



TRANSFORMATION
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The Crossing Church
Las Vegas, Nevada

OPENING

This week we are continuing our 3-week study called **After\$hock**. Maybe the best metaphor for 2020 is an earthquake followed by a series of aftershocks. Anyone who has experienced an earthquake may know that the aftershocks often cause more emotional trauma and as much damage as the actual earthquake. That is what 2020 has felt like to us and the aftershocks don't seem to end! Perhaps the area where we feel them most is our personal finances. Last week we talked about this foundational principle: when it comes to our worries we must put God first in every part of our lives including our money issues.

QUESTION: Since last week's study, what progress have you made in putting God first and letting Him handle your finances?

SCRIPTURE¹

Matthew 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Romans 12:2a Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Ecclesiastes 5:10-12: Whoever has money never has enough, whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless. As goods increase, so do those who consume them. And what benefit are they to the owners except to feast their eyes on them? The sleep of the laborer is sweet, whether they eat little or much, but as for the rich, their abundance permits them no sleep.

Deuteronomy 28:8 The Lord will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The Lord your God will bless you in the land he is giving you.

Proverbs 21:20 In the house of the wise are stores of choice food and oil, but a foolish man devours all that he has.

Luke 6:38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

OBSERVATION

Money was a common theme with Jesus. In fact, sixteen of His thirty-eight parables are about money. Jesus often referred to us as stewards of all of His Father's resources -- stewards being managers of someone else's property. The world tells us we are consumers, but not in Jesus' world -- there we are managers -- not owners who don't have to answer to anyone. Solomon also talked about money in the Book of Proverbs. His major theme was that whoever loves money never has enough of it because they are never satisfied. This is called greed, but greed has nothing to do with the amount of money we have -- we can be poor and greedy just as easily as we can be rich and greedy.

¹ All scripture translation is NIV unless otherwise indicated.

QUESTION: So, how greedy are you? How are you measuring your level of greed?

QUESTION: What don't you have today that you just can't wait to spend your money on?

APPLICATION

Our physical bodies express our mindset attitudes through different three postures: Closed fists, open hands with palms facing up and hands with palms turned down. Our mental transformation, as we become more Christlike, is obvious as we move from one of these postures to another -- a reflection of our hearts:

1) The Closed Fist Posture: The moment we clench our fists on what we consider to be our resources, we uninvite God from our finances. We hang on so tightly that the tension overwhelms us. The biggest barrier to moving from closed-fists to open-hands is not only greed for more – it is fear. We believe that we can prepare for our futures if we hold tightly to our money today. What fools we are! When we begin to release our grip and move from a scarcity mindset of “I'll never have enough” and invite God's involvement into our lives, we will see a transformation take place from worry, tension and fear to peace.

QUESTION: To what extent are you clenching your fists around your finances?

2) The Open Hand Posture: When we open our hands, we are opening up our lives to God's involvement into our finances. We are acknowledging that He is the provider and the owner of all of our stuff. The transition begins when we realize that every spending decision we make is a spiritual decision. That's not how we usually think about money, is it? When we pray, read the Bible, go to church – that's spiritual. But for us as are followers of Jesus, how we manage His money is also a reflection of our spiritual lives. We can make the same amount of money as the closed-fisted person who says, “I will never have enough,” yet we can say, “I will trust God with my money because it all comes from Him anyway.”

QUESTION: Where are you in making the transition from closed to open hands?

QUESTION: What do you understand about your finances being part of your spiritual life? How does this knowledge change how you deal with debt?

3) the Palms Down Posture: This is where the real transformation takes place – where our fists aren't clenched, nor are our palms up to receive, but our palms are down as we give. We become a conduit for God's blessing and trust that He can do more when we radically trust Him than we can on our own because He can do more with 90% of our income in His hands than we can do with 100% in ours. **We come to the transformational truth that we can't outgive God!!** He's the God of abundance.

QUESTION: What is your attitude today about Christian generosity? What are you telling the world about how much you want to bless God by the posture of your hands?

QUESTION: What do you understand about tithing and sacrificial giving? What are you doing with that knowledge?

This is not a prosperity gospel we are talking about here. This is not a “give so we can get rich” philosophy. If we are generous with God, He will be generous with us. If we are stingy, He will be stingy. The measures we use will be measured back to us. It is about being conduits and partners in God's purposes here on earth. It's all about our mindset that says we want to bless God with our giving and if we are blessed in return, that's a bonus not a motive! The Parable of the Talents is a perfect example of what God expects us to do with our money and the spiritual gifts He has given us. ²

The way we respond to pressures in our lives tells God which of us are strong enough spiritually to be entrusted with His resources. It wasn't when everything was going well, was it? It wasn't when our lives were stress-free, was it? The most transformational times are those difficult seasons of life where God stretches and grows us. Sometimes it takes a global pandemic – sometimes it takes an earthquake and the aftershocks - - to get recalibrated.

QUESTION: Think about the most transformational times in your life. What was going then?

QUESTION: Where do you see God blessing the part of your life that you release to Him?

² Matthew 25:14-30



PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we pray that you will begin to open our hands. We want to surrender to Your will. Then, as we include You in our financial plan, may You turn our palms downward as we become a conduit for Your purposes. We ask that You do this in Jesus' name. Amen.

QUESTIONS

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