

Rev. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Matthew 6:2-4 | God, Money, and You
January 8, 2023

WELCOME:

- Please turn your Bibles to Matthew 6.
- Bibles in the back—our gift to you.

REVIEW:

Last Sunday, we looked at Matthew 6:1 and learned how not to be someone that we're not.

Jesus taught us how not to wear a mask—hypocrisy.

He warned us how easy it is to fall into the temptation of being a hypocrite.

We want people to like us—so its easy to fall into that trap.

But

He taught us how to live out of the new identity He gave us— through His blood on a Roman cross and the empty grave.

LW KEYPOINTS:

- Hypocrisy is the outward sin of using religion (God's Word, traditions, rituals) to cover up inward sin. (The more traditions and rituals you have in your life the further away you are from the relationship.
- Hypocrisy is never treated lightly in Scripture.

INTRODUCTION:

Today Jesus gives us his first illustration of hypocrisy—He provides the example of money and how to give it away.

prayer

Over the next two weeks, Jesus ~~gives~~ gives two more illustrations of hypocrisy—prayer and fasting.

So we've got money, prayer, and fasting as word pictures relating to hypocrisy.

All three are tied together, and it seems Jesus is working his way backward with ~~them.~~ *these illustrations.*

Because when you learn how to fast, you learn how to pray, and when you learn how to pray, you know how to handle money.

In other words, out of our fasting comes prayer, and out of prayer comes giving.

I couldn't help but notice how Jesus ties in hypocrisy with money—

Think about how close ^{*hypocrisy*} ~~this~~ was to Him the entire time He taught His Disciples.

Judas is the poster boy when it comes to hypocrisy.

And his hypocrisy was primarily focused on money.

I have two primary points this morning.

Because

Money and giving, many times, are unpopular subjects—especially within the church because:

- 1) It's abused.
- 2) We don't understand money Biblically.

There are 2,350 verses on money.

That's more Scripture than on the topics of heaven, hell, or faith.

Obviously, The Lord has a lot to say about ^{*Money*} ~~this~~ subject.

So my objective is to teach this text on money this morning— and then offer suggestions on how to make the subject of money less fearful in our own life.

Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 6:2-4 CSB

Matthew 6:1— *"Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. Otherwise, you have no reward with your Father in heaven.*

Matthew 6:2— *So whenever you give to the poor, don't sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be applauded by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward.*

Matthew 6:3— *But when you give to the poor, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,*

Matthew 6:4— *so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*

And dear friends, these are the words from the Lord Jesus Christ within the inerrant, inspired, and infallible Living Word of Almighty God.

EXEGESIS:

Matthew 6:1— *"Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. Otherwise, you have no reward with your Father in heaven.*

Verse one is what we ^{studied} ~~learned~~ last week...

Now, in verse two, Jesus gives us a common example of how people are hypocrites.

Matthew 6:2— *So whenever you give to the poor, don't sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be applauded by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward.*

So whenever you give to the poor— Your translation may say, “give alms, give a charitable deed.

The picture that Jesus is painting in verse 2 is mercy—

Mercy should be ~~very~~ familiar to us as it was one of the Beatitudes we studied:

Matthew 5:7—*Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.*

When you give money to someone who is truly poor, you show compassion.

The actual Greek word there has mercy at its root.

The three primary ways that giving was done in the first century were giving money, food, or clothing to the poor.

Notice that Jesus says, **“whenever”** *you give to the poor*—He doesn’t say “if.”

Giving money, food, and clothing away is an expectation from Jesus.

~~Once again~~ ^{→ format Mercy}, this is nothing new to the Jews.

God’s people were continually reminded throughout the OT to be considerate of—and generous to the poor, regardless if it was fellow Israelites or Gentiles.

People are people—and God commands us to have mercy on everyone—regardless of their race.

Matthew 6:2— So whenever you give to the poor, don't sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do...

This is an interesting verse.

Up to this point, there's no evidence from history or archaeology that Jews used a literal trumpet to announce their giving.

It seems unlikely that they would allow that in the synagogue.

We get the phrase, "blow your own horn." from this verse.

Can you imagine someone in the foyer of our church standing by the tithing boxes, and every time one of us donated—they would blow a trumpet?

Or if someone gave a lot of money, they would use a tuba?

Or if somebody tips God, they would give a little whistle?

No, they most likely didn't allow that in the Temple—Just as we don't here.

There is a second option for our interpretation.

It appears that Jesus is poking some fun at the people who want to be noticed for their giving—Hebrew humor!

Inside the temple were thirteen donation boxes that were narrow at the top and wide at the bottom.

They were designed so people couldn't steal money from them.

STORY: We had someone a few months back asking me how come we don't take an offering during the service.

And this particular Scripture came to my mind as we were talking.

And I said something like, we have two black boxes in the foyer, but they're locked, so you can't make change.

Needless to say, I haven't seen him back.

He didn't appreciate my wit!

All that to say that these boxes in the Temple resembled a ram's horn like this or a trumpet.

Although nobody blew any physical trumpets—

These donation boxes did make a unique sound as people dropped coins.

So people who wanted to be noticed would drop many coins— all at once.

Can't you just hear all the rattling and racket as those coins rolled down the box and then making a thud?

This practice was called “sounding the trumpet.”

It was this practice that Jesus is most likely referring to—and obviously opposes.

Matthew 6:2— *So whenever you give to the poor, don't sound a trumpet before you,*

Don't drop all your coins at once, sounding the trumpet...

as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be applauded by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward.

We spent a lot of time talking about hypocrites last Sunday, so I'll be brief here.

I have a pastor friend who tells the story of a first-time visitor who went way out of his way to give his first-time donation directly to the pastor.

The pastor refused to take it and pointed toward the donation boxes.

The visitor said, “no worries, pastor, I know how the system works.”

He then forces the check into the pastor's hand and says—“You’ll be getting those each week that I’m here.”

It turns out he never returned.

How easy would it have been for him to drop it off in the box—just like everybody else, or better yet, donate online where nobody sees a thing?

KEYPOINT 1:

Financial hypocrites make a point of giving publicly when they could easily give privately.

In Mark’s Gospel, Jesus presents someone doing it right.

Mark 12:41— *Sitting across from the temple treasury, (trumpet-looking donation boxes), Jesus watched how the crowd dropped money into the treasury. Many rich people were putting in large sums.*

So rich people were “sounding the trumpet” to draw attention to themselves.

Mark 12:42— *Then a poor widow came and dropped in two tiny coins worth very little.*

Mark 12:43— *Summoning his disciples, he said to them, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others.*

Backstory

How is that possible? What are you talking about, Jesus? She put in an amount that equaled less than a penny.

Jesus can read their minds, literally, and says...

Mark 12:44— *For they all gave out of their surplus (they didn't need the money), but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had—(Jesus' statement is so profound he reiterates)—all she had to live on."*

That's some crazy faith, my friends!

KEYPOINT 2:
Our giving is an act of worship.

It's an act of worship because our money is connected to our hearts.

Matthew 6:2— *So whenever you give to the poor, don't sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be applauded by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward.*

What is their reward?

It's the recognition and praise from other people.

They have their reward — was an expression that business people used to complete a financial transaction.

It's the idea of something being paid for in full.

The language that Jesus uses for *rewards* is decisive.

In other words, men's praise— is all they will ever get.

That is all they are capable of receiving.

The reality— is that hypocrites don't actually give away anything — they buy— and their reward is what they've paid for.

→ Man's Praise

Does this mean that it's wrong to give openly?

Must all giving be anonymous?

Not necessarily. In Acts 4:34-37, Barnabas sold a field he owned and laid all the proceeds at the apostle's feet.

We also know that Ananias and Sapphira, a husband and wife, also sold land—like Barnabas— but when they laid that money at the apostle's feet, they were struck dead.

What's the difference?

They both gave openly. — Apostles knew, church knew.

Why was Barnabas spared but not Ananias and Sapphira?

The difference was a heart issue—they lied.

The motive of Barnabas was to fund the church. — His motive was pure.

His giving was an act of worship.

The motive for Ananias and Sapphira was deception.

Their giving was simply an act.

They wanted to appear more spiritual than they really were.

They were wearing masks, playing the role of the hypocrite.

In this text, Jesus is concerned about how the giving is done.

Because our actions speak louder than words.

What we do trumps what we say we believe.

Let's fast forward two thousand years.

Has anything changed?

Giving is still done to be noticed.

If it wasn't, why does the world publish lists of donors?

Why does the world feature lifetime members, president's clubs, and century clubs?

Churches and para-church ministries are not immune from this temptation.

They fall into it too.

You can get your name on a certain brick on the building, your name on a plaque—or, my favorite...you can buy your own sanctuary seat.

But Lord have mercy if someone sits in your seat—especially if you paid for it!



Matthew 6:3— *But when you give to the poor, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,*

This phrase from Jesus is a bit odd.

Don't both of our hands almost always work in unison?

We use both hands to lift, carry, and catch things.

Our hands are together in work and play.

To *not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing* was an expression that referred to doing something spontaneously. ^{possibly}

In other words, if you see a person in need — give.

Do it without hesitation. Do it with joy. Don't ^{overthink it} think about it — just give.

And then—forget about it.

In other words, *don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing*.

The most satisfying giving, and the giving that God blesses, is that which is done and forgotten.

It is done in love and out of response to a need.

And when the need is met, we go about our ^{day} own business.

We're not standing around waiting for a trumpet to be blown—or to get a tax deductible receipt!

We don't want recognition. Why? Because we're disciples of Jesus!

We don't need to be applauded by people—our joy comes from being known and forgiven by God.

+ **Matthew 6:4**— so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

We gotta a whole lot of secrecy going on in these verses—and it's the divine kind of secrecy. ^{IT'S NOT A WICKED TYPE}

Our purpose should be to meet every need we can meet— and leave the bookkeeping to God.

PREACH:

At the onset, I mentioned that giving money away is an unpopular subject— especially within the church because:

- 1) It's abused.
- 2) We don't understand money Biblically.

Let's talk about the abuse of giving.

It's important for us to realize that people have always abused others when it comes to money.

Whether it was silver, gold, cattle in the OT, or printed money today.

And we can bank on the fact that abuse will continue until Jesus returns.

Secondly, we live in a time where there have never been more requests for your money.

Through technology and social media, every church, para-church ministry, and secular non-profit has its hand out.

In fact, there are 1.8 million churches and non-profits asking for your money.

The sheer volume of requests seems like abuse.

But it won't if we understand money Biblically.

So I'm going to give you some thoughts and key points.

Some of these will resonate with you, and some won't.

I pray that you can take at least one of these home and apply it to your finances this year.

Let's start at the beginning—before silver and gold.

Genesis 1:1—*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

KEYPOINT 3:

God owns everything.

Not just from Genesis to Revelation, but before the foundations of the world— to the new Heavens and the new Earth.

KEYPOINT 4:

God owns you through redemption.

1 Cor. 6:20—*You are not your own for you were bought at a price.*

That's why we purposely sang, "Jesus paid it all."

So before we move on, I want to make sure we're all on the same page—

God is sovereign— over the economy.

God is sovereign— over inflation.

God is sovereign—over retirement!

God is sovereign—in 2023.

He's not pacing in Heaven worried about the world's economy.

We are to trust and pray that God is a God of provision.

He is Jehovah-Jireh. He is the God who sees and provides.

We see God's provision all through Scripture.

However, along with God's sovereignty, there is human responsibility.

God is not going to mail your payroll check from Heaven!

He uses other people to do that—and there are consequences when we neglect our responsibility.

+ **Proverbs 6:6**— Go to the ant, you slacker!
Observe its ways and become wise.

+ **Proverbs 6:7**— Without leader, administrator, or ruler,

+ **Proverbs 6:8**— it prepares its provisions in summer;
it gathers its food during harvest. *notice that = plans*

+ **Proverbs 6:9**— How long will you stay in bed, you slacker?
When will you get up from your sleep?

+ **Proverbs 6:10**— A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the arms to rest,

+ **Proverbs 6:11**— and your poverty will come like a robber,
your need, like a bandit. *-when you least expect it*

In other words, God has given us a brain and he wants us to use it.

Work is not a part of the curse of Gen 3. *-The Fall* Work is a reflection of God's character.

Work was given in Gen 2.

Now, when it comes to your giving, let me suggest making it a part of your budget.

If you don't have a budget, let me suggest a book, "Total Money Makeover" by Dave Ramsey—that will get you started.

Crown Financial Ministries

It's the beginning of the year, so this is a great time to do this type of exercise.

Ask yourself, What are the priorities in 2023?

Do you need a fix the house, a new car, or go on vacation?

Plan those things out.

And then plan your giving according to Biblical principles.

KEYPOINT 5:

Tell your money where to go.

We don't want it the other way around -

Scripture only talks about two ways to give.

The first is to the local church, and the second is to the poor.

Let's look at the church first.

- Notice how specific God is w/ the command: the reward that comes from Him is not mine.

Malachi 3:10— Bring the full tenth (tithe/the first ten percent of your gross profits) into the storehouse (local church) — so that there may be food in my house.

Incor

↳ why?

The primary role of the local church is to teach the apostles doctrine—it is to give it's congregation spiritual food.

Test me in this way," says the Lord of Armies. "See if I will not open the floodgates of heaven and pour out a blessing for you without measure.

You can't control blessings

That's An Amazing Promise From God - No where else does God allow us to test Him - only w/ finances

And the reason for that is that the Holy Spirit reveals the percentage/amount. *to us individually*

The apostle Paul talks about giving both in 1 Cor and 2 Cor.

1 Cor. 16:2—On the first day of the week, each of you is to set something aside and save in keeping with how he is prospering,

From what God has given you, you are to give to the church.

Paul says the first day of the week—weekly.

Why would he make that a priority?

Because there's something supernatural to writing that check every week/two weeks to the church—whenever we get paid.

Writing that physical check

It's a reminder of God's grace in our lives. Secondly, save a certain amount of money and then pay your bills.

→ We are to pause? Thank God for His personal grace

When I used to write checks, I would *my title* it and then hold it up and say, "Thank You Lord!"—and put it in the envelope.

Now I pay online, and I fill out the little form and before I hit "Give", I say "Thank You Lord!" Click!

2 Cor. 9:5—*I considered it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance the generous gift you promised, so that it will be ready as a gift and not as an extortion.*

2 Cor. 9:6—*The point is this: The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows generously will also reap generously.*

SAME principle

2 Cor. 9:7—Each person should do as he has decided in his heart—not reluctantly or out of compulsion, since God loves a cheerful giver.

So rather than the OT law of a tithe, the NT says to give whatever you want—as long as it brings you joy.

Paul goes on to say, don't let anyone guilt you to where you feel like you must give.

KEYPOINTS
Here's the NT principle: *for give to your church.*

Decide what you will give from a joyful heart and then do it systematically/ weekly/bi-weekly.

And the great thing about budgeted systematic giving—it's not based on how much or how little we have.

Simply start with a ~~tithe or a specific dollar amount to the church and the other organizations~~ —and give it consistently.

Here's where the topic of finances and giving ^{our} lowers ~~are~~ anxiety.

When someone asks you to give to their organization—you can say...

KEYPOINT: #6

"I've already planned my giving for this year, but I will be happy to pray for your ministry."

Dear friends, that kind of statement relieves the stress when people ask.

There's confidence in telling your money where to go.

So that's what Scripture says about giving to your church.

The second form of giving that Scripture talks about is to the poor.

We are also called to give directly to those in need when we have the opportunity and ability.

The keywords are —“in need.”

2 Thess. 3:6— Now we command you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from every brother or sister who is idle and does not live according to the tradition received from us.

2 Thess. 3:7— For you yourselves know how you should imitate us: We were not idle among you;

2 Thess. 3:8— we did not eat anyone's food free of charge; instead, we labored and toiled, working night and day, so that we would not be a burden to any of you.

2 Thess. 3:9— It is not that we don't have the right to support, but we did it to make ourselves an example to you so that you would imitate us.

2 Thess 3:10— In fact, when we were with you, this is what we commanded you: "If anyone isn't willing to work, he should not eat."

So this instruction does carry over from the O.T.

2 Thess 3:11— For we hear that there are some among you who are idle. They are not busy but busybodies.

2 Thess 3:12— Now we command and exhort such people by the Lord Jesus Christ to work quietly and provide for themselves.

2 Thess 3:13— But as for you, brothers and sisters, do not grow weary in doing good.

Giving is an illustration of the cross.

When you give to the church, you are giving vertically.

God

When you give to the poor, you are giving horizontally.

people

Now, note what the apostle Paul is saying—discern who is begging for money.

Scripture clearly says not to support healthy beggars.

Those who have the capacity to work must work.

If not, we, as the church, are enabling them to stay poor.

However, as Christians, we should always err on the side of generosity.

We are to give freely out of what God has given us.

because
We will never out-give God.

Interesting to think about

God doesn't need your money, but you need to give it *AWAY*!

When you give your money away, it reveals the marvelous and miraculous work that God has done your heart—by His grace.

PRAYER

BENEDICTION

Col 3:15—And let the peace of Christ, to which you were also called in one body, rule your hearts. And be thankful.

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