

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

DATE

August 13, 2023

SPEAKER

Brian Frost

SERIES

Jesus On Money

PART

3

TITLE

Send It On Ahead

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 6:19-24; Luke 16:1-14



© 2022 Providence Church (Raleigh, NC)

Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold. While generally accurate, parts of this transcript may contain errors.

Providence reserves the right to correct and/or remove a transcript at any time.

Providence family, it's great to see you. If you're a guest with us, welcome. I'm going to do something that I just know instinctively, human nature hates this, and that is I want to ask you if there's a seat next to you that's open, if you can squeeze in. I know you got your little place and it's really a great thing, but there's a lot of people in the back two corners who are standing and would love a place to sit down while we open up God's word. I know that's a little uncomfortable. Thank you for your willingness to move and do that. It really is good to see you. I hope that you're doing well. Last week I was gone and we had time with all three of our boys. In fact, they're all here this morning. Our son flies back out this afternoon, so it's been an absolute joy, but it is really good to see you.

If you have a Bible in your hand, turn with me to Luke chapter 16. As you turn there, let me tell you a little bit about next week. One Sunday or one weekend a year, we set aside a week to simply try to recount, to remember some of the ways that God has been faithful to us, how he's been kind to us, and to give him thanks for that. The Sunday will end with a meal, 5:00 PM, great big family meal here. You're invited six o'clock a service right here where we're going to sing and we are going to see a bunch of people get baptized, and baptism, if you're new to this or if you may be even thinking about this, is a gift. It is one of the great honors that God Almighty gives to people who have put their faith in Jesus Christ.

Because what baptism is is an opportunity for us to say in public and the first time we get to say it, we don't have to use as many words, which is nice because it's symbolic that we have put our faith in Christ Jesus, in His life, that He lived without sin, that He died on a cross for our sin, who was buried and He rose from the dead, and that we have placed our faith in Him for the forgiveness of our sins and for the hope of eternal life. So, if you have placed your faith in Christ, Christ himself ask you to be baptized in order to be able early in your journey with Him, of following Him to tell other people that you are not ashamed to walk with Him, that you're not ashamed to call Him your own. So if you have put your trust in Christ and you haven't been baptized and you like to talk about it, we simply want to be able to serve you.

There's already 40 people who have told us next Sunday night that they're going to be baptized and we've already talked to them. It's going to be an amazing night, and so you can join a host of other people who want to proclaim their allegiance to Christ and the fact that He is already saved them, He's already cleansed them, He's already forgiven them, and we're going to have an opportunity to celebrate. So let me pray. Father in heaven, we thank you so much for your grace in our life and as we open your word, we thank you that we get to open words of life, that you intend good for our life when we open up the Bible, even the times when you correct us, when you confront us, when you challenge us, when you convict us, when you expose us to some of the darker parts of our own heart, we thank you that you always do that for our benefit. So I pray that you would help us to lean in, to trust you, to want to be exposed.

Would you grow faith? Would you grow love, grow hope, grow humility, generosity, kindness in each of our hearts? For those who don't have a relationship with you, would you grow their understanding of what you have done or who you are, what you've made available for us? Would you draw people to yourself? We pray all of this in Christ's name. Amen. So this morning we finish just a real brief three week series called Jesus

on Money where He's really looking at our heart and using money as sort of a reflective pool to be able to see into our heart what we care about, what we value, what we love, and we have been looking at three different parables, or at least we looked at two, and this morning we're going to look at a third, which happens to be a kind of difficult one.

It's perplexing and it's been historically perplexing to God's people, but before we get there, I want to ask you to try to imagine something, and for some of us it won't be very hard. Just imagine you live in a place of opulence, a place of opportunity, of comfort, safety and security, and you and everyone around you seems to spend every living hour, every day trying to expand that opportunity, comfort, security and safety. Then all of a sudden in this world you get wind, you hear that your country, where you live, where you enjoy all of this opportunity is going to be overtaken by another. You're going to have a new leader, new laws, new morals, new virtues, a new system, and it includes a new economic currency. If this happens, it means that what you have spent all your time amassing won't be of any value for the new kingdom doesn't take our currency.

You look around and a lot of people, everyone has the opportunity to hear this news, and so you're looking at your friends and how people are responding to this news and some people, they hear the news and they scoff at it and they just continue to amass their own currency, currency that will have absolutely no value if indeed the new kingdom comes into power. Others, however, believe so deeply that they begin to live differently and choose differently to live on less and exchange every possible dollar into the new currency, a new currency that will have no value if the new kingdom does not come. So it's an ultimate test of faith. Is this all there is or is there really a new kingdom and a new currency coming? You see, Jesus says this isn't fictional. He says, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven."

As stewards, that's what we've been looking at, stewards are managers of what Christ has given to us. He's told us repeatedly, "It's all mine, everything is mine. And while you're here, I'm going to entrust a portion of what is mine for your stewardship, for your management," and He gives us all kinds of instructions. He tells us to give generously and to save wisely, to live appropriately. He tells us to pay our taxes. He tells us to pay off our debts. He tells us to enjoy what we have. He tells us all kinds of things such as take care of the needs that you have and the needs of your family.

In other words, we have to be balanced, we have to see all of His instructions. What we find here in Matthew 6 is really the most amazing insider trading tip in the history of the world and He gives it to His followers, and what He says is you cannot take what you have with you, but you can send it on ahead to heaven where you're going to live forever. In Luke 16, He uses a parable that is admittedly confusing and perplexing in order to reinforce this truth and this is what He says starting in verse one. He also said to the disciples there was a rich man who had a manager and charges were brought to Him that this man was wasting his possessions and He called him and said to him, "What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your management for you can no longer be manager."

The manager said to himself, "What shall I do since my master is taking the management away from me? I'm not strong enough to dig and I'm ashamed to beg. I've decided what to do so that when I am removed from management, people may receive me into their houses." So summoning his master's debtors one by one, he said to the first, "How much do you owe my master?" and he said, "A hundred measures of oil." He said to him, "Take your bill, sit down quickly and write 50," and then he said to another, "And how much do you owe?" He said, "A hundred measures of wheat." He said to him, "Take your bill and write 80," and the master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. For the sons of this world, a more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light.

I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth so that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings. One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? If you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters for either he will hate the one and love the other or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. The Pharisees, who are lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him. He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts, for what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God."

So if you just read that or heard it read and you thought, all right, I don't get that, then you're in great company, right? There's like 2,000 years of believers who read that the first time and thought, I don't know. I don't know what it means. What I want to encourage you to think about is really three things, not only today, but hopefully they stick with you and you begin to think about them this week. The first thing I would love for you to consider is that Jesus tells us to make friends who will receive us into heaven. He's going to take the first nine verses to get to this culminating statement. I tell you make friends who are going to welcome you into your eternal dwelling. Now how He gets to that summary statement, how He gets to that conclusion is strange and odd at first glance, but it's brilliant.

He's going to tell a story about a really bad person in order to teach us a really important lesson. He starts in verse one and He says to his disciples, "There was a rich man who owed a manager. Charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions." We've looked over and over at all of his parables where we are managers of resource. We all came here with nothing. We were all naked when we arrived and everything else, we're going to leave everything we have. It's ours for a season just to manage, and what He does is He gives us these resources to manage in order to test our heart primarily. Also to take care of our needs, but to test our heart. We'll get to that in a moment. Managers at this time, when Jesus was on the earth, they were really important people.

They were white collar executives with a tremendous amount of authority. They had proxy power. When the owner was gone or even when they were there, when the manager spoke, they spoke with the authority of the owner, and so he had ruling power not only over the workers and their wages, but also the crops, the harvest,

the entire operation and the debtors. In other words, when you had a chief manager over a wealthy estate, you actually have somebody who's living in opportunity, comfort, safety, security. They also had tremendous amounts of social position. They could walk into a room and everyone knew that's not the owner, but that person has proxy power. If I get in good with that person, then I am by default and good with the owner's resources. So it was a place of honor and everyone knew it was a place of honor, and we're told that in Jesus' story, by the way, this is a parable, which means He's not describing an actual owner and an actual manager. He's describing the world in which we live.

So He's inventing details in order to get to His conclusion and He says of him that he's wasting his possessions. Now there's probably like two people in the whole room, and even them it's kind of a half care that that's a present active participle, the word wasting, but why that's important to at least know is this wasn't a one-off. This wasn't a bad Monday afternoon where I thought I'm just going to try to take a few extra office pencils home. No, this was a lifestyle of waste. This was a lifestyle of making decisions to profit personally at the expense of the owner. Jesus adds severity to his actions by using the word here charges Diablo. That's where we get the word diabolical or translated, it's the word devil. In other words, this man's management wasn't simply wasting, it wasn't just like, oh, it's fine, it's not a big deal. We have so much. It was deceitful wasting. It was dishonest wasting. It was illegal wasting. It was sinful wasting.

So to draw us closer to the point, Jesus has the owner do something that is really foolish. In Verse 2, it says, "And He called him and He said to him, what is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your management for you can no longer be manager," and when He says, turn in the account, that doesn't mean just give me the book right now. Literally what he says is I'm going to give you time to get that book in order, and this is really foolish. You see, when you get fired or if you have to fire somebody, because you don't trust them, because of mismanagement, you don't give them the keys and proxy power and the client list and time to do further harm after you've already told them that they're fired because they can do more damage than they've already done.

Yet that's exactly what the owner told him to do. He could have just said, "You're fired. Give me everything. Give me your key card. You're out the door. Hire someone I trust and then say, go back and figure out how they manage the resources, how they mismanaged it," but instead he gave him the opportunity, and in that opportunity he had time, he had a window to be able to do something. Notice what he did, Verse 3. First thing, he's talked to himself and he says, "What shall I'm going to do? What shall I do? Since my master is taking the management away from me, I'm not strong enough to dig and I'm ashamed to beg." In other words, what can I do in this window of time to secure my future while I still have the keys? What we find here next from Verses 5 to 7 is the picture of human self-preservation that can be really nasty.

It can be deceitful, and that's precisely what Jesus wants us to see. He's describing the world and the economy in which we all live. You see Satan, when he looked at man, he sized up the human heart, and in Job Chapter 2, Verse 4, he says, "All that a man has he will give for his life." In other words is it is remarkable what we are willing to part with to keep our safety, security, opportunity and opulence. Many people part with their

integrity, they part with the law, they part with their friends, they part with their family, with their business partner, they part with all kinds of things in order to get my own. Satan looked at humanity and he says, “This is how unscrupulous they are. They will part with anything, even things they know are valuable to them so long as they keep their pillows so that life can be comfortable.” Shrewd self-preservation.

All of a sudden we learn how he’s going to do this, and starting in Verse 4, he says, “I have decided what to do,” and this is like one of the few master keys in the whole parable so you understand it. Verse 9 is the conclusion, but Verse 4 looks like Verse 9, and Verse 4, he says, “I have decided what to do,” and then you notice the words “so that,” mark that in your mind because you’re going to see that again in Verse 9. “When I am removed from management, when I’m fired, people may receive me into their houses.” Managers of an estate lived at the estate, so when a manager got fired, they didn’t just lose their job, they also lost their home. He needed a home. So what am I going to do? I know what I’ll do. I’m going to take the keys and the proxy power and the time that I have when I’m supposed to be accounting for my mismanagement and I’m going to multiply it in order to secure personal favors in the future.

That’s why he says he calls them one by one and he gives us two examples. He goes to one and he goes, “How much do you owe my master?” and he says, “A hundred measures of oil, olive oil, three years of wages,” and notice he says, “Write it quickly,” because that’s what thieves do. Listen, if it’s a value, it will be valuable tomorrow, “But do it quickly,” and he gives him a 50% discount without the owner knowing. Why? Because in doing so, he can say now 50% off and don’t forget who gave this to you. He goes to another, “What do you owe?” “A hundred measures of wheat.” That’s nine years of wages. “I’ll tell you what, let’s take 20% off your bill and don’t you forget who gave that to you.” It’s wrong, illegal and clever. Then Jesus adds a shocker.

You get to Verse 8, the first part of Verse 8, the master, when he finds out what he’s done during the season when he’s supposed to be writing out how he was mismanaging things, he commends the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. Now why in the world would Jesus invent and add details into the story where the owner is commending evil that has harmed himself personally? The only answer that I can see is that Jesus knew that in our dog-eat-dog world, people commend dishonest schemes that work. We do it all the time. We hear somebody else and they’ve laundered money or there’s some Ponzi scheme or they figured out a loophole in the warranty of their sunglasses or their phone that on month 11, if I simply break it, then I can get another one.

We, the people who live in the society with people who are unscrupulous are like, “Well, I think it’s kind of wrong, but got to give it to them. It’s a good idea.” This is what Jesus is putting into His story to help us understand, “Look, I know the world you’re living in where people commend schemes that work even when those schemes are illegal, even when they’re dishonest and dishonorable.” Then all of a sudden He’s going to add why. That’s what the word “for” forces because. This is why. Why did he commend him? For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light.

Now the sons of this world, He's describing as unbelievers, the sons of light, He's talking as Christians, people who have put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ and are trying to follow Him, and this is what He's saying. He's saying you look around the world today and what you find is you have all these people and they're amassing in tenacious, persistent, consistent ways, all of this wealth, this world that they know they are going to die and leave and they are more tenacious than the believers are in securing for them an experience in heaven where they're going to live forever.

Then all of a sudden He gives us, which is a little confusing, but the summary and it's Verse 9, and notice what he says in Verse 9. "And I tell you," meaning parable over, now it's teaching time, "Make friends for yourself by means of unrighteous wealth," notice just like Verse 4, "so that." In Verse 4, he says, "So that people will receive me into their homes so that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings." Jesus has told this entire story describing the brokenness and fallenness and dishonesty of the economic systems of the world in order to point us here. Make friends. The friends that Jesus is referring to are those people who are going to welcome us into heaven when we arrive because through us, whether it's our life or our witness or our resources, they had the privilege of hearing the gospel and responding in faith.

How are we supposed to make these friends? By the means of unrighteous wealth. Now this does not mean go break laws to build a bunch of money so you can give it to the church or to missions or to the poor. Unrighteous wealth is a metaphor. It's a metaphor for the currency, the money, the economic baton that has passed from person to person within this world that has been used in all kinds of ways. Jesus is not saying sin so you have money to make friends for heaven. No, because Jesus also says be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. You are a holy people.

We're not to be deceiving people. We're not to be lying to people. We're not to be this illegal, shrewd person. We're supposed to be this persistent and consistent person where we're saying, how can I leverage every day to live in godliness and take everything that I have to make friends? What is this unrighteous wealth? It's money. It's money. It's on the screen. It's also in your pocket. This \$100 bill was issued in 2006, which means that it has 17 years of circulation. This is what he means when he uses the words unrighteous wealth. Just imagine for a second how many sordid, nasty places this has been.

This \$100 bill has the potential to buy bananas, bread and prostitutes. The money in your pocket, it has a history. Some people have done illegal things to receive it and then it's been spent on all kinds of things good and bad. In other words, what he's talking about is this, that when he says, "Make friends by the means of unrighteous wealth," what he says is this, take this currency, redeem the resources that have been previously used in the sinful shadows of this world and invest them in ministries that proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to people who will hear it, believe and eventually welcome you to heaven, because you have been persistent and you have been shrewd, not in an illegal or a sinful way, but you have been tenacious to say I am going to leverage every single moment, every gift, every dollar. I'm going to enjoy what I have. I'm going to provide for my needs. I'm going to provide for my family. I'm going to pay my taxes. I'm going to save for the future.

Every dollar that I can part with, I'm going to exchange, and I'm going to exchange in order to make friends who are going to welcome me to heaven. So my question is, are you making friends who will receive you into heaven? The second thing I want you to consider is that Jesus tells us to consider our experience of heaven. Jesus knows that we all love to say, it's sort of a natural thing, "If I had more money, I would give." We all say it, but Jesus knows something else. Not only does He know we all say it, He also knows that it's a lie. He's not saying that we lie. He's saying that we are believing a lie when we think once I have a bunch, then I am going to be really kingdom minded. Once I have a bunch, I'm going to be really generous to people who are in need, people who are hungry, people who need a coat.

He knows that we're lying because He tells us in Verse 10, "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much." In other words, it is not about the amount, it is about the heart. That's why Jesus, it's such an interesting day, He goes, "Hey guys, let's go to the temple and watch people put their offering in the offering box." You would be mad if I did that, but we read Jesus did it and you get there and so they have some grandstand. They're like, "Okay, let's watch," and all of a sudden people start and they have these boxes, holes in them and they're dropping their money in. His disciples are like, "Wow, do you hear all that money that fell in there? That person gave a whole lot," and suddenly we're told that there was this poor widow who comes, and she only has two copper coins, two little pennies.

She drops them in and Jesus says, "All right guys, this is why we're here. I want you to know something. All the people that you've seen walk through here today and put money in that box, she just gave the most." Now economically she gave the least, but He said, "She gave everything she had." It's about the heart. Where your treasure is there, your heart is also, and this is so serious, this is why He says Verse 11 and 12, "If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, meaning if you have not sought to redeem money that has been used in the sordid, dark shadows of this fallen world in order to make friends in heaven through the gospel, who will entrust to you true riches and if you have not been faithful and that which is others who will give to you that which is your own?"

In other words, the Lord entrusts money to test if He is our treasure, and if we fail the test, we impoverish ourselves forever. So, what does that mean? True riches? If I lose out on true riches, does that mean that I lose my salvation? No, it doesn't. You see, Jesus came to the earth, He lived without sin and then He went to a cross or He died for our sin. He's buried in a grave, rose from the dead and He says, "If you trust in me, I will forgive you of all of your sin and all give you my righteousness. You'll be wealthy forever." Morally. Christ, let me say this, our place in heaven is established by Christ, but our enjoyment of heaven will be influenced by our faithfulness in how we manage the commodity that we call money in this fallen world.

A lot of people have asked the question, well, if there's no jealousy or envy in heaven, right? So we don't walk down the street and go, "They got a nicer mansion than me. Look at that mansion right there." There's none of that in heaven. Everyone's totally happy with what they have. So why does he talk about rewards? He talks about rewards in heaven. A lot of people have asked the question, well, what is the difference between people

who've been handsomely rewarded in heaven and people who haven't? I believe the answer to that question is this. Everyone's pretty happy with their own house in heaven and we're not looking around going, wow, they got a house and a fence. No. What's happening is this, the reward that we experience in heaven is our capacity to enjoy it forever. Some people will have a nice house and have less capacity to enjoy it because they spent all of their days amassing treasure for a world they knew they were going to leave.

Other people are going to experience greater depths of joy forever because of what they have done in response to their faith in Jesus Christ. So let me urge you to consider your experience of heaven. Third, Jesus tells us to yield to the king of heaven. By default, everyone who has an owner who commands attention over their life can't have another one. You have one owner who has full attention and commander of your life, you can't have a second, which is why in Verse 13 he says, no servant 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.

In other words, we all have to choose, am I going to yield to the king of heaven while I'm on the earth or am I going to yield to money when I'm on the earth? What he's saying here is this, is that one is always going to be leveraged to serve another. You find someone who has a fierce white-hot love for Christ, and what you'll find is that they're leveraging their resources to find greater enjoyment of Christ, but the same is also true on the flip side. You find someone, even a religious someone, who has a primary love for money and they will leverage Christ, the Bible, the church, people's faith in order to accumulate greater wealth for themselves even at the expense of others.

Do you love Christ more than money? Your receipts tell that story without deceit. This always brings conflict. You see, some of you, it's like two of you are like you love Christ and it's the only thing you love and you're like, "I don't know why anyone would send an upset email to Brian this week because everything that he said, I just totally agree with." For the rest of us, what you find is this, is that conflicted hearts, meaning we have two different loves, you hear this and you experience conflict, and then you typically create conflict.

That's exactly what we find in Verse 14. Notice what it says. It says, "The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things and they ridiculed him." The Pharisees were the religious people, and yet they were leveraging their religion and their faith for their true love, which was money. So when they heard all of these things, they scoffed, they ridiculed. Within the word ridicule is the word for nose. Literally they stuck their nose up at Jesus. Don't you see providence? This is where it's so important. If your heart is conflicted because you love money, you have placed yourself in a camp with people you don't really want to be associated with.

Jesus responds to this by saying, "You are those, you pharisees, who justify yourselves before men. But God knows your heart, for what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God." I know this is heavy, really heavy, but there has never been anyone in the history of the world who is more committed to your good and your joy and your everlasting experience than the person who spoke this. So trust Him. This is the

ultimate field test of your soul. Do you really believe in heaven? It will change if you really believe in heaven, what you do today with your resources, with your time, your talents and your treasures. So let me close with a few applications. First, I urge you to give consideration to the gospel of Jesus. Friends, none of this, none of this makes any sense to somebody who doesn't first see that Jesus Christ is the treasure in the field.

This is what Jesus wanted to teach, which is why he said another parable in Matthew 13, He says, "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure in a field which a man found and covered up, and then in his joy, he goes and sells all that he has and buys the field." In other words, this is what He's saying. For the person who looks at Christ and sees who He is, His nature, His character, His glory, His honor, His dominion over all things, and then what He did for us, what He willingly absorbed for us, and then what He willingly gives and extends is a gift to anyone who places their faith and trust in Him, it's like for that person, they've walked around a field and it's just all brush and suddenly they see this treasure, this unending, immeasurable treasure, and they don't just say, "I think that's nice." They sell everything, not in anger or opposition, but in joy, in joy, to say, I have to be near that treasure.

Have you seen Christ? Not the church, not religion, Christ as the treasure of your soul? If you're just seeing it, just call out to Him in faith and say, "I need you. Would you forgive me? I believe. I confess you as the Lord." He'll forgive you, save you. He'll be your treasure. Suddenly you're going to get a new heart, and a lot of the stuff that we just talked about, you're going to go, "I think I get it now." Second, let me urge us as a church to guard our heart against spiritual nearsightedness, but last week we saw a rich man building bigger and bigger barns in order to declare himself at peace, totally unaware that he was going to die that night.

Jesus called him a fool, and the reason he was a fool is because he was nearsighted. Now, some of us are nearsighted, which means that you can see everything up really close really well, but the further it is, it all gets really, really fuzzy, and so you need some corrective lens. You have a corrective lens and suddenly all of a sudden everything that's far away, it's like, I can see it now. Every single one of us is nearsighted spiritually. We see what is here in the world, and we said, I need bigger barns, and so God gives us a corrective lens and He says, "Look at heaven. It's not about a nicer car. You can only see what's right in front of you. Think about forever and ever."

This is what Jesus said. He said, "Do not lay up for yourself treasures on earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven," and then notice what He starts talking about, eyesight. He says, "The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness." You walked in, the lights are on. If your eyes are working, the light, your eyes receive the light and you can see things so you don't stumble around the room, but if your eyes aren't working, even when the light is on, you bump into things because you can't see. He takes that metaphor and He says, "Now let's talk about your heart."

He says, "The light is on. The truth is in front of you, and the heart that sees it, can then navigate this whole

world, totally aware of the next, but those whose hearts cannot see it, their eye is bad. Not only do they bump around this world, but they're totally unprepared for the next." Third, we urge us to direct our resources to make friends in heaven. I've already said we need to be balanced as managers. We're supposed to save and live and enjoy and pay taxes and all these other things. So the answer to the sermon is not go out this afternoon and sell everything you have, give it all away and say, "Okay, God, I did it." No, He tells you to pay taxes in a couple months, and so you need to prepare for it. But if your eyes are working spiritually, you're going to see that it's really important to part with as many minutes, talents and treasures as possible to reach people and grow people in the gospel.

Let me just urge you, I say urge you, let me commend you for your faithfulness. So many of you, you've just got so many friends, not just here. Think about the children, the students, the investment that so many of you make that just building it. You're making friends. You think of all the ministries, you're making friends. All the money that you have given this place isn't the only place that you can give, and I'm not going to ask you. It's between you and the Lord where you give the money. Some of you're making so many friends, it's just so good. Let me just introduce you to some of your friends. Not by name, but by sight.

I realize they have a block over their face because they live in China and it's illegal to do what they're doing. This is a little church. It wasn't there a few years ago. We were in contact with a little Bible school and there's a guy and all of a sudden he begins sharing the gospel, and he becomes their pastor. He begins to disciple several of these people and they start sharing the gospel, and now they've become pastors, and we, as providence, because you give so generously, are supporting all of these leaders, and all of these people have heard the gospel partially because of your investment. They're your friends. You got so many friends. I'm so thankful for you. So before we commission out one more and then sing two songs before we go, let me give you a moment right now where you're at, just a moment, to pray about some of the things you just heard. Okay?

So Father in heaven, I ask that you would make clear that which is still confusing. I ask that you would give faith where there's still doubt. I ask that you would give assurance. I ask that you would give clarity. Thank you God, that no one has ever been more committed to our good than you. We thank you that you've reached us with the gospel, and that you've allowed us to hear it. We thank you that we get to leverage our lives and everything in our life to help other people to hear. So would you help us to seek clearly?

Thank you for the privilege now to send. We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Providence, this is Gretchen Deece, and she's been here at Providence for some time, and the Lord has placed upon her heart a desire to share the treasure that she's received and that is her faith in Christ, and so she's going to be spending about half a year overseas in Europe, in a place that is largely lost, sharing the gospel that we sing about, we talk about, we think about. We'd love to celebrate it here with people who haven't heard. So in Acts 13 we're told something so important, and He says there that the Lord raised up two people within their heart, a desire and a passion to say, "I have to go," and then the church gathered around them and they laid hands upon those individuals as a physical expression of something that was happened spiritually.

That was that the church, by their physical expression of love was saying, “We are here for you. Even when you’re not going to be here. We’re going to be praying for you. We’re going to be thinking about you. We’re going to be supporting you financially. We’re going to be writing to you. We’re going to be caring to you,” and so I want to ask you to look at Gretchen. You got her face. Don’t forget this face. It’s like all the other people that we have at Providence. She needs people praying for her, caring for her, writing to her, and I urge you to be able to do that. So let’s pray for her now. Okay. Father in heaven, we are grateful, so grateful for Gretchen. Thank you God for your grace in her life, to save her, to open up her eyes, to help her to see that you are the way, the truth, and the life and apart from you, there is no other way to get to the Father.

Thank you God for opening up her eyes to help her to see that without you, that she was lost, that she was spiritually blind, and that you have opened up her eyes, her heart and everything about her. You’ve forgiven her. You’ve allowed her to experience the joy of knowing the treasure of the whole world in Jesus. I thank you that you’ve called her out. Thank you God, that you have given her the courage. Thank you for the people in her life who have contributed to speaking truth into her life, to reinforcing this in her heart, to be praying for her, to give to her, to be able to go. As a church family, we thank you that we get to participate in that giving and praying and sending and loving and caring.

So we pray for her that you would protect her, provide for her, give her strength and encouragement and our prayer, God, we pray it again, is that people would come to faith in Christ because she goes. And so help us to be faithful to her as she’s being faithful to you. Help us to be faithful to you in the same way we pray all of this in Christ’s name, amen to providence. Let’s give thanks. Okay? Gretchen, we love you. We’re proud of you. Now I ask you to stand up and let’s sing together.



© 2022 Providence Church (Raleigh, NC)

Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold. While generally accurate, parts of this transcript may contain errors.

Providence reserves the right to correct and/or remove a transcript at any time.