

## **Entrusted with Your Money, Pt. 2**

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**Galatians 6:6-10**  
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In the nine years that I've been the lead pastor here, I've preached 381 sermons. As I've reflected on those messages many, many times, I've encouraged us to live in ways that will allow us to hear six words, "Well done, good and faithful servant." This comes from the concept that we've been looking at since the beginning of the year, the concept of stewardship. That is, living your life as a Christian, not like an owner, but like a manager, a steward. Living your life knowing that everything you are and everything you have has been entrusted to you by God, who is the owner. To manage it in ways that please him and benefit him, knowing that he's going to assess your management of his stuff. So far, we've looked at the stewardship of our lives and then the stewardship of our families and our finances. Next week, we'll look at the stewardship of two functions that we have.

One as an employer or an employee or a student, and then as attenders or members of a church. So today we return to finances, which makes this my fourth sermon on money in nine years. So if you think churches are frauds because all they're talking about is money, well, by that definition, this church isn't a fraud and I'm not either, because I've taught on money 1.05% of the time. So if you think that, just know we're usually going through what Jesus said and did in the book of John, and you just happen to be here by God's appointment for one of only four times I've ever talked about money. Now, while I haven't talked about money a lot, there is a preacher who did talk about it a lot, and his name is Jesus. He said radical things about money, things we say are true, but things that would drastically change our lives if we lived the things that he said.

Like Luke 6:38, "Give and it will be given to you. Good measure, press down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap for with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." That includes all kinds of things you could give, but it also includes our money. Or Luke 12:15, that, "One's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." Do we really think that? Or Luke 12:21, that a fool, "Is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich towards God." Which one are we rich in, truly? And then there's Acts 20:35 where Jesus says it is more blessed to give than, what? "Then it is to receive." See, we know it, but do we really believe it? See, based on the most basic reading of Jesus, there's an unbreakable connection between how we think about money and what we do with money on the one hand, and our Christian lives on the other. Either money acts like our God or God will set the agenda for our money.

I know money is an uncomfortable subject and because of that, many pastors, myself included, have avoided it, but Jesus didn't and we need it if we are going to grow as Christians. Have you ever noticed how money just dominates a lot of what we do during the week and a lot of our thoughts? You can talk back to me. It's okay. Yeah. And so as a result of that, we need God's

word on this subject. So starting Galatians 5:26, we begin to see in Galatians what a life submitted to the leadership of God's spirit looks like. And so verse 26, "It will be seen in the way that we treat people. There will be a humility there." And we'll see at the beginning of chapter 6 that there will be a love between Christians as God's spirit is as we are submitted to him in our lives.

And then starting in verse 6, we see what the spirit's leadership looks like when it comes to the money, the finances, the resources that God's entrusted to each one of us. Now listen, the flesh, this anti-God, self-centered part of us, the part of us that tries to get to be dominated by sin and self, that part is activated by money. You ever noticed that? And your flesh is going to be the part of you that you're going to have to do battle with as you listen to this message. Why? Because money is hard to get and when we get it, our flesh convinces us that that money is ours. However, the spirit helps us see that money, while given to us to meet our needs and given to us for our enjoyment, it's also given to us for far more. That God does his will in the world through our money.

Now, I say our money, but it's really what? It's really his money. We are merely God's money managers, his financial stewards. We don't own anything. We have money because God gave it to us. We manage everything, including God's money, to give him the best return on the investment that he made when he entrusted that money to us to manage. Or to be more specific, it is in your best interest both now and eternally to invest God's money in God's work. And listen, that should start in your local church. Now, if that statement was uncomfortable for you to hear, just know that it was 1,000 times more uncomfortable to say. But the truth is the truth. We are to use God's money entrusted to us to further his work in the world. And whether this church is your church or not, the place that that financial investment should start for all of us is the local church we call home.

Look at verse 6. "Let the one who is taught the word, share all good things with the one who teaches." Translation, if you are hearing God's word at your church, you should support it financially. This is one of the many proofs that God's spirit is leading your life. So let's break verse 6 down a little bit. Notice first, this is individual. Notice it says let who? What does it say? "Look, let the one." The one. This is each Christian. And notice the issue is not who's doing the teaching or how gifted they are but notice what is the issue in the text. It's not who's teaching. It's the content of the teaching. What is that? It's the word, it's the Bible. It's the gospel. If the word is what we're being taught, we are expected to give to that ministry. Giving to solid churches is how the word spreads to more and more people as they come to know love and serve Christ.

It all happens through the teaching of the word. And notice the instruction. The word "share" refers to financial support, just like it does in Philippians 4:15. And it is a command. It's not for a one-time inconsistent giving, but it's what's called a present imperative, which means a command to ongoing in the habit of financial support. And finally, notice the intimacy. He uses the word share. That word refers to a partnership, not a payment. So this is not a fee for goods provided. No, there's a togetherness here. Each one of us shares the resources that we have for the benefit

and blessing of a solid local church. The point is that you demonstrate faithful stewardship of God's money and that you're submitted to the spirit with the money entrusted to your care when you, ***point #1), Invest in Your Church Primarily. Invest in Your Church Primarily.***

If your church is devoted to helping people know love and serve Jesus, including helping you do that and they're helping you do that through the proclamation of God's word, then you should give there, and you should give there first, I've been a Christian for 30 years. This is nothing new, at least in the circles that I've been in. We should give God's money to the church that we attend. That's Christianity 101. Now think about the context of verse 6 for a minute. This is Christians in gatherings with pastors who are teaching the Bible. So this is not referring to parachurch ministries, relief organizations or charities. Those did not exist when this command was given, right? They didn't exist. Now all of those are great and they're used by God to do great things and they should all be given to, just not first. According to verse 6, if our local church is teaching the Bible, it should be the first place that we support financially.

Whether it's Old Testament priests or faithful New Testament pastors, God's people gave first to God's work and then to everything else and showing that God's work through their church was of first importance. I mean, that's why one Corinthians 9:14 says, the Lord commanded. So, "The Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel." Do you hear that? It's commanded. We are commanded to make sure that those who preach the truth to us get their living by the preaching that they do for us. And I say "us" on purpose because I'm not just the main preacher. The truth is preached to me as well and to my wife and to my kids and all of the ancillary ministries here at our church just like it is for you. So it's us. Now have you noticed how ministries promoting false teaching that deceives people and sends them to hell, all have all the money that they need and a whole lot more?

You ever noticed that? Why do you think the followers of false teachers are so generous while Christians being taught the word by solid churches aren't usually that generous? And you could say they're deceived, and you're right. That's true, but it's also just a sad fact that people who call themselves Christians give happily to frauds, while many solid churches scrape by, when you and I, we are to give where we are fed. Now listen, you need to understand that's not us. I'm not up here because, "Hey, I need you to give to this," or "Hey, I need a jet." Maybe if I said I need a jet, all of you would give a ton of money to this church. I just realized that's the problem, I need a private jet. Now we're going to see all kinds of money. But think about it. We're doing fine financially.

You notice how some people will say, "This church doesn't need my money." They do not give to the church they attend. Then if they give at all, they say something like, "I give to other ministries who need my money." That's not the paradigm God set up here. Did you see anything about need in verse 6? No. The paradigm God set up here is all who spiritually benefit from a church that is teaching the Bible should follow the spirit's lead and financially benefit that church. Now, I know that sounds self-serving and all the cynics in here are thinking that right now, but I'm saying this to myself too. I know pastors who do not give to the church that

employs them because they give it to other ministries. But in the Old Testament, Numbers 18:26, the priests, they were supported by the people's giving. And then it says from that giving that they received, the priests were to give 10% right back to God to support the ministry that they were already doing. It's not just for, "You guys need to do that." No, all of these messages, this is what we need to do.

If you're sitting there now and you're like, "That's nice, John, but I do not have two nickels to rub together. It's embarrassing, but I just cannot do this." Well, first notice verse 6 says, all good things. Most scholars think that's money, but it doesn't stop there. That phrase allows us to broaden itself out. So share the good that you have. Maybe you don't have money to give, but you have time. Invest that in your church. Maybe you don't have money to give, but you have a skill or a passion. Invest that into your church and then give financially when you have some money. Now listen, I'm saying if you don't have any money, which is probably not anybody here except maybe the kids and extreme cases for the vast majority of us, those words do not apply that I just said.

Because we all have an income and if we have an income, we should give part of that income to our church, but only if our church is what? Verse 6. Only if our church is what? Teaching the Bible. So it is a pastor's responsibility to make sure that this is the kind of place, the kind of church that God would want you to give your money to. Let me rephrase that, give his money to. And pastors do that how? Verse 6, we prove teachers, pastors, ministries prove that it is worthy of our primary financial support only as it is teaching the Bible. Which means it proves that it is not worthy of our support if what? If they don't teach the Bible? How many ministries out there are swimming in money and yet they don't teach the Bible? And they twist the Bible, and when they twist the Bible, people open up their wallets and throw billions at them.

Whether this is your church or not, assess, is my church teaching the Bible? That's the one requirement of this text, and if it is, we are commanded to give God's money there first. Next, Paul uses a farming metaphor to encourage this. Look at verse 6 again. "Let the one who has taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. Do not be deceived. God is not mocked. Why? Whatever one sows that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the spirit will from the spirit reap eternal life." Now, I'm not a farmer and I've never been a farmer, but even I know this universal law of farming. You ready? Get your pens out. You harvest what you plant, you reap what you sow. You plant corn, you get apples, right? No, you plant corn. You get corn, right?

Well, the same is universally true in life. We harvest what we plant. We will experience the consequences of our decisions. Our past and present actions are seeds and our present and future experiences are the harvest of those deeds. So your marriage is a garden, your spouse, your kids, your neighbors, your friends, your job, your local church, all of these things are gardens. And what you're getting out of them is a direct relationship to what you what? Planted into them. So if you planted love, you're harvesting love. You planted joy, you're harvesting happiness. If you planted criticism, you're harvesting conflict. If you planted anger, you're harvesting anger, and on

and on and on. Verse 7 comes right after verse 6, meaning the principle applies to where we invest God's money. So verse 6 is the instruction. Verses 7 & 8 are the motivation.

The context is of financial support for your church, and the motivation is verse 7 & 8. "One day you will harvest a blessing. When you share all good things now, that is when you plant money in a solid church." So you demonstrate faithful stewardship of God's money, that you're submitted to the spirit with the money entrusted to your care when you, *point #2), Invest in Your Church Generously. Invest in Your Church Generously.* It's another universal farming law. The more you plant in general, what? The better the harvest. The less seeds you plant, the smaller the harvest. I know. What? Well, that applies to giving. You determine what your returns are going to be by how much money you invest in ministry.

Invest a little, expect a little. Invest generously, expect a lot. The reason God gives us money, Deuteronomy 8, I think 14 or 8:18 says that God gives us the ability to get wealth. And then 2 Corinthians 9:11 tells us why he does that. Listen 2 Corinthians 9:11, "You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way." You are blessed with money to be generous with God's money. Remember the motivation Jesus gave for being generous. Luke 6:38, "The measure you use, it will be measured back to you." Or 2 Corinthians 9:6. The same context as Galatians 6, giving to ministry couldn't be clearer. "Listen, whoever sows sparingly," context is giving to ministry, "Whoever sows sparingly," whoever does the minimum, gives a little, "Will also reap sparingly. But whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully."

Do we believe this? Do you really believe this? This is God in Malachi 3:10 saying, "Give and you cannot outgive what I will give back to you in return." Now again, I hesitate here because of all the false teachers who manipulate the Bible and God's people with this truth as they try to, failingly, sanctify selfishness and greed. The end of those frauds will be the lake of fire, unless like Zacchaeus in Luke 19, they repent and prove their repentance by giving all that money back. Now though they twist this truth to their own benefit and to their own destruction, God says in our text, he will bless us in response to how much of his money we give to his work. And because he's generous, he will give a generous return on that investment. Look at verse 7. How clear does God make this? The return, the reaping, the harvest is so sure that God would be a liar and worthy of mockery if he did not give a return on that investment.

Also, did you see Paul brought up eternal life? The end of verse 8? What's that all about? God is saying that our financial investment of his money in a faithful church is one of many indicators of where we're headed after we die. Like Zacchaeus in Luke 19:19, Jesus said the proof that salvation had come to him was how he used his money after he was saved. So what we do with God's money does not, cannot earn our salvation, but what we do with his money is one of many indicators of whether or not we already have salvation in the first place. And that's not just me. Look at verse 8. "For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption." Use God's money to satisfy your flesh, to maximize it for self. That's an indication that you will reap, what does it say? Corruption.

This is eternal decomposition in hell and then the lake of fire. The flip side of that, keep reading, "But the one who sows to the spirit will from the spirit reap eternal life." So to use your money for the good of others, to satisfy God's will, to maximize it through a solid church, that's one of the many indicators that when you die, you're going to reap eternal life. So no one is saved by their good works and no one is saved without good works. A life of following the spirit's lead is evidence of saving faith, and that evidence is seen in what we do with God's money in the context in relation to our church. Our lives are compared to two fields, the flesh field, and the spirit field. And in context, what we do with God's money plants seeds in one of those two fields. And the size of the harvest that we're going to enjoy depends on which field we plant in and how much we plant in that field.

And I'm afraid we just don't think about this. So we're not planting to get ready for the harvest. The harvest, by the way, that throughout this text is guaranteed to come. Do we believe that? I mean, do we honestly live like that's true? I mean if we did, we'd be so generous with everything that we have, right? How much we give in this life determines how much we will harvest now and especially in eternity. So what does investing generously look like practically? Give me some practical tips on this preacher. Okay, Christians from every denomination for the past 2000 years have looked to tithing, giving the first 10% of your income as a starting point. So for every \$10 you get, give one of them to the work of the Lord through your local church. Now, I know pastors and theologians disagree on this. Welcome to Christianity where we disagree about everything. Now, I know I've said before, if you can't give 10, give five, give one, give something.

But I started looking at this more and there's a Christian book called the Didache which many think was written in the first century when the books of the Bible were being written. And it says, first century, that Christians should give 10%. Every early church fathers, like origin in the 200s AD, Roman and Augustine in the 400 ADs all said 10% is the Christian starting point.

Now listen, I'm not saying, "Well, old guys say give 10%, so we should too." I am saying giving the first 10% has been Christian teaching since the first century. Now, I know some of your thinking right now, "Tithing, that's Old Testament, that's Old Testament." New Testament giving is based on what? Grace. I agree 100%, but let me ask you, why is tithing something that Abraham did in Genesis 14:20, 600 years before the law was given? Why did Jacob commit to tithe all that God gave him in Genesis 28:22, again, 500 years before the law was given? You know what they were doing? They were responding to God's grace in their lives, and that response hundreds of years before the law was to give 10%. How does the law work into that? Well, what the law does is it just reinforces what God's faithful people were already doing in response to God's grace before the law.

Just like this, the law says you will not murder. Dang it, I could have murdered everybody, but now it says it in there so now I can't do it. No, right? No, it was already wrong. It was already something God's faithful people were supposed to do. The law simply came along and put it in black and white. Also, let me ask you, in light of all the grace you have as a Christian, that Old

Testament people didn't have like a completed Bible, new heart, forgiveness of sins, new creation, work of the spirit in you, death and resurrection of Jesus. In light of all of that grace, you think that God's okay with our response to all of that grace being less than the 10% he expected in response to his grace in the Old Testament? So we've been given far more grace. God's okay with us giving far less, not as law but as a loving response to his grace. Is it hot in here?

Listen, people who become adamant about grace giving or joy giving often do so to hide that they're giving far less than the 10% that Old Testament believers gave. Now listen, if 10% is coming across as legalistic to you right now, one author said, "Well, then give 11." Now, as in everything I say, you have the freedom to ignore it, but we will both stand before Jesus for what I just said about tithing. Me because I said it, and I will give an account for every single word I say up here. And you based on whether or not you were right to ignore what I just said.

So we put it all together. We are told, 2 Corinthians 8:7, to excel when it comes to giving, to go beyond. 10% is not law but based on grace, it's a good place to start. And if you sit down, you assess your budget, you get rid of the excess and you still can't get to 10%, get there as fast as you can. And listen, if you write your name on a connect card that you will try to give your first 10% for the next 60 days. If you trust God with that, I'm going to do that, I'm going to trust him in that. And if after 60 days of tithing, if you need that money back, we will give you 100% of that money back. 100%. All I need to know is that you're doing it. So name, I'm doing it, connect card, send me an email and we're good to go.

The issue in all of this is not giving. The issue is faithful stewardship of what? Of God's money. The easiest way to start doing this by the way, is by going on our website, clicking the give tab, and setting up recurring giving. That way you just set it and forget it. There are not many things in life where you can automate obedience, but this is one of them. Obedience in giving. Now for some, 10% can be done without feeling it much at all. If you can give 10% without feeling it, you should probably be giving more. I heard of people who lived on 50% and gave 50% a portion to their church and then schools and parachurch organizations and missions and charities all over the world. When I was growing up, there was a man in the church I grew up in who reverse tithed. Like what in the world was that? I mean, it made such an impact. This is like 35 years ago and I still remember it. I mean, nobody remembers his sermon from 35 years ago, but I do remember this.

He lived on 10% and he gave 90%. I mean, do you think he and his wife were sad and anxious all the time? They weren't. Do you think they're going to be sad and anxious at planting all that money in God's work when they stand before Jesus? What do you think that harvest is going to be like? See, that day is coming not just for them but for us, and it's actually where Galatians 6 continues. Look at verse 9, "And let us not grow weary of doing good. For in due season, we will," what? Reap. We might reap. It could happen. Who knows. "We will reap if we do not give up. So then as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone and especially to those who are the household of faith." Doing good in this context is how Paul considers generously investing

God's money in God's work through a solid church with pastors who are faithfully teaching the word. Verses 6 -10 were written in the context of supporting our church, but much that is said in these verses has a wider application than just to financially supporting a church.

The idea in verse 9 is this, while there will be reasons that could make us think that God wants us to stop investing in our church and loving people with his money, Paul says what? Look at what it says. Verse 9, don't give up. Don't quit, don't stop. Don't become discouraged. Keep doing good. Why? What does it say? "Because whether it's in this life or the next, you will see a return on your investment." If when we have the chance to, we do good to everyone and especially other Christians and in context, the way that we do that is by giving to our church. But again, only if that church is what? Teaching the Bible. Which then helps people what? Know, love, and serve Jesus, which through that teaching the great commission is fulfilled. In other words, you demonstrate faithful stewardship of God's money. You demonstrate you're submitted to the spirit with the money entrusted to your care, when *point #3*), you ***Invest in Your Church, Consistently. Invest in Your Church Consistently.***

Building off this idea of not growing weary, not giving up like it says in verse 9. We're to keep doing good with our finances by consistently investing them in our church. So the giving paradigm for the Christian in the Bible is quite simple. Number one, give at least 10% to God. Not based on Old Testament law but based on the starting point with the goal of increasing it in response to the massive amount of grace that you and I, that we've been shown. Grace that Old Testament saints could not have dreamed of. Second, give to God first, not the leftovers. Proverbs 3:9, "Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the first fruits of all your produce." Third, "Give when you're paid." As Proverbs 3:9 says, "The first fruits of all your produce."

That is, we give God the first part of what our work produces. And then fourth, "Give this way consistently." Consistently. Now, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 gets at this idea of giving consistently, giving us some important guidelines for giving. It says, "Now concerning the collection for the saints on the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up as he may prosper." So number one, we learned from this text, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, the church should do an offering each week. Number one, number two, as each of us prospers, we are to put an amount aside to give. Number three, the words each of us means that no one is exempt. All of us are to do this because number four, the words put something aside and the words store up, again, are commands. You Greek nerds out there, you check me out.

Why do you think God keeps commanding this of us? Look at verse 9, because we're going to be very tempted to what? To give up, to stop. We are commanded to support our local church primarily generously and consistently, but only if what? Only if it teaches the Bible. This by the way, is in contrast to giving sporadically or when we feel like it. We should never tip God because of something we liked in church. "Here's a 20, preacher, good talk." No, that's not how this works. Know where to give regularly, generously, and consistently to a solid church. And then we're to give wherever else we think God wants us to give his money to. Have you noticed



though that instead of consistent giving, we often give based on need? We hear a sad story or we see people suffering and we're moved emotionally and then we give.

I heard one pastor call that intervention giving, intervening to meet a pressing, often tragic need. This text is challenging us to a different kind of giving. When we invest a percentage of God's money into a church that is teaching the Bible, so people know, love and serve Jesus, that's called prevention giving. Intervention giving gives to a crisis. Prevention giving keeps crises from ever happening, which is kind of hard to measure, right? I mean, how do you measure the amount of marriages that don't face a crisis because husbands and wives are living the way that God designed them and saved them to live? How do you measure the amount of kids that they would never have unwanted pregnancies or do drugs or transition their gender or suffer the consequences of false teaching or the consequences of reckless behavior? Why? Because from a very early age they're being trained to honor God and love people and follow the Bible.

This doesn't happen in the world. This happens in a solid church. Now listen, Redeemer will always intervene to help people who are suffering, but the power of God in a Bible teaching church is seen in what it prevents, namely the tragedy and trials that'll never be measured, at least not by us here. But they will be measured when? On the day of harvest. I don't want to think what I would've done or what I would be right now if it was not for a local church's influence on my life. I don't even want to think about that. By giving here consistently and generously, you are preventing the horror stories people give money to from ever being written in hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of lives.

Anyone here think we're in the end times? Anybody think that? Jesus says Matthew 24:14, that the gospel, "Will be proclaimed throughout the whole earth and then the end will come." Why do you think right at the end of days that God made America the most prosperous nation in history and made American Christians the most prosperous Christians in history? Why do you think God did that? Spend it on ourselves and have some cool stuff? No, he did that at the end of days to get the gospel to the whole earth through solid, faithful churches. And then what did Jesus say? The end will come. So listen, if this is not your church but your church is solid, it teaches the Bible like we see in verse 6, then give primarily, generously, and consistently to your church. If this is your church and you're not giving, I hope you felt conviction today.

I hope that you follow the Bible and the spirit and start investing here today. If the realignment from God's word is if you're tipping, then give a percentage of your income. If you're giving a percentage, give 10% if you're giving less. And if you're giving 10% and you can, I'm going to challenge you to do more. As I said last time, we're doing fine financially. We have no debt, we're not in trouble. We don't need anything from you at all. All of this is because I do want something for you, though. It's Paul in Philippians 4:17. Listen to what he says to this church that he's asking them to support his ministry financially. He says to them, "I'm not seeking a financial gift from you, but I am seeking the fruit, the blessing that will increase to your credit." What do I mean? There are a lot of motivations to give.

I mean, think about it first, when we give, we're like God, aren't we? What is God constantly doing? Giving us life and breath and everything else? Acts 18:25 says, so when we give, we are like God, who is constantly and generously giving. Second, we give because of the grace that we've been given in Christ. Second Corinthians 8:9, "Who, though he was rich, yet for your sake, he became poor so that you, by his poverty, might become rich." Yes, rich in salvation, rich in mercy, rich in forgiveness for all of our sins. For those who trust in Christ, yes, but the context of 2 Corinthians 8 is rich in giving because of all the grace that we've been given from Christ. And third, we give because of the fruit we expect in the next life when we do. Why invest financially in a solid Bible teaching church?

Because verse 6 says that we should. That's a good reason, but Paul doesn't say do it because I said so. God doesn't say do it because I said so. 7, 8, 9 are the motivation. And again, what is that motivation? We give because we will. We will harvest rewards on the day we stand before Jesus. One author put it this way says, suppose you live in the US, but instead of living in Africa for two weeks, like I just did, you're going to live and work in Africa for 6 months. But there is one rule to this. You cannot bring anything back with you from Africa. Not one thing. You can mail what you earn back to the US but you can only bring back to the US what you brought with you to Africa, and nothing else. So if that's the case, if that's the rule, what would you do with the money you earn from your job?

Well, you would definitely take care of your needs, right? You'd probably do some fun stuff and live your life, but that'd be about it, right? I mean, think about it. You can't keep anything you get in Africa. I'm going to decorate my place. I'm going to get this cool car. Wait a minute, you can't take it with you. You'd probably be mailing a good portion of your money back to the US, right? Your decisions will be driven by what? "I can't keep this, so do I really need it, or can I live without it so that I'll have more when I get home?" I mean, that would make sense as we thought about that, since you can't take anything with you when you leave Africa. You see where I'm going with this? Can't take anything with us when we leave here in death, but we can send it forward. We can send it forward to our true home. When we are generous with God's money, and that starts with a local church and then beyond that, to advancing God's mission in the world.

Jesus did say, Matthew 6:19, you can check me later. "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth." Didn't he say that? Is that in your Bible? "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." Well, I don't think about rewards. I just do what I'm told. It's not sinful to be motivated by rewards if Jesus told us to be motivated by rewards, right? So don't just have a financial plan for the next 10, 20, 50 years, have a financial plan for the next 10 billion years. Giving is a divinely established, heavenly rewarded win-win. That is the motivation of our text. A win for us when we get to heaven, and a win for all the people here who are blessed by our generosity with God's money. I mean, do we think like this? I mean, do we really believe this?

One minute after we die, we will know how we should have lived our lives. On the day we reap the harvest that we planted with all of our good works, including our financial generosity. I just don't want us to be in that moment and think, "Why didn't I do more? I wish I did more." Instead,

when we get God's money in alignment with his will as expressed in his word, that puts us on a path to what? To hearing, "Well done," when Jesus opens our bank accounts and assesses what we did with his money. The worst thing would be standing before Jesus and thinking, "I didn't know this was going to be on the test." But now you do. Is it hot in here? Let's pray.

Jesus, you are kind and gracious and merciful. You don't leave us to figure things out on our own. You've given us your word and your word has dozens and dozens and dozens of principles and pieces of wisdom when it comes to money. Money is an uncomfortable subject for us to think about. It's an uncomfortable subject to talk about. It's an uncomfortable subject to hear preaching about, but it's good for us. We need it and we need your grace to take your words seriously. I know I do. These messages on stewardship are convicting as I'm preaching them, and that's good. It's healthy. It's right. To see where our lives are and get them back in alignment with your truth, to be corrected, even rebuked, when necessary, because when that happens, we are experiencing your grace as you realign our lives on the path to hearing, "Well done." There are a lot of areas of our lives as we've seen, our family and now our finances, where we're going to be assessed by you. And so thank you for telling us how you want us to live in these areas of our lives that we're stewards of. Please give us the grace and the determination to follow through. Because in the end of the day, the only way we will ever hear well done from you is because of your grace. And so we ask these things not just for our good, but we ask these things for the glory of your wonderful name, Amen.