is “seed” to sow in the kingdom and what amount is “bread” to eat or to use for your personal life. Many have a pocket full of seeds, but without the fruit because they do not sow the seed.
- P. A few years ago, Ana and I determined to write out what we needed financially to maintain our family. Then, we said to the Lord that we would give away whatever we receive above that.
- Q. **2 Corinthians 9:10** *Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness (good works)...*
- R. **Luke 6:38** *Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”*

- S. **Luke 6:38** Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.” (NLT)
- T. It could be that your need for provision could be locked up in your ability to learn the principle of giving first and then receiving. What are you holding on to today? What is holding you back from experiencing a free-flowing heart in Jesus?
- U. **8 Reasons Why I Tithe & Give Offerings:**
1. **Tithing is worship to God.** I worship Christ for who He is and for what He has done in my life.
 2. **Tithing safeguards my treasure.** “Don’t store up treasures on earth! Moths and rust can destroy them, and thieves can break in and steal them.” (Mat. 6:19)
 3. **Tithing is my life, sort of.** My finances are earned by exchanging my time and physical energy through work. My work is an expression of my life, which in turn earns wealth. “...for it is He (God) who gives you power to get wealth.” (Deut. 8:18)
 4. **Tithing is my Family Contribution to the Spiritual Household.** I am helping to sustain the Lord’s House of Prayer for this city and this Church family. The church does great work and needs your support. “Bring the entire ten percent into the storehouse, so there will be food in my house.” (Malachi 3:8)
 5. **Tithing is connected to fulfilling the 1st and 2nd Commandments.** “Missions exists wherever worship doesn’t.” (John Piper)
 6. **Tithing is set up on the law of sowing & reaping.** Giving finances is like planting seeds with a promise that in time, a harvest will come.
 7. **Tithing is exercising my Father’s Character.** I am acting more like my Heavenly Father when I give cheerfully and gladly. “...for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Cor. 9:7)
 8. **Tithing is about pursuing God’s blessing above every other.** God promises to pour out a blessing to where there would not be room enough to receive. This is not always in financial returns, but in ways that only you realize. “Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do,” says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies, “I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won’t have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test!” (Mal. 3:10)