

Harris Creek Baptist Church  
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Series: The Good Life  
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### Life with Money

#### **Matthew 6:19-24:**

**<sup>19</sup> Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup> But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. <sup>22</sup> “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. <sup>23</sup> But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! <sup>24</sup> “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.**

#### **1 Timothy 6:17:**

**<sup>17</sup> Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.**

#### **1 Timothy 6:9-10:**

**<sup>9</sup> Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. <sup>10</sup> For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.**

It's great to be with you guys this morning, back in the series, "The Good Life". And I want to start with a confession. This past, last, weekend, we were going on life group retreat. And I had just got Westin out from school, picked him up from school, and stopped by a gas station. I went inside and I overhear this conversation. In the gas station someone is purchasing a lottery ticket and I hear that it is a record jackpot. Unprecedented. 2 billion dollars. Anyone buy a ticket? (JP points to someone in the audience) I appreciate the courage, some of you were like (JP acts like he is very hesitant to raise his hand). Yeah, I bought one. I did. I got one. Listen, not something I have done probably 3 times in my life, but I'm thinking 2 billion dollars, you know I don't know how God wants to bless me. Maybe that's it. So, I get the ticket and I go and immediately shine a spotlight on it. Text the life group a picture of it. We are headed to someone's lake house. I text

them a picture of the lottery ticket and say, hey, next year we're going to be going to my lake house. And so we get out there to the retreat and we're sitting around the table and the topic comes up, the Powerball, the lottery jackpot, 2 billion dollars. And one of the guys goes, "Yeah, that's a tax on the stupid. You know you pay stupid tax." So he goes on to talk about how statistically unlikely it is that you would win and then goes and says, "Yeah, only stupid people would do that." So I was like, well I'd just like to raise my hand and say my feelings are hurt. And he goes, "You didn't buy one did you?" "And I say, "You didn't check the text did you?" He didn't, he did not. And so we had a good laugh and actually somebody else there had purchased one too and so they pull out their ticket and we put them on the table and we're just talking about this and what dawned on me in that moment is we didn't treat that ticket like a venomous snake. It was just a casual, kind of flippant, like, you know oh yeah, we might win a billion dollars, probably not, but... And we're just having this conversation and there's just a casual nature to it. And if given the option, do you want to win or not win, if it was up to me, I'd choose to win, and as I'm looking at my ticket and they read those 6 numbers and the numbers they say match the numbers on my ticket, I'm not going to think I've got cancer. You know what I mean? It's not like I'm going to be like (in a very sad tone) "Oh no, I won the lottery. Oh man. This is terrible. What a responsibility."

And you might be a little bit confused right now. You might be like, a venomous snake? Cancer? What are we talking about? That state of confusion I think is indicting of our current culture as it relates to money. Here's why: Because I think that if you were on a deserted island, hypothetically speaking, and it was possible to erase everything you knew about money, like you went back to zero and you knew nothing about currency, and somebody is trying to explain it to you, you have to learn what money is, and all you have to learn from is this book. So you start flipping through it on all of the things that it says about money, which is a lot, and even if you just get to Jesus and the thousand times he talks about money and you're just learning and you're trying to soak in, "What is this money? What is he talking about? Okay, it's some kind of spending thing," and you walk away from that. I think you would treat it more like cancer than the way we treat it today. Right? That's a big assumption. You have to wrestle with, "Is that true?" You hear that and think, okay, is that true? I'm going to show you, as we move into a text, we continue in our series "The Good Life," is this true?

And so if I had a box up here and I said "Hey, you can have the contents of this box. You can have what's inside." Before you say do you want it? Do you want what's inside? Let me describe it to you, let me explain it to you. Here's what it says, "If you desire what's inside, you will fall into temptation and in a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. With it you will leave the faith and be pierced with many griefs." Do you want it? I don't think you're going to be like, "Oh yes! Give it to me!" You're going to be like, "No! What is it, cancer? No! Is it a venomous snake?" Money is not bad. Like believe it or not a venomous snake is not bad, but we think it is. It's not bad, it's dangerous and if you believe the Bible, you would lead that with, "Oh, it's dangerous. That's dangerous"

1 Timothy 6:9-10: **9 Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.** And our problem is we don't trust the Bible. There's an enormous chasm between where we're at today and what the scripture teaches about money. It's going to be really hard for me to say something today, especially if you've been in church long, that you've never heard about money. It's going to be hard to wow you with an illustration or to take you to some verse that you haven't seen on the topic of money. No, the onus on me is to try to get you to believe what it says. Not see what it says, because you've seen it. You probably aren't going to hear something you've never heard before, but how do we leave here and simply trust the words of Jesus who said this thing that you want for those that have it, it's harder to get into heaven. And we're like, did He really say that? As plain as day! Couldn't have said it even plainer, even illustrated it with a camel. We just don't believe Him.

And so we're in a series called "The Good Life," and we're talking about, for the next two weeks, the good life and money. I'm well aware this is a space maker sermon, which is good, we're out of space, so I guess that's helpful. Week one we talked about stewarding our bodies. We've said this series is a stewardship series. Stewardship is how you use something that you possess that's not yours. You steward it. Week one we talked about stewarding your body to the glory of God. Week two we talked about stewarding your minds, the thoughts that come in our mind. How do we honor God with them? Week three we talked about stewarding our gifts and talents, the skills that the Holy Spirit gave us. How do we use those skills to honor God? And then week four we talked about stewarding our work, our jobs, our occupation, our professionalism. Even if it's in the home, how do we use that as a mission field for the Kingdom? And then last week we talked about stewarding our relationships, our life groups and the people that we have a relationship with. How do we steward them to the glory of God? And this week and next week we're talking about stewarding our money.

And as you think about the biggest problem at Harris Creek regarding our money, what do you think the problem is? Like what are the answers that we need regarding money here today? You might say how to spend it, where to invest it, how to make it. What would you say, our biggest problems regarding money? (JP pauses for someone from the crowd to answer, no one does.) Anyone? (JP points to someone who spoke up in the crowd.) Okay what? How to get more of it. How to talk about it. Oh, "we don't talk about it" is the problem. "How to get more of it" is the problem, multiply it. How do we share it? Spending money before we have it. How do we glorify God with it? I think our biggest problem regarding money is we think it's ours. We think it's our money.

We're talking about stewarding things that are not ours. See, God distributes the money and He gives it to people so they can get it where it goes. And somehow in our Christianity, like our

learning of the Bible and attending church, we have lost sight of that reality. All great answers, by the way, but as I think about the biggest problem that we have with money, is we think it's ours.

And so my main idea today is the good life cannot be bought. The good life cannot be bought. I think so often when we think of the good life we think, man if I just had more provision, you know if I had more than enough, enough for college, enough for a bigger house, enough for a nicer car, enough for a better neighborhood, I'd even be generous. Like as people need it, I'd give it to them. I could help others out, I could help out my family member who has that thing. I could help out my neighbor who came across hard times. If I could just have more, I could do more good. That would be the good life. But you know what, I think maybe the lottery is a tax on the stupid, not because of how unlikely it is that we would win anything, but because of what happens to people who do win or who do have resources. In fact, there was an article written by The Big Think that was actually debunking the idea that winning the lottery ruins lives and this is something that I pulled from that article. I'll just read it to you: "What started as an unfathomable blessing slowly reveals itself to be a curse. The downward spiral is usually caused by one or a combination of several factors. Winners manage the money poorly and it vanishes in a few years. Family and friends won't stop asking for cash, turning resentful with every dodged favor. Life without a job or responsibility becomes meaningless or in the grimmest of fates, the winner becomes a mark for local criminals as was the case for 20 year old lottery winner, Craigory Burch Jr., after a group of masked men murdered him during a home invasion in 2016. These scenarios have all played out among lottery winners." The article goes on to talk about a study they did at Stockholm University where they looked at 3,000 lottery winners twenty years later and this is what they said: "...we found there's no strong evidence that lottery winners are happier in the long run..." If you pay for something to make you happy that has never made anyone happier (JP shrugs his shoulders) Yeah, that's foolish. Right now you feel two things. You feel like, man I know that's true, money doesn't make me happy. It doesn't make people happier. I know that. I know that, I've seen that, and I don't believe it. It's a tension. We're like "I know, yep, money! For them, that's crazy! That guy murdered, and scandals, and all of those things, but I'd be different. It'd make me happier." We all feel that tension. Let's just say it. Say what it is. God's word is brilliant. It's absolutely brilliant and this may be the area where we have most left what it teaches. What a tremendous burden today.

I'm going to be in Matthew chapter 6 if you want to turn there. This is Jesus' teaching, our Lord and Savior, teaching what is known as the most famous sermon of all time in the history of history, we call it the Sermon on the Mount. Who's present? He's there by the Sea of Galilee, His disciples are close, crowds are gathered, and He's going to begin to address religious ideologies of that time. There's a well-known group there called the Pharisees, a sect of the Jewish faith, who have completely bought in to the prosperity gospel, which is to say that if you really know God and have a relationship with God, he will bless you monetarily. And like all lies from the enemy, there is a sliver of truth in there, but Satan has taken it, perverted it and twisted

it so that you would walk away from that and try to be your own god, obligating God to do things for you. That's what they had done, it's what we still do today, and it's why Jesus said this in verse 19. As I move through this text I'm going to give you 3 S's to help you steward money wisely. Where you store it, how you see it and before you leave today, who you serve, God or money. Straight from the text, verse 19. **19 Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.** And right there, if you've been in church long, you see a familiar text on the subject. One you've probably have heard before, maybe even know parts of it by memory. It has a baked in illustration for us that's really simple. A treasure is something that is valuable to us. We do not take what is valuable to us and leave it in plain sight where it can be stolen or destroyed by the elements or eaten by rodents. We take that which is valuable to us and we put it in a place that is secure, behind bars, with an armed guard, FDIC insured.

That's what we do, it's what Jesus said then, it's still true today. We hear that we're like, yes, and the problem is we're short sighted. We view it through a lens like this world is all there is, even though we know it's not, we live like it is. It's the tension. Oh I know, man, earth, not my home. The things of the world are going to grow strangely dim in the light of His... You know. I'm going to die one day and I'm going to be with God forever and ever and ever and I can store up treasures there and I don't live like this is my place. And you know this is my home, this isn't my home. I'm going to die soon man. No U Haul behind a hearse. But when we leave here, "Where do you want to go for lunch? Let's eat something delicious! Tomorrow is Monday, back to the old grind, stacking it away into a 401(k). Not finger pointing, not me! I don't really know what that means, where that threshold is, so I'm just going to hide behind my ignorance and assume I'm not doing that" all while we are and that's the truth. What do we do? Got to figure it out. We've got to figure it out. The good life is determined by where you store it, my first point.

### 1. The Good Life Is Determined By Where You Store

The truth is the earth is not all there is. That we are going to die much sooner than we realize and we're going to be somewhere forever and ever and ever and my latest favorite illustration about this is the womb. Like we all lived in another world one day in days past. We all lived somewhere for nine months. We were born out of this place, we were birthed forth into a new world where we will live for about ninety years. And you will say yeah but nine months is a lot less than ninety years. Ninety years relative to eternity is a lot less than nine months relative to ninety years. Does that make sense?

A lot less, like infinitely less. We are here but a vapor, but a moment, and then we're going to be somewhere else forever and ever and ever and in the same way that your parents, or maybe as parents, you prepared a nursery for someone to be born into, you have the opportunity to prepare a place where you're going to be forever and ever and ever. And I'm starting out the gates saying

I just don't think we think about this enough. So, if you're going to change one thing after this morning you think "How do I make sure that I think about this more?" And the problem for some of us is we just don't want to. It's easier to hide behind ignorance. It's just the air we breathe.

Right now as you sit there, you are in the process of moving away from the earth and toward heaven. Like when we say amen, and we dismiss, and you walk through those doors and back to your cars, you're going to be closer to heaven than you were when you came in here, if you are a follower of Jesus Christ, you trusted in his death and resurrection for the forgiveness of your sins. You're in this process of moving from the earth and to heaven. So, Jesus is just giving you really good mental health advice. Because if you store up for yourselves things in a place that you are slowly leaving, and you're moving to a place where you haven't stored things there, you're going to grow depressed and angry and angsty and sad and bitter. But if you have taken this life, and you've leveraged it for the next life, then as you move closer to that life, you grow more hopeful, more joyful, a better outlook, kinder. And so what can happen right now is you can self-assess, especially if you're in that fourth quarter of life. There's a lot of you here, I know you feel like this is all college students. It's actually not, we can look at the stats, there's a lot of people here, hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people here, in that fourth quarter. And you can self-assess. Am I growing more joyful? Kinder? More benevolent? Or am I growing more bitter? Angrier? Sadder?

As we read this text, it stirs up questions that I want to answer. I'm not afraid of the questions. God's not afraid of the questions. Questions like can we have nice things on earth? Questions like what does it mean to store up things in treasure? How do we store up stuff in treasure? The Bible is so kind that sometimes, I'll say often, where a question is stirred up in one place, it will answer it for us in another place. This is one of those texts. Where Jesus preaches the sermon of the Sermon on the Mount, later on he saves Saul of Tarsus, he becomes the apostle Paul. The apostle Paul writes a letter to his friend Timothy, who's the pastor of a church, and in that letter he provides a commentary on Matthew 6, in 1 Timothy 6.

So we can turn to 1 Timothy 6, we can lay that text over this text and it will answer some of those questions for us. Questions like can I have nice things on earth? What does that need to look like? It says in 1 Timothy 6:17: **17 Command those who are rich in this present world,** okay, when it says "**rich in this present world**" it's talking about you, because of where you woke up this morning, you are rich in this present world. You're like I don't have any money. Much of the world lives on less than two dollars a day. You can make more than two dollars in fifteen minutes standing on the corner of Speegleville Road and Old Lorena. Because of where you are, you are rich in this present age, so when he says "**command those**", he's saying command me. **17 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.** And right here he answers the question, "can I

have nice things on earth?” Or, “how can I have nice things on earth?” And he gives us a list. And I’ll read to you:

Be humble: Command them not to be arrogant. Be humble.

Don’t hope in it: Not to put their hope in wealth, it says. That’s a tricky one because I think we’re like, oh, I won’t hope in it. We all kind of hide behind, I don’t hope in it, I just save it up. “**...put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything...**”:

See it as a gift from God.

And then it says “**...for our enjoyment.**” So, fourthly, enjoy it.

So you say “what does enjoy it mean?” “Enjoy it” is a statement of utility. You can only enjoy things you use. You can’t enjoy things you store. You don’t enjoy anything in the storage box. You don’t enjoy anything on the top shelf in the closet. You do not enjoy those things. You’re storing those things. To enjoy something means use it, but the scripture is so kind, he’s going to show us how to enjoy it now. He’s going to expand on that word “**for their enjoyment.**” In verse 18 he expands on that. Here he goes. Here’s what enjoying it looks like: **18 Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.** Now listen, here’s how you know it’s commentary on Matthew 6, **19 In this way, they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.** That is the good life. Can the good life be bought? No! It already was purchased by God’s son Jesus Christ on the cross. He purchased for you in eternity, the good life. He died for your sins. He raised from the dead. You cannot buy the good life, it was purchased for you. You trust in Him. So what does enjoyment look like? What does it look like to store up treasures in heaven? He gives us another list:

Be rich in good deeds.

Be generous.

Share what you have.

If you cannot share it, get rid of it, because it’s an indictment on you. Be rich in good deeds, be generous, and share what you have. This is how you store up for yourselves treasures in heaven. This is how you enjoy what God has entrusted to you here.

I think we all kind of nod our head at that. We all want to be the rich Christian. Not a lot of people here today that are like, yes, my greatest ambition is to be the really destitute follower of Jesus. You know I want to leave this earth with nothing in the bank account. I want to have released it all. It is probably, depending on what you mean by that, more consistent with the Biblical world view, but listen, I did young adult ministry for a long time. There’s an elder, I know a guy, he’s an elder at his church, I think probably the most Godly human being I’ve ever

met. Lives in a giant house. It's not just big, it's beautiful. Craftsmanship, well designed, on a huge lot, in the really nice part of town. Not in Waco, you're trying to figure out I wonder who he's talking about. And this house, just to explain this house, I want to paint the picture, they've got great art on the wall. Not the stuff you buy at Amazon. The art has those little lights that hang over the art that perfectly lights the art so that you see it in its intended form. And just everywhere you look in the house it's just beautiful. The right furniture in the right room. Clearly professionals did this. They hung the art, they put the lights, and they put the furniture there. Beautiful pool, courtyards, not one but many places where you can go outside and entertain. Their kitchen is beautiful but they've got a kitchen outdoor. They have outdoor kitchens, that's plural, not just one. They've got multiple places where you can cook food and entertain people outside. They've got the pergola, they've got the outdoor patio with the roof over it. It's got heaters, guys, in Texas, so you can turn them on twice a year and stay comfortable. This is their house.

And, I've weighed this carefully because I've thought about this today, I'm going to say something, you don't need to argue with me, but he probably knows the Bible better than anyone in this room or in the town hall. This is a guy I've spent a lot of time with. I mean, he knows The Word. I mean he wakes up at 4:30 every day and spends an extended time in God's word. Every young adult man I've ever counseled has said, that's who I want to be. I'm going to be an elder with a giant house. I'm going to be a rich Christian, for the Kingdom. I'm going to give it away. I'm going to be generous, I'm going to be super involved. He gives 30 hours a week to the church of his time. That's who I'm going to be, man.

And like no you're not. You would hate it. You would absolutely hate it to use it the way he does. Do you understand? Every single weekend, to make it true, almost every single weekend, they entertain ministries. They bring them in their home and they cook for them and they serve them. They're bringing out the food. This is their life. They have five people living with them. Unrelated to them, and unrelated to each other, all who do ministry, who they said, hey, you may not be able to afford a place to live, come and live with us. Five people, ever since I've known this guy, has lived with them. They rotate in and out depending on seasons of life. Five people live with them. You think, I would probably do that if I had what he has. If you don't do it now, you don't do it then! Like if you don't use your two bedroom apartment in that way, you're not going to use your seven bedroom house in that way. Generous people aren't generous when they get stuff. They're generous when they have nothing. That's the truth. Your greatest moment to be generous is right now. It's not like you get an abundance and then you're like, okay now I'm going to be really generous with it. That's not even the heart of generosity.

**Verse 22: 22 The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!** We read that and we think okay, he's left the topic of money. But he's going to come back to that verse, you cannot



serve both God and money, so he has parenthetically, he says something that is extremely important. He begins to talk about the lens that you see the world through. That's called your world view and it's extremely, it's of utmost importance, when you talk about stewardship of resources. There's some Jewish contextual things happening here. I can't say it better than this commentary so I'm just going to read it to you. This comes from Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch who said this:

“Some Jews believe that a “good eye” designates an attitude of goodwill and kindness towards others. Someone who has this attitude in life will rejoice when his fellow man prospers; he will wish everyone well. An “evil eye” denotes the opposite attitude. A man with “an evil eye” will not feel no joy but experience actual distress when others prosper and will rejoice when others suffer. A person of this character represents a great danger to moral purity, according to some Jews.”

David Guzik of Enduring Word Commentary says this:

“Often a materialistic, miserly, selfish Christian justifies their sin by saying, “It's just one area of my life.” But even as the darkness of the eye affects everything in the body, so a wrong attitude towards material things brings darkness to our whole being.”

So my second point is the good life is determined by how you see.

## 2. The Good Life Is Determined By How You See

If you have a scarcity mindset, then you go through this world with an envious heart, a jealous heart, and a greedy heart. You think about, “How can I get mine?” A scarcity mindset is just “Hey I don't have enough. I need to store up more for college. I need to have more for retirement. There's not enough. I need to get more.” That's a scarcity mindset and if you go through life with that, then you look at every situation with envy, jealousy, or greed. The person gets a promotion and they say, “Hey, guess what, I just got a raise.” Outside you say, “Oh, that's so great. I'm so encouraged by you!” And inside you say, “Why not me? When is this going to happen? I need to find another job. I need to make more. I need to get ahead of the game.” because you view life as this miserable competition of how am I measuring up versus others.

And there will never be enough. And you know this is true, especially those of you who are here who are well resourced. Because you know the house has never been big enough. You've never been like, “It's big enough!” At this moment, moving forward, we're not going to take in any more. We're just going to funnel it all out until it's gone. People will email me once a week, on average, or more times, at least once a week, “Hey, I'm really struggling with pornography. I need to get well.” I get that email all the time, almost every day. Rarely in fifteen years of doing this has anyone emailed me and said, “Man, I just love money too much.” That tells me that we have a problem that we don't really see as a problem. We see porn more dangerous than that and we're just trying to get enough, but the problem is there's never enough.

A 2018 study from the Purdue University used data from the Gallop World Poll and found that the ideal income point for individuals is \$60,000 to \$75,000 for emotional well-being. When people earned more than \$105,000 their happiness levels decreased. Like Jesus said, more money, more problems. Notorious B.I.G. said it too, I know.

A survey in 2018 from LinkedIn found a clear link between more money and more stress for US employees - top earners taking in over \$200,000 had 68% more stress. While these higher incomes buy pleasures such as nice vacations and meals at restaurants, that stress can play a key factor in one's overall happiness.

And you and I and so many of us, we're not on a truth journey, we're on a happiness journey. We're trying to find happiness in this life. It may be our greatest inward desire and the issue, we're looking in the wrong places at lessons we cannot learn. 1 Timothy 6 says: **9 Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.** Love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Show me a branch of murder, I'll show you a root of money. Show me a branch of greed, I'll show you a root of money. Show me a branch of theft, I'll show you a root of money. **10 Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.** Do you know what word we want to put in that text? There's a word that you and I want to place in there. It says, **"Those who want to get rich MIGHT fall into temptation and a trap and many foolish..."** It doesn't say that. It says, **"Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction."** and you and I think, okay, well yeah, I've got to be careful because I might fall into temptation and into a trap and into harmful ruin and destruction. You already have! That's what we don't realize. We're already in the trap. Why don't we realize it? Because we're all in it! We're all stuck in the trap! We're in the trap. There's the walls and we're in it and it's the world and we have been trapped. We read that verse, like gosh, I really need to be careful to avoid temptation. You're so stuck in the trap. It's the worst kind of stuck in the trap. It's when you're stuck in the trap and you don't know you're in the trap. And the enemy is like, I got 'em. I got 'em.

This is where you're like, "What about you, man? You've got nice shoes. Didn't you build a house?" I did. I built a house. We did. You see the house, you don't see the wrestling. I wrestle. I want to be the very best steward of God's resources. And if I were to really get naked in front of you I would say this: There was a season where I think we did better. I'm talking about my family now. I'm talking about me. There was a season where I think we did better than the present. It was one of more sacrifice. It was before book deals, and we did better. But now, I'm trying to let myself off the hook. But I think, and this is a little bit awkward but I'm going to say it, I wrestle with, if everyone here did what we did, would we be a healthy church? And I think so. I think so. So, if you're like, "Well I'm not going to do it. I'm going to use you as my excuse not to do what I need to do." Then, I'm great to sit down with you and you can lead that meeting

and simply do what we do. I mean percentage wise. I don't even mean specifically. I want to be known for generosity and Kingdom living. And as a church, I want to be known for generosity and Kingdom living. But more than anything, I just want God to have our hearts. I just want God to have our hearts.

I got out of bed this week and (JP takes off his glasses) I can't see without these. So, if you ever like wave across the room and I don't wave back and I don't have my glasses on, I can't see. I'm near-sighted. I can see here (JP puts his hand about a foot away from his face) plain as day. I can see my hand, I can see all the details. Front row, anything beyond about five or six feet I can't even recognize your face. If it was Monica sitting right there, I wouldn't even know that it was her, it's that bad. So, when I wake up and I need my glasses, I can't find them, because I can't see. So I can't get out of bed and see if they're on the nightstand. I can't see if they're on the dresser. I can't see if they're on the vanity. I have to get up and scan like this (JP is hunched down like he's looking really closely at a surface) to try to find my glasses. So, I found them and they were on the vanity by the sink. I found them and I put them on but where they were by the sink, water had gotten on them. Stuff had splashed on them like soapy water. So the lens was covered with film, so I saw even worse when I put them on.

I say this to you because to see correctly close in this world, we have to start by seeing correctly far. We have to look at this world through the lens of eternity. If we do not look at every financial decision through the lens of eternity, we will not get that financial decision correctly. Every amazon purchase, every gift, every expense, every piece of furniture, every automobile, every home. If we do not see it through the lens of eternity, you will not see it correctly. We're not home. What we have is not ours.

Verse 24: **24 No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.** Where it says money there, it's the word mammon. Interestingly enough, mammon is a Chaldean god. It's believed today there's a demon with that name assigned to them. But, I want to show you this text, it just says something very plainly, and very binary, and I'm sure you've seen it but do you realize what it says. It says this; you cannot love God and money. Then it goes on to say something even more pointed. If you love money, you hate God. That's what it says. Some of you are like "Wait, hold on, it does?" Yeah. If you're devoted to money, you despise God. You will love one and hate the other and we think, no, no, somehow, I'm going to be the first person to walk that loves both. The good life is determined by who you serve. My third and final point.

### 3. The Good Life Is Determined By Who You Serve

Because the passage assumes that you will serve one or the other. No one can serve both. You serve two masters. You can't serve both. You will serve one or the other, God or money. And everybody knows that their master is their motivator. Whoever is over us, whoever it is that we

serve, that's our motivation for life. So, it's really asking the question, what's your motivation for living? Is it to get ahead? Is it to get more? Is it to be more comfortable? Or is it to know the King of Kings closer? You can look at decisions you make in the day-to-day. For example, a little while ago, a friend reached out to me, and just said, "Hey, I've got a tip, a pro tip." My buddy reached out to me and he told me about this crypto that was thirty dollars a share yesterday. Today it's trading at two dollars. He said it's going to bounce back up and beyond thirty dollars and we can get in on it today. And I'm hearing this and it's interesting to me how fast my heart leapt at that. "Oh! A chance to double up! Triple up! Let's go! Man, I'm in!" I'm thinking 401(k), college fund. But, I took a thousand dollars, I know you're going to think I have a gambling problem at the end of this. I took a thousand dollars and I bought this crypto. What blows my mind is how quick I am to take investment advice by way of a friend, from a stranger I've never met and not from the Word of God that says it so plainly. I'm like "Oh, chance to get ahead!" Jesus says in Luke 18 no one who has given up for my sake will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this age and the age to come. But we're like, Jesus, we don't believe you. That's confusing. We're just going to hide behind the confusion and keep taking investment advice from Forbes and Wall Street Journal and other places. Thank you, Jesus. Within three hours that crypto was worth \$0.0007. It was all gone. And what I'm telling you is that's what's going to happen with all of our resources. It's all going to be all gone one day. It's not that we make a god out of money, it's that money makes clear who our god is.

In summary, the good life is determined by where you store. The good life is determined by how you see. And the good life is determined by who you serve.

It says if you love money, you hate God. If you're devoted to money, you despise God. It's really heavy-handed it feels like. It's like, "Man, is that true?" I mean Jesus was on this earth and He just was preaching a sermon and I'm sure he was measuring his words carefully and the Holy Spirit took it and put it in the Bible. You can wrestle with, "Is it true?" It's just what it says. So, if we hired a private investigator, we're trying to determine who you serve. So we hired a private investigator and we say "Hey, I want you to examine their life, examine where they spend their time, where they spend their resources, what they do. Who do they serve?" It's binary. It's one or the other. Hey we're just trying to figure out, "Does this person, insert your name, serve God or money?" And that private investigator, what are they going to look at it? They're going to look at where you store, right? They're going to look at how you see. How you value things. And they're going to say, "Well you spend a lot of time at work." Do you work for Bible verses? How do they compensate? Oh, they pay you? Okay, alright. And so you get that money, then what do you do with it? Where do you spend it? How much do you save? What do you do with it? They're trying to figure out "Who do they serve, God or money?" I don't think we're a little bit off right here. I don't think this is one of those where at Harris Creek we just barely miss it. Listen, I'm not talking about Highland. I'm not talking about Antioch. I'm not talking about First Baptist Waco or Woodway. I'm talking about Harris Creek. I think we miss it by a lot. A lot. I

don't want to get up there and Him be like, "Why didn't you tell them? Why didn't you tell them what I said?"

What do we do? What are we supposed to do? Something very, very different. Don't leave me there. See you next week, okay? Let me pray.

Father, we need your help here. There's probably a lot of stirring in your heart right now. Maybe arguing, maybe disagreeing. I want you to pray. I want you to just ask Him what's true. Ask Him to show you if you're off or where you're off. Ask His Holy Spirit to tell you what it should look like. Bring your thoughts to God. This is not a time to let your mind wander and think about your neighbor and who's looking at you and where your purse is. Talk to God. There may be, I've been in church long enough to know, there can be this, "Oh," there's a lot of confusion on TV and stuff, "they're probably going to take an offering after this". No, we're not. If that's your attitude towards the church, here's what I want to say to you; do not give a dime to this place. Show up, and receive the word of God. I do not want a dollar from you. I want God to have your heart. So pray right now, ask him to have your heart. Say, "Lord, would you have my heart?"

What is at the foundation of a lot of our stewardship of resources is fear. You know it's that scarcity mindset. And if we're all in the trap, if I'm right about that, I really want to figure a way out. My concern is that the way out might mean a change we're unwilling to make even though that change in our own lives and well-being would be better than if we won the lottery. It's wild. Do you think we have an enemy and do you think he's crafty? Do you think he's good at stealing and killing and destroying?

And s, I know that God just wants what's best for you. That's what I want. So I have an assignment for you. I have an assignment for you should you choose to accept. Some guys are going to come down the aisle with baskets... I'm just kidding, that's not true. (The crowd laughs) That's not it. Here's your assignment. Would you just show up to life group and say who do I serve, God or money? Because they are that private investigator. They hopefully see aspects of your life. Like this is why in our life group I want them to know what we give and what we save and what we spend. I know that left to my devices, my own decisions, there's an angst there that I just live with. I don't know if it will ever go away. Maybe it's the thorn in my flesh. Am I going to be a minimalist? Am I going to have nothing? How much is okay and what does that look like? How much do I manage perception, which I don't ever want to do but sometimes people say you should and sometimes I think, I don't know, should I? And I just get stuck there. So, just this week as you meet with them, just say, alright, let's go around. Drink the truth serum. Love me enough to tell the truth, do I serve God or do I serve money. It's binary and you can only choose one. And then help me make the adjustments that I need to make to answer that correctly moving forward.

If we can help you, there will be a team of folks up here that would love to pray. I'm going to stay for a minute. I can't talk long because I have another thing after this, but I will stay until I

talk to everyone who wants to. There's also the welcome center out there. You can stop by and just gather more information. If you're watching from afar you can email us at [hello@harris creek.org](mailto:hello@harris creek.org). I'm so excited to continue in this series with you. I love you guys. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.