

Jesus on Money

Selected Passages

Series: *Jesus On _____: The Only Perspective that Matters*

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Well, I don't mind telling you that I had a "Come to Jesus" meeting with Jesus this week! You know what I mean when I use this expression, right?

Someone does something that doesn't sit well with you...maybe there needs to be a bit of healthy confrontation with someone, and you tell them, "we are going to have a come to Jesus meeting" – meaning:

- We're going to talk some things out...
- We're going to address some things that need to be addressed...
- We're going to get on the same page...

And coming off the last two week's sermons...one on anxiety...the other on marriage – BOTH pretty intense subjects, I was looking for kind of a lay-up message this week! I was looking for something that would be a bit more simple...maybe a little less controversial or intimidating.

I looked at the preaching schedule and found the topic we are covering today – it's the title of the message: **Jesus on Money**

So, I had a come to Jesus meeting with Jesus! In that meeting, I asked him, "Lord, could you not give me such a heavy topic that automatically makes people tense up when it's even mentioned?!"

And while he didn't speak audibly back to me, I did get the sense of him asking me the question, "Who planned this series?" And I had no one to blame but myself!

It is interesting isn't it, that Jesus was not afraid to wade into the deep waters as it relates to our lives and what we go through. As we are seeing and we have six more weeks of this series, Jesus wasn't some warm fuzzy kind of preacher that never got in anyone's business NOR did he hold back from speaking hard truths.

And listen, hard truths are sometimes good for us...someone getting in our business is sometimes the best and most healthy thing that could happen to us.

Illus. Doctor – When I go to the doctor and have blood work or take a physical, how wrong would it be for the Doctor to read my chart and see my tests results, KNOW something is off...KNOW something is not right, but say nothing because he doesn't want to ruin my day?!

That would not be a good and loving doctor. In the same way, how wrong would it be to come to church and when 15% of the teachings of Jesus...11 of his 40+ parables deal with how we

should view and handle money and possessions, never say anything about it because it might offend or not sit well with someone.

We could NOT preach this *Jesus on* series and do it justice if we didn't talk about this subject. And fair warning as we get going today, you may in fact hear something today that doesn't sit well with you or perhaps is a bit convicting or too close for comfort.

And I just want to encourage you to listen with a soft heart. It could be that out of all the messages we cover in this series, this is the one you need most...this is the one that will be MOST beneficial to your spiritual growth and development.

Don't get turned off by the fact we are talking about this and don't get turned off by what is said about it. If you do get upset with anything that is said, have your own "Come to Jesus meeting" with Jesus because we are looking at his perspective on money. And as we are saying in this series, his is the ONLY perspective that matters.

Now, early in the week as I was studying and reading my plan was to read every passage...every verse that Jesus talked about in dealing with money and just list it out!

This was actually going to be the sermon. If it was twenty statements or lessons, then. I was going to list out the twenty statements and lessons. If it was twelve, I'd list out the twelve.

Well, as I got going on my plan, I began to see that Jesus taught the same thing about money and possessions over and over again. And while there are all these teachings and parables that mention how we should view and handle money, the totality of what is taught I think could be summarized in two large categories.

Take everything that Jesus said on money, and we are going to look at most everything today, and it all falls in one of two categories or buckets if you will.

- 1. Perspective - How I view money**
- 2. Stewardship – What I do with money**

And I'm going to give you the conclusion of the message right up front here, but you can't leave...gotta stay until the end. How you deal with #1, will affect what you do with #2.

In other words, how we view money, will determine how we steward it. So, getting #1 right is of utmost importance. If you don't have a proper perspective on money, you will never properly steward your money. I should probably say "his money", but we'll get there momentarily.

Let's unpack: **Perspective – How I view money**

Now, money in and of itself is morally neutral. And the Bible never says...Jesus NEVER says that having money (even a lot of it) is wrong. He NEVER says if you have money you are "blessed" – that was the belief of the day or if you don't have it, you are "cursed".

We do see when he talks about money though - a lot of times, he is warning about the dangers associated with it, and we need to look at these dangers because it will help us as we seek to see money as we should.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus addresses and warns people about only living for the “here and now”. Remember our Kingdom series? If you missed it, go back online and listen to those messages because we talked for seven weeks on what it meant to be a citizen of the Kingdom.

Citizens of the Kingdom view all of life VERY differently than those who are not sons and daughters of the King. As citizens of the Kingdom, we are living under his reign and rule and know that whatever we have is ultimately from him and meant to serve him.

Citizens of the Kingdom have an eternal mindset when it comes to money and possessions (at least should have one). We don't live for the world or like the world. We live for the King. Jesus said in:

Matt. 6:24 – “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

Jesus is teaching here that we will either worship money as a god OR we will worship God with how we use our money. But we can't do both!

Because of our sinful bent AND because we are physical beings living in a physical world, there is nothing that has a greater or stronger pull on our hearts AWAY from God and living under his rule and reign than that of money.

The human heart because of SIN can take a gift from God...it can be a good thing! It can be a talent...a relationship...a material possession...a job...and if we're not diligent and careful our hearts will deceive us, and we will turn that gift into an idol that we serve.

We were made to worship. And if we are not careful because of what money provides us and affords us (pun intended), we can begin to look to money to meet our needs and fill our hearts MORE than we look to God.

So, understand right out of the gate when it comes to money, just like we said with worry and anxiety message – you can have it, but it can have you!

I was amazed at all of the times Jesus talks about money, how often he urges us to be careful with it! Money has a subtle way of creeping into our lives and if not extremely cautious and spiritually discerned, can create havoc.

Jesus told a story in Luke's gospel. A man had come up and was having a dispute with his brother...there was a conflict regarding how they were going to divide their inheritance – isn't it amazing how often money divides people?

Listen to what Jesus says and the lesson he teaches regarding the dangers of money. Again, this is all given to ensure we have a proper perspective regarding our wealth and resources.

Luke 12:15-21 – “**And he said to them, “Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”** (This is where we sometimes get fooled! We think it’s about how much we have!) ¹⁶ **And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, ¹⁷ and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’** (Notice the “I’s”...money blinds us to our own greed and selfishness! And the lesson given here is if we have money, it’s not just for meeting our needs, living for the short term, and accumulating a bunch of stuff for me, myself and I!) ¹⁸ **And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.”’ ²⁰ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ ²¹ So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”**

Money and possessions had grabbed this man’s heart and enslaved him...so much so, he wasn’t even aware of his greed and covetousness!

Remember the story of the Rich Young Ruler? He comes up to Jesus and wants to know how he can have eternal life. Do you remember what Jesus said to him? He gave him some of the 10 Commandments to live by and this guy tells Jesus, “I’ve kept all these since I was kid.” Jesus responds:

Luke 18:22-25 – “**When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” ²³ But when he heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich. ²⁴ Jesus, seeing that he had become sad, said, “How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”**

Jesus knew the seductive danger of riches...that it will grab our heart and not let go. He knew that it above all can become an idol in our lives that we bow down to worship.

And at the end of the day, this young man could not trade the treasure he had on earth – that he could see and touch and feel and experience in the “here and now” – for a treasure in heaven he couldn’t see!

His money...his wealth had him! And in the end, he is just a rich fool...just like the man in Luke 12 because he worships money instead of God. He’s living for the temporal over the eternal.

To have proper perspective on money is to realize that it can keep you from the Kingdom of God. Be warned today, that while money is morally neutral, it can take you to some really dark places if you’re not careful...it can even damn you!

As Jesus said, it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom. Why is this?

Because it's really hard for rich people (that's us!!!) to:

- see their need...
- admit their need...
- and radically surrender...

EVERYTHING to God INCLUDING that which they own and have worked so hard for (i.e. money) that gives them security and a sense of comfort and well-being.

This is why you can't serve both God and money. One is going to win out over the other. Don't be deceived today! If you focus on the temporal at the expense of the eternal, you will get the temporal over the eternal, and live to regret it!

As C.S. Lewis said– **“Aim at Heaven and you get Earth ‘thrown in’. Aim at Earth and you will get neither.”**

This was what Jesus was saying in the Sermon on the Mount in: **Matt. 6:19-21 – “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal,²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”**

What you treasure the most, is where your heart will be. And Jesus wants your heart to be on him and his kingdom.

You take your eyes off him (that's the following verse, btw v. 22– “eye is the lamp of the body) – you take your eyes off Jesus and it will be nearly impossible because of our sin nature and the inherent dangers of wealth to see money as God sees it.

Perspective – how do I view money? Will I look at it through the lens of the temporal (it's about me and meeting my needs in the “here and now”) OR is it about the eternal (it's about laying up treasure in heaven)?

Randy Alcorn – “Every day, the person whose treasure is on earth is headed away from his treasure. Every day, the person whose treasure is in heaven is headed toward his treasure.”

illus. Books - We should view our money like I view books in my study. I got the Randy Alcorn quote from his book, *Money, Possessions and Eternity*. Every week I go and collect books that I'm going to read from that will help me as I prepare for the message each week.

They are tools...instruments used to help me accomplish my purpose...this is money! We should view it through an eternal lens and not allow its tentacles to take root in our heart, leading us astray from the one, true God we are called to serve.

So, much of what Jesus said about money dealt with our perspective on it...the danger associated with it. A second big bucket that Jesus's teaching fell into regarding money was about:

Stewardship – What I do with money

Now, perspective and stewardship go hand in hand because when it comes to money, Jesus was VERY clear that whatever you have...whatever is graciously given to you by God is given to you in order for you to manage.

This is actually what the word stewardship means. I'll use Meriam- Webster's definition of stewardship. Here it is:

Stewardship - the conducting, supervising, or managing of something; the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care

There are two major requirements of a steward. The first is to be trustworthy or faithful, and the second is to be responsible.

This is a wise steward...someone who is faithful to the one who entrusted him with whatever it is they were entrusted – in our context today, it's money...wealth.

A steward is also to be responsible. He's responsible with the money and wealth that has entrusted to him. He's responsible to safe-keep it, invest it. give it - whatever the owner says do, the steward is responsible for doing it!

Jesus said much about the faithfulness and responsibility as a steward. Let me give you some examples. One example is of a bad manager. Jesus gives a parable and concludes it saying:

Luke 16:10-13 – “One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. ¹¹ If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches?

¹² And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?¹³ No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

Jesus says here, “what you do with what is entrusted to you matters.” If you are faithful with little, you can be trusted with more. But if you're unfaithful with the little, how could God entrust you more? Why should you? You've proved yourself unfaithful!

? - Are you being a responsible steward with what God has entrusted to you? You will be held accountable!

He gives another parable highlighting the accountability factor of stewardship. Again, faithfulness and responsibility matters with what God has entrusted to you.

Matt. 25:14-30 – “For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property.

¹⁵ To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶ He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. ¹⁷ So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. ¹⁸ But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹ Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.’ ²¹ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ ²² And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.’ ²³ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’

²⁴ He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, ²⁵ so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.’ ²⁶ But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? ²⁷ Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸ So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. ²⁹ For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰ And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

We’re going to preach *Jesus on judgment* in a couple of weeks, so I’ll reserve some commentary and preaching points for then, let me say this now though, notice you don’t just hear the words, “Well done, thy good and faithful servant” for dying! You must actually be a faithful and responsible steward in order to hear those words from God!

Now, what does faithful and responsible look like for the believer? Well, if you take the whole of Jesus’s teaching on money, you will discover:

a faithful and responsible steward will invest their money in the Kingdom by giving it to God as an act of worship and to others as an act of service.

In fact, this is one of the surest ways that we serve God OVER money...and continue to ensure we serve God OVER money is to invest it in the Kingdom (lay up treasure in heaven) by giving it to God as an act of worship and giving it to others as an act of service.

This is Jesus's perspective on money. He's going to share with us by word and by illustration how giving is an act of worship.

One of my favorite stories in all the Bible is in Mark 12. It's the story of a widow that Jesus observes giving in the temple. In four verses, Jesus teaches about giving being an act of worship.

Mark 12:41-44 – “And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. ⁴² And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. ³ And he called his disciples to him and said to them, “Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. ⁴⁴ For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

As an act of worship, this woman: **Gives discreetly**. She didn't make a big commotion out of what she was doing. Jesus, time and again said this is how we should give.

In the Sermon on the Mount, in a section on giving, Jesus said: **Matt. 6:1-4 – “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.² “Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”**

Don't miss it...give discreetly and God will reward you! He doesn't say how he will reward you, but we can trust that he will.

Luke 6:38 – “give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”

Sounds like a good giving plan to me. I can trust the Lord when I give...that he will give it right back **HOWEVER** he sees fit! I do know though you can't outgive him!

Illus. Maw-maw – “can't outdo the Lord!”

Back to the widow's offering. She: **Gives sacrificially**. While she only gave a penny, she gave everything she had, and Jesus said her gift was more than all the others put in.

When it comes to giving our money, God's economy and our economy don't line up. If all you think about on giving money is the numbers and trying to make them work, you will **NEVER** experience the life God designed you to live.

I'm not calling you to be irresponsible. The fact is, many of you can't give the way God wants you to because you have been irresponsible!

Many are in debt...some owe others so much, giving to God doesn't even sound like an option right now!

And can I tell you, your greatest act of worship and devotion to God could just be to honor him by getting out of debt so that you can invest in his Kingdom.

Illus. Kingdom Finance classes – Financial Peace University

What does it say about us when we are NOT investing in God's Kingdom?

Jesus would say...and if you don't like this, don't email me, have a "Come to Jesus meeting with him"...

- Jesus would say, "You are serving money instead of him."
- Jesus would say, "your greatest treasure are the things of earth, not things in heaven, and your bank account and credit cards prove it."

We give discreetly. We give sacrificially. This widow also: **Gives willingly**

No one forced her to put her penny in the offering. She did this on her own...that's what made it an act of worship! She did it because she wanted to!

This is the kind of giving Jesus desires! He wants it from the heart! He doesn't want us begrudgingly giving. Instead, he wants a heart so transformed by his goodness and grace that that person can't help but give...can't wait to give!

He wants Zacchaeus kind of giving! You know what I'm talking about? Zacchaeus was a cheat and tax collector! And when he met Jesus and experienced the love and grace of Christ, do you remember his response?

Luke 19:8 – "And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold."

You KNOW Jesus has changed your life when you start giving willingly to the work of his Kingdom...and this brings up a great question about:

- WHO we should give to?
- HOW much should we give?
- WHERE we should give?

Pastor, is this where you talk about the tithe? Well, remember when Jesus lived. He lived when people were bringing tithes and offerings to the temple. And just a point of interest, he did NOT negate bringing the tithe.

Rather, he affirmed it (Matt. 23:23) – his MAJOR point was don't tithe, think you can check off the box, and live however you want! You need to tithe AND live righteously as well! His words are do both!

Let's answer this though...three questions and answers and we'll fly through these!

Q: Who should I give to?

A: God

It is assumed by Jesus when you give, rightly, you are giving ultimately to God as an act of worship. Even when you give to someone else as an act of service, God sees it as being done unto him.

Matt. 25:35-40 – “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’

³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? ³⁸ And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?’³⁹ And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ ⁴⁰ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’

Whenever we give from the right place, with the right motive, we ultimately give to God.

Now, today you can give to God in a number of ways, but a primary way is through the local church. When you give money...when you put it in the offering plate or sign up as a recurring giver online, you are NOT giving to Champion Forest.

Your contribution statement may say it...your tax return may say it...(and by the way, Tax Day was Monday – Jesus teaches in Matt. 22:21 to give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's!).

In reality though, you are giving TO God THROUGH Champion Forest. The church is the bride of Jesus. When you give to/through his bride, you are giving to him. There is so much more I could say on this, but time doesn't allow.

Q. How much should I give?

A: Jesus doesn't say

Again, he affirms the tithe (that's 10%), but he never tells us how much we should give. He leaves that open to us. I like what:

John Wesley -- “Not how much of my money will I give to God, but how much of God’s money will I keep for myself.”

Talk about a faithful and responsible steward. John Wesley was incredible with his finances. He was known for giving and investing in the Kingdom. He also said this:

“Money never stays with me. It would burn me if it did. I throw it out of my hands as soon as possible, lest it should find its way into my heart.”

Jesus never focused on how much we give...he knew what we gave reflected the priority of our hearts. Final question:

Q. Where should I give?

A: Where there is need (this is what Jesus taught!)

You’ve got to determine where specifically you are going to give. There are so many worthy causes. I preached a message years ago where I came up with what I called a “priority funnel”. Looking at the whole of scripture you see the priority of where giving should be directed.

It starts with the local church because the local church should be meeting needs of all kinds...and I just want to say here you can have an extreme amount of confidence in our church. We have a wonderful finance committee that we work with that helps us establish our budget and one of our focus priorities is “loving our community”.

Know when you give, you are helping to meet so many needs in Jesus’s name that you probably were not even aware of!

Second, is giving to what I categorize as the least...the poor...the broken in society. Again, this is why giving to local church matters. So much of what we do helps move this mission forward. We partner with so many ministries that are doing great work in this area. I think of our Life 6.24 initiative that is help those who desire to adopt and provide foster care. I think of our CMC ministry that feeds the food insecure.

This kind of giving is investing in the Kingdom by giving to others as an act of service.

Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan. If you remember from that story, the Samaritan man saw the Jewish man who had been robbed and left for dead, and he took care of him, bandaged him, put him up in a hotel and footed the entire bill. He gave and met the need of this man.

Illus. “Servant Evangelism” budget

Third, in the priority funnel is what I call “Kingdom Partners”. These are parachurch organizations that are helping to strengthen the local church.

We partner with incredible ministries like CareNet, Gracewood (single parents), FCA, Lighthouse for Students (helping underprivileged), H.O.P.E Haven which helps the homeless – these are ministries that we sponsor and help support through our church via our missions offering OR you can give separately to them.

Just make sure whatever organization you are giving to is focused on sharing the gospel and keeping the gospel at the forefront of what they do! We can't just meet a physical need and not the spiritual – the spiritual is the most important and Jesus modeled this for us over and over again (see the healing of the paralyzed man in Mark 2).

a faithful and responsible steward will invest their money in the Kingdom by giving it to God as an act of worship and to others as an act of service.

This is *Jesus on money*. And as you can see, he has given us A LOT to think about. Perspective...and stewardship. How you view money, will determine what you do with it.

Let's pray.

Please Note: This document is not meant to be a published, cited, annotated research paper. It is simply a transcript of a spoken message, provided as a resource. Many commentaries, articles, and other sermon helps were likely studied and contributed to the forming of this message.