

It's Not About the Money

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Good morning church. This morning we're going to have a pain-free conversation about money.

Our culture has a lot to say when it comes to money. Not all of it is healthy. But I wanted to play a short little game with you...I'm going to start a phrase and I want you to finish it for me.

- A penny saved is a penny **earned**
- Another day another **dollar**
- Money doesn't grow on **trees**
- It takes money to make **money**
- You can buy those a dime a **dozen**
- Put your money where your **mouth is**
- Get your money's **worth**
- Time is **money**

It's on everybody's minds...

posted: "If robbers ever broke into my house and searched for money, I'd just laugh and search with them."

Our culture has a lot to say...

The Bible also has a lot to say about money. How we relate with it and how we manage it. Because... Money is one of those ultimate tools. It is a master key that unlocks all other resources--If you have enough money, you can buy anyone to do anything. In that sense, money exposes the allocation of my heart.

Jesus is a great savior. As it pertains to money, He saves us from a host of artery clogging evils that collect around our heart: Here's 7 of them.

Jesus Saves Us From...

- Slide: Love of Money**
- Fear of Money**
- Lack of money**
- Worry of money**
- Folly with Money**
- Attachment to money**
- Enslavement to money**

Slide: Love of Money & Material things (Covetousness – teaches us fulfillment in Christ)

1 Timothy 6:10

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and by craving it, some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.

Slide: Fear of Money (Thinking that it's evil. It can be a blessing from God)

Deuteronomy 28:3-6

You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country.

4 Your descendants will be blessed,
and your land's produce,
and the offspring of your livestock...

5 Your basket and kneading bowl will be blessed.

6 You will be blessed when you come in.
and blessed when you go out.

Slide: Lack of money (tyranny of poverty)

Philippians 4:19

And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Proverbs 10:15

The wealth of the rich is their fortified city, but poverty is the ruin of the poor.

Slide: Worry of money (handwringing anxiety, teaches us to trust)

Philippians 4:12

"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

Matthew 6:8

Your father knows what you need before you ask him.

Slide: Folly with Money Management (wisdom to manage our resources well)

Proverbs 20:21

An inheritance claimed too soon will not be blessed at the end.

Slide: Attachment to money (frees us from stinginess, and makes us generous)

Acts 2:44-45

All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.

Slide: Enslavement to money (\$30k in consumer debt--that's financial bondage--financial freedom)

Proverbs 22:7

The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is a slave to the lender.

My goal this morning is not to give you money management tools though we need those to help us flourish. If you need help with money management, we have a class starting **Wednesday, February 5th**

- *Financial Peace University* (Dave Ramsey) – debt reduction & money management tools

My goal is to reset our relationship with money. Not that it's been wrong. Just to go back and examine the foundation.

Slide: Walt Disney said, *“We don't make films to make money. We make money to make films. Money should be a means and not a master.”*

“We don't work to make money. We work to enjoy and build God's kingdom on earth, and money is just a tool to do that.”

- The orphan attitude says, “if I don't have it, I chase it till I get what I want. It's up to me.”
- The attitude of the Father's child says, “If I need it, I ask for it and my Father provides it. And if the Father doesn't provide it then I don't need it. I already have all that I need in Him.”
- Love scorns wealth. The wealthy orphan will always crave the Father's love for the son.

Song of Solomon 8:7

Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot sweep it away. If one were to give all the wealth of one's house for love, it would be utterly scorned.

“Money is one of the greatest tools I have for expressing my love for God and His people.”
Love is the target. Money is the tool.

Turn to Genesis 14:17-24

Background:

- Marauding kings of the North sweep down and plunder the wicked squatting kings of the South.
- This is every day in the life of the ancient Middle East but also normal human behavior.
- It's the way the world is, not the way it's supposed to be.
- It is easier for us to covet and commandeer someone else's treasure than to put in the laborious work of cultivating our own: someone else's spouse, talents, vacation home, wisdom, or relational connections and job opportunities.
- In a night raid Abraham surprises and despoils the Kings of the North.

Genesis 14:17-24

- **V.18-20** an interjection into the text
- **V.20** This act of giving may seem out of place to you. The priest didn't demand this gift. God didn't command it. It was a response of honor. I am the beneficiary of His blessings and protection. I'm declaring, with my money, God is my great benefactor, it's only because of him that I am what I am. This gift is a swearing of allegiance, and alignment of interests with El Elyon and his patrons.

- **V.21** At first the King of Sodom's offer looks like Middle Eastern generosity, thankfulness.

World's System--Control

- The cannibalizing world of marauders and covetousness and greed and Mammon—that we live in, that lives in us--operates out of self-protection, control, and mistrust, self-interest. Contracts. People with resources have power. And they waste it on themselves.
- The King of Sodom knows Abram has done him a great service, knows that he owes Abram a favor—he feels indebted and he doesn't like it. He's not in control. He tries to turn the tables to his own advantage so that he can play Abram and use him.
- This isn't dirty money—there's nothing unethical. But it's dark money—there's the shadow of an "agenda" lurking over it, with strings attached. Expectations of how you'll behave.
- In the world's system I may give you something, but there's a subtle chess game, a manipulation of the score, there's a reward I expect to my generosity. There is a coalition of interests. An appeasement of favors. And positioning for future power.
- We see this in Revelation. The mark of the beast is 666. It's a financial system used to control people.
- This is the way the world works, the way Satan tempts us. Once you swallow the fruit, he's got a hook inside you. He can play you. He becomes the puppet master. Your Baal that promises rain, Baal that promises you bountiful crops. He's got your appetite. He sets out the dog dish you run to. You look to his resources, to his guidance. You become a slave to your benefactor's interests.
- **John 14:30 the prince of this world is coming. He has no claim on me." (ESV)**
"He has nothing in me." (NASB) No strings to pull. No cards to play. Not a quarter inch of my heart belongs to him.
- Jesus wants to cut the strings of **Love**, and **Fear, Lack, Worry, Attachment** to the treasures of this world. You cannot serve God and Mammon. He wants to set you free so you can love him with your whole heart. Heroes of love.
- The king of Sodom sets the bait.
- And Abram smells a snake. He rebuffs the offer.

Abraham's Choice

Abraham's bank account with Sodom's gift verses giving God a gift. Cost differentiation. Abraham's choice cost him something. He could live high on hog, or live sacrificially for love of Yahweh

Abraham's choice communicates:

- Yahweh is my treasure, more than the wealth this world has to offer.

The principle of 10% tithe – that every believer sows 10% of all that I make into the kingdom-- is not about the Money--God isn't Ebenezer Scrooge counting penny stacks and giving you coal.

- He gave his greatest treasure to buy us back.
- The money is a thermometer that reads the temperature of your heart.
- **Slide: God uses the principle of the 10% tithe to reach your heart, and free your heart from the suffocation of self-interest.**
- In ancient world, the 10% was a grander statement of fealty.
- “I’m in league with this God. Everything in my life is a resource at his disposal or a blessing to his beneficiary.”

I am so thankful that El Shaddai - the God of More than Enough, frees me from the worry of money.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

For some of you, maybe all this talk about a gracious and loving and personal God sounds like a foreign language to you. Hopefully it sounds appealing.

Many of you may have grown up with the formalities of religion, and you learned all the Sunday school answers, but now you need help growing into your own faith, experiencing the power of Jesus for yourself, and not just from a text book. Others of you maybe are trying to take your first steps to grow in faith in Jesus. But you may still be sojourning out of the vacant promises of Sodom.

Next week we’re starting a discussion group called ***Conversations About Faith*** designed to help you take first steps in faith or build your first habits that help you grow stronger in this kind of trusting faith in Jesus.

- We’ve designed a questionnaire to help you evaluate, “how am I doing in my faith?”
- We’re making this questionnaire available to the entire community. And if you read it and realize, I have room to grow. We’d love for you to join us.

Next week we’re giving a chance for people to leave the service after worship, to meet the teachers, and kind-of test drive the conversational environment and get started in the class. Then starting Feb 9th, the group will be offered on Sundays during the 2nd service time.

Resolution: A declaration of allegiance

Yahweh is my benefactor. I’m in league with Him. I trust Him with everything I have. And I honor His leadership with the first 10% of my income. I commit to using all of my resources to express my love to God and love for his people. Amen.