

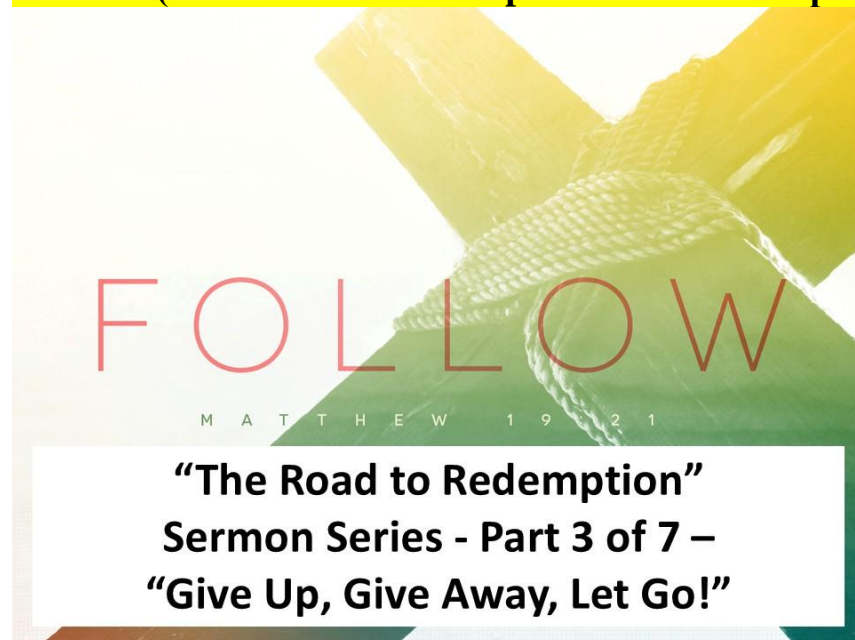
## **Sunday 03/23/25 – Panama Methodist Church**

**Sermon Title: “*The Road to Redemption*” Sermon Series: Part 3 of 7 – “Give Up, Give Away, Let Go!” Matthew 6:19-21, 1 John 2:15, Luke 12:13-21**

**(Slides 1-16 will be listed in order throughout this sermon 😊!)**

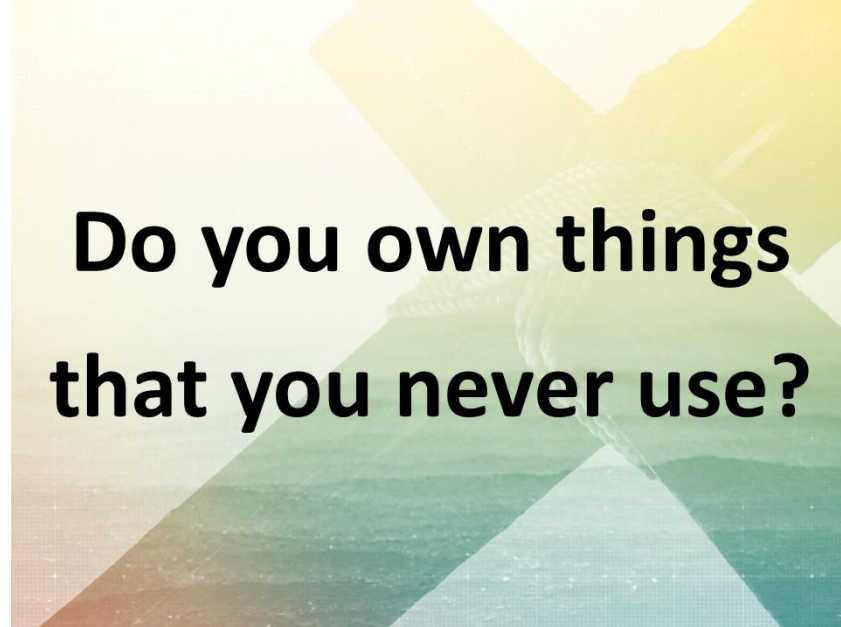
This morning, we are continuing our “Road to Redemption” sermon series, as we are symbolically walking together to the cross of Jesus Christ on Good Friday. Jesus will die for us all on Good Friday and rise to new life on Easter Sunday. This season of Lent is the path and the season to prepare for Christ to die for us and then rise again. Throughout this sermon series we have been discussing different things Jesus said, taught, and experienced, and how we can relate to them and grow in them, as we walk to His cross together. This morning, we are going to talk about the need we all have to, “Give Up, Give Away, and Let Go!”

**Slide 1 – (“The Road to Redemption – Part 3” – Opening Slide”)**

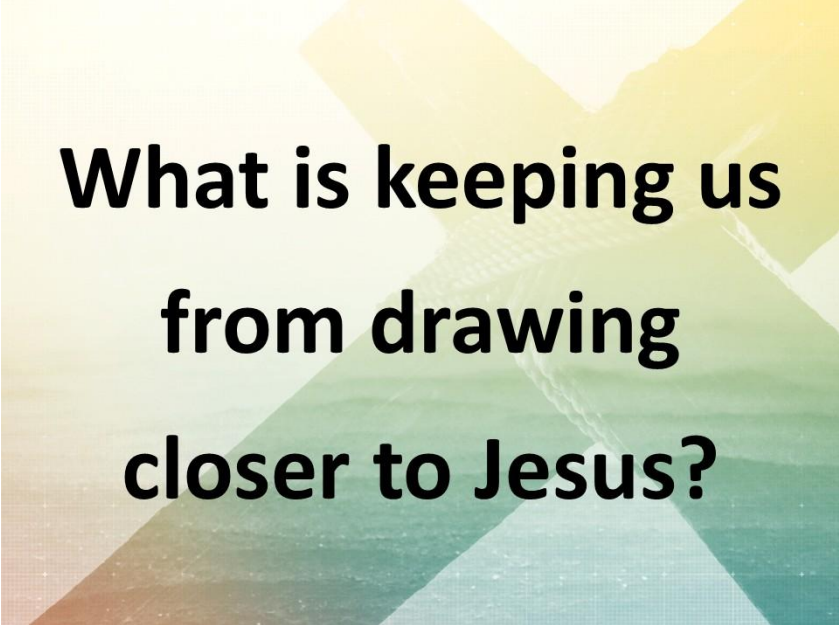


Since we are challenged in the season of Lent and always to “Give Up, Give Away, Let Go!” here are a couple of question to get us thinking, reflecting, and praying this morning:

**Slide 2 – (“Do you own things that you never use? - Question”)**



This could be clothing, possessions, things in the attic, the garage, the basement, or even a storage shed. How long have you had these things? Will you actually use them? If not, why not “Give Up, Give Away, Let Go?” Here is the second question for us to get us thinking about, reflecting on, and praying on this morning:



# What is keeping us from drawing closer to Jesus?

What, if anything, is going on in our lives that is keeping from drawing or growing closer to Jesus Christ our Lord?

As we are thinking, reflecting, and praying this morning, I am going to be talking about possessions and wealth. Possession and wealth by themselves are not a sin unless our possessions and wealth begin to possess us. If your possessions become almost like an idol, and if we worship wealth, how are we putting Jesus first? We can be thankful for what we have and all that we have accomplished, while at the same time not worshipping what we have. I have a couple of scriptures that I want to touch on prior to my preaching scripture from Luke 12:13-21 for this morning. The first scripture is Matthew 6:19-21. So, if you want to turn in your bibles or your bible apps to Matthew 6:19-21 we will hear what Jesus tells us about making possessions and wealth into idols. Here is what Matthew 6:19-21 says:

**Slide 4 – (“Matthew 6:19, NRSV”)**

## **Matthew 6:19, NRSV**

**Concerning Treasures**

**<sup>19</sup> ‘Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal;**

**Slide 5 – (“Matthew 6:20-21, NRSV”)**

## **Matthew 6:20-21, NRSV**

**<sup>20</sup> but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

So once again, working hard, getting ahead, and have possessions and wealth by themselves is not a sin. It is a sin though to worship things and wealth. Do we have

things that can we “Give Up, Give Away, and Let Go” of? Is Jesus the center of our lives?

One more good scripture before we get into our preaching scripture for this morning, is 1 John 2:15. If you can turn from your bibles or bible apps from Matthew 6 to 1 John 2:15, let us look at this verse of scripture together. 1 John 2:15 says:

**Slide 6 – (“1 John 2:15, NRSV”)**

## **1 John 2:15, NRSV**

**<sup>15</sup> Do not love the world or the things in the world. The love of the Father is not in those who love the world;**

I remember a classmate of mine in seminary school had a bracelet on his wrist one day. The bracelet just had the letters in caps “NOTW,” and the “T” was a cross. I could have asked the classmate what this meant, but I Googled it on the internet instead. I the bracelet that had the letters “NOTW,” meant “Not Of This World,” which I think is also a Christian clothing brand. What it means is that as Christians, as followers of Christ, we are in this world, but not of this world. The

Bible tells us that the world is fallen, and the devil is the prince of this world.

Keeping our focus on heaven, knowing that the things of this world are temporary and fleeting, is what 1 John 2:15 is trying to point us to. We need things to live and flourish on this earth, but we should not worship possessions and wealth. In fact, the early Christians or the early church was so attacked in part by the Roman Empire, because we would not make an image of God in stone, wood, or metal. Our God cannot be contained in things of this earth, and something made of stone, wood, or metal can quickly become an idol. The Roman Empire also did not like that we Christians claimed that there was only one God in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is bigger than anything on this earth, yet He created this universe and this earth. If we remember a couple of weeks ago when we talked about the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness for forty-days, one of the things that the devil offered Jesus after the forty-days of temptation was over, was all the riches and kingdoms of this world. The devil said that they were his to give and to take away. Being in this world, but not of this world is what Christ calls us to when we follow Him. Or another way to put is, "Do Not Love The World," as we can see a picture of:

**Slide 7 – (“Do Not Love the World - Picture”)**



This is why we are called not to love the world, but to love He who created the world.

In opening now to our main preaching scripture for this morning, I invite us a final time for this morning to turn in our bibles from 1 John 2:15, to the gospel of Luke 12:13-21. In this gospel reading, we have a story of parable from Jesus. This is often called “The Parable of the Rich Fool.” This story or parable has to do with whether our focus is on possessions and wealth, or on Jesus. Again, it is not a sin to have possessions and or wealth, but it is a sin to worship them, and not Christ. When we are blessed, God calls us to bless others. Here is what Luke 12:13-21 says:

Slide 8 – (“Luke 12:13, NRSV”)

## **Luke 12:13**

**The Parable of the Rich Fool**

**<sup>13</sup> Someone in the crowd said to him, ‘Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.’**

Slide 9 – (“Luke 12:14-15, NRSV”)

## **Luke 12:14-15**

**<sup>14</sup> But he said to him, ‘Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?’ <sup>15</sup> And he said to them, ‘Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.’**

**Slide 10 – (“Luke 12:16-17, NRSV”)**

## **Luke 12:16-17**

**<sup>16</sup> Then he told them a parable:  
‘The land of a rich man  
produced abundantly. <sup>17</sup> And  
he thought to himself, “What  
should I do, for I have no place  
to store my crops?”**

**Slide 11 – (“Luke 12:18-19, NRSV”)**

## **Luke 12:18-19**

**<sup>18</sup> Then he said, “I will do this: I will  
pull down my barns and build  
larger ones, and there I will store  
all my grain and my goods. <sup>19</sup> And I  
will say to my soul, Soul, you have  
ample goods laid up for many  
years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.”**

Slide 12 – (“Luke 12:20-21, NRSV”)

## Luke 12:20-21

**<sup>20</sup> But God said to him, “You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?” <sup>21</sup> So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God.’**

So, the story or “The Parable of the Rich Fool,” is found only in the gospel of Luke 12:13-21. It is also interesting to note that this story or parable arises around a dispute over inheritance. Jesus had been speaking to large crowd of thousands, and amidst all of this, a man said this to Jesus in Luke 12:13, once again, ‘Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.’ Interestingly enough, Jesus said in response to this man in Luke 12:14-15, ‘Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?’ Jesus then said to the crowd, ‘Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.’ You see possessions are temporary and money is a tool, but Jesus always points us back to him. In fact, Jesus told a crowd in Matthew 22:21 about paying taxes with a coin with the Roman Caesar’s face on it, this:

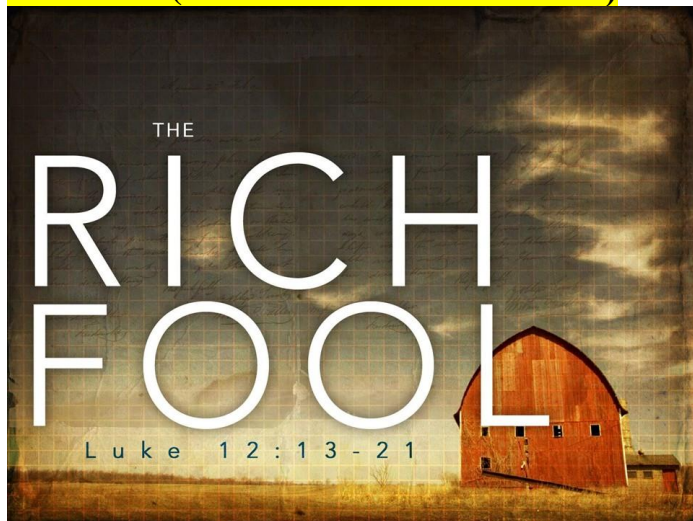
**<sup>21</sup> “Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s’ (Mt. 22:21, NRSV).**

Jesus always points us to God, over possessions and money, and in fact, Jesus' primary focus is faith in Him, over all else. We have the opportunity to give as the Holy Spirit calls us to give, but Jesus calls us first and foremost to holy living and faith in him.

After this question in our gospel of Luke 12:13-21 reading for this morning, Jesus then gives us "The Parable of the Rich Fool." What Jesus says to us in this story or parable, once again, is that "The land of a rich man produced abundantly." As a result, the "rich man" decided to "pull down" his "barns and build larger ones." The "rich man" then said in those larger barns he will store all his grain and goods. In fact, the "rich man" said, after tearing down the smaller barns, and building the larger barns, he will, once again, say to his own soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, and be merry." So, the "rich man" is going to basically forget about everything else, his neighbors, and the world around him. He is just going to "eat, drink, and be merry." The assumption is that the "rich man" will do this until he dies. When will he die though? Once again, in Luke 12:20, it says, "But God said to him, "You fool!" This very night your life is being demanded of you. All the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" Then, once again, this gospel lesson ends with Jesus saying in Luke 12:21, "So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God."

In the early Christian Church, often the generosity of wealthy families, not always, but in many cases, allowed Christians to be protected in order to conduct its mission and ministries. People with early means also helped Jesus' ministry on earth. When we put Jesus before wealth and possessions, we become grateful for what we have but not worshipping what we have. None of us get out of this life alive, with the potential exception of living the end times in the Book of Revelation. This said, billionaires will all die one day, as even their immense wealth and possessions cannot save them forever. If God has blessed us, we can use some to bless others, but none of us will escape the human reality of an earthly death. The only exception will be, once again, if we are alive in the end times of Book of Revelation. Here is a good picture of the parable of the "rich fool":

**Slide 13 – (" Luke 12:13-21 - Picture")**



The "rich fool" builds larger barns to put all of his things in, so that he may live for years. None of us know though how many days or years we have left. So let us put

our trust in Jesus, and in this season of Lent and always, may we “Give Up, Give Away, and Let Go!”

In discussing how this applies to our lives, let us make sure we understand what we have discussed this morning:

#### **Slide 14 – (“Application to Our Lives # 1”)**

##### **Application to Our Lives # 1**

- **Luke 12:13-21**: known as the Parable of the Rich Fool, warns against prioritizing material possessions over spiritual riches and emphasizes that true wealth lies in being rich toward God, not oneself.

How can we work hard, be grateful for what God has given us, but not worship possessions and wealth? In this season of Lent and always, how can we “Give Up, Give Away, and Let Go!” Further how can we be happy with what he have and not be covetous or desire more and more?

#### **Slide 15 – (“Application to Our Lives # 2”)**

##### **Application to Our Lives # 2**

- **Guard against Covetousness**: Jesus warns against the desire for more and more possessions, reminding us that our lives are not defined by our wealth.
- **Seek Spiritual Riches**: The parable encourages us to focus on building a relationship with God and seeking spiritual treasures rather than material ones.

Seeking Christ, while giving away what we do not use or need, giving up what we can go without, and letting go of anything that keeps us from Christ are all good things to do in this season of Lent, and in general.

Lastly, we are called to live with a purpose, and to not be a “fool.”

**Slide 16 – (“Application to Our Lives # 3”)**

### **Application to Our Lives # 3**

- **Live with Purpose:** We should use our blessings and resources to serve God and others, rather than hoarding them for ourselves.
- **Don't Be a Fool:** The rich man's story serves as a cautionary tale, reminding us that our lives are fleeting and that we cannot take material possessions with us into eternity.

As I call the praise team forward, let us remember that on Good Friday Jesus gave up his very life for us, and when he did, he was not focused on possessions or wealth. In this season of Lent and always, let us continue to work hard, but let us be grateful for what God has given us. May we be generous, may we “Give Up, Give Away, and Let Go,” as Jesus gave us his very life for us all. Amen.