

Giving is Not Sacrificial, It's Smart

By Jeff Noblit

sermonaudio.com

Bible Text: Luke 16:1-14

Preached on: Sunday, February 9, 2014

Anchored in Truth Ministries

1915 Avalon Ave.

Muscle Shoals, AL 35661

Website: www.anchoredintruth.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/anchoredintruth

Let's go to Luke but we're going to fast-forward and go to Luke 16 as I want to preach to you a message to hopefully stir our hearts and get us ready for our World Impact Conference which we call a True Church Conference and I love Jesus because you can't figure him out. I've told you before, he's not a tame Jesus. And I would have never expected our Lord to do what he did as recorded in Luke 16, as he uses the most unusual parable illustration to point out a spiritual truth.

Luke 16, beginning in verse 1 and we'll go through verse 14. I have sniffles and I'll ask you to forgive me one time and hopefully we'll get through this. Alright?

“1 Now He was also saying to the disciples, 'There was a rich man who had a manager, and this manager was reported to him as squandering his possessions. 2 And he called him and said to him, “What is this I hear about you? Give an accounting of your management, for you can no longer be manager.” 3 The manager said to himself, “What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg. 4 I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the management people will welcome me into their homes.” 5 And he summoned each one of his master's debtors, and he began saying to the first, “How much do you owe my master?” 6 "And he said, “A hundred measures of oil.” And he said to him, “Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.” 7 Then he said to another, “And how much do you owe?” And he said, “A hundred measures of wheat.” He said to him, “Take your bill, and write eighty.” 8 And his master praised the unrighteous manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light. 9 And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they will receive you into the eternal dwellings. 10 He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. 11 Therefore if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you? 12 And if you have not been faithful in the use of 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 else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.' 14 Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him."

I've entitled this message "Giving is Not A Sacrifice, It's Smart." That's exactly what the Lord teaches here. Giving, that is, to the Lord's work, to the advancement of the Lord's kingdom, particularly the spreading of the gospel and the planting of churches for his glory, that's not a sacrifice, that's smart. Now, if you're living in the South and you're a Northerner and it's toward the end of the war between the states and you realize this thing is about to come to an end and you realize, "I've got all this Confederate money," and you begin to understand, "I'd better cash this in and get US dollars." That's not a sacrificial thing to do, that's a smart thing to do because the Confederate dollar is fixed to be worthless and that's the kind of picture the Lord paints for us here in this parable.

Now, again, a parable is a story that's laid down alongside a spiritual truth. Usually there is just some basic truths the Lord wants to teach and he'll give a story of something and say, "Here's some basic truths I want you to glean." Now, this parable was directed particularly to the disciples but we also know the Pharisees were listening in, they comment at the end of it. Again, about these Pharisees, the Scripture teaches us that these Pharisees, these Jewish religious authorities are legalist, they are religionist. I like to call them externalist. And they are materialistic and greedy. These Jewish authorities had twisted theology, got it out of balance so they could support their quest of being wealthy at the expense of those they ministered over.

Now, we see their worldly response very clearly in verse 14 where the text says, "Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him." You know, the worldly, proud, lover of this world has always been a scoffer of sound preaching. It's always been that way. Always will be that way, at least until the Lord returns. Now, I have two simple points. They're long but I think they're simple. 1. We are accountable to God as managers of his wealth. I think that's a very simple point. The Lord begins this parable by saying there was a man who, in effect, was rich, he had a great company or many companies and he had a vice-president, if you will, a manager of this company. The word "manager" is a word that simply means "a steward." A steward is one who is responsible for overseeing another person's property now listen, for the benefit of the other person, the owner. A steward does not have right to manage what he's over for himself. He is to manage this man's property, this man's wealth for that man's benefit.

Some of you own companies and I know you pretty well. I know some of you are pretty doggone tough concerning your employers but it's something you've sacrificed. As a matter of fact, I've been with a number of you when you started your companies and we prayed together about how in the world would you get the few hundred thousand dollars or whatever you needed to start that company and now that seems like a long time ago and God has blessed but you have every right to expect the men that you hire to manage

what's yours, they're accountable to you to do what you would like done for your benefit with your wealth.

So, there is a calling into account here in verse 2. Here this wealthy man called him, the manager, and said to him, "What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management for you can no longer be manager." Well, verse 1 said he's been squandering, been dealing dishonestly with his owner, with the man he worked for, yet it probably was his master. I wanted to say master but that doesn't parallel over into our culture today but he's been squandering his employer's wealth. So, he's called into account and, of course, this parallels our relationship to God. We have to remind ourselves. It's so simple. You say, "Oh, I know that." But have you thought on it lately? God owns everything.

I've told you before, I have to confess, I need to be more faithful but I do try to make a pattern of naming the things that I think are mine and reminding myself, "God, they're yours. God, that car is yours." I sometimes think God would say, "I don't want your old car." But it's good for me to say, "The car is yours. The clothes are yours. The house is yours and the bank's. The farm is yours and the bank's. God, it's yours." Now, that may seem like a simple thing, maybe it's something you teach children. Hey listen, all of God's children need to remind our flesh, God owns everything, we are just stewards.

The Bible says, the Lord is speaking, "The silver and the gold is mine." The Bible says, God speaking, "I am the owner of all the cattle on 1,000 hills." Psalm 89:11, "The earth is thine and the world and all it contains thou hast founded them." Every hill, every mountain, every valley, every ravine, every plain, every field, every river, every stream, every ocean, every sea, every blade of grass, everything in the plant kingdom, everything in the animal kingdom, all the minerals, all the resources, every square inch of planet earth, God puts his finger on it and God says, "Mine." We are but stewards, managers of just a little part of it for a little while.

1 Corinthians 4:2 in this context talks about that it is required of stewards that one be found faithful. For example, a bank. A bank is a manager. The bank doesn't own the money I put in, it's my money but they manage the money I have and if they do not manage it well, I'll take it out and put it somewhere else. If I own a business and I hire a manager, again, if he loses money, well, I have to let him go and hire someone else. There is accountability and under God all that there is, there is accountability to him. Job says, "Naked I came into this world and naked I shall return." God in effect says, "You came into this world stripped naked and when you go to the undertaker after you die, you're going to be stripped naked again." Now, somebody will probably buy you a new suit to put on and you'll look good but it isn't yours. You can't really take it with you. You know, a man goes into an art gallery and he's admiring the pictures, the paintings on the wall and he decides he loves one so much that he takes it off the wall and he begins to walk out of the gallery and the security guards rush up and arrest him immediately and say, "What are you doing? You didn't bring anything in here and you can't take anything out." That's what God says, "Naked you came into this world and naked you're going to go out of this world."

So, there is an accountability. We are managers and we are stewards of all that is God's. Now, look, there's a good biblical balance in here. Let's don't get over here with some of these guys who are into morbid poverty idolatry as if that's spiritual and it's not. Scripture doesn't teach it. And they really feel like they have to punish themselves and give a public appearance of, "Oh, I'm not worthy of anything and I can't have anything," and whatever you do, they out-humble you. You get a \$10,000 car, they'll get a \$5,000. You buy a \$200 suit, they're going to buy \$100. You know, they're always into that. Now, we don't want to get there but neither do we want to get over here with Jim and Tammy Baker in this excessive, extravagant thing that spirituality means we ought to have better than anybody else on the earth. But we ought to rest somewhere in the middle and the key of all Christian truth is: it's a heart issue. You will never be right observing the external of a man or a family and saying, "Oh, they're not spiritual because they have....Oh, they're spiritual because they have." You can't do that, God doesn't allow that. It's a heart issue. God ordains some to be blessed with more wealth. God ordains others of us just to get by. God is sovereign and each one can love God and serve God faithfully with what he has.

Aren't you glad we're freed up like that? You notice that we don't have to have a human being come by and give us this checklist of 27 things to make sure we're okay with God on what we buy or what we have. A woman buys a \$70,000 car, one man buys a \$20,000. Look, I can't get into that. That's your business before God but I would say, "Where is your heart?" That's what I can get in on, your heart. I can't read it but I'm to preach to it and challenge you about it and that's what the Lord is saying here, "Do you walk through this earth with a sober reality the earth is the Lord's and all it contains? I am a manager and a steward of what is his."

Well, 2. and this is the real crux of what the Lord is saying to us: be smart and send it on ahead to enjoy it for eternity. The Lord is going to say simply that: be smart and send it on ahead so that you might enjoy it for eternity. Now, I want you to listen now, don't grow foggy on me. I'm preaching with a head and chest cold and at least you can listen. Alright? Because it can get a little tangled up and I want you to get this. Look at verse 3: the manager is going to be fired, he's been called into account, he's been squandering the possessions of his employer or his master. In verse 3, "The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg.'" So, this manager saw that he's going to have nothing when his master releases him and, you know, that's the way it is with us. When God releases us of our earthly stewardship, it's permanently over. There is nothing left materially speaking. We have an object lesson of this in every paper's obituary column. At death, our stewardship is over. You see, everything you have is either going to leave you or you're going to leave it. Did you hear that? Everything you have is going to leave you or you're going to leave it.

Now, look what this manager does. He says, "What am I gonna do now? The management is taken away and I'm too feeble of a man," maybe he's getting to old to dig, "I'm ashamed to go out and dig." Ah, he's crafty. He is shrewd. Verse 4, "I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the management people will welcome me into

their homes.” So, this guy is a crafty fellow. He says, “I’ve got a plan whereby I can do some things in this little bit of time before I’m fired and endear myself, do some favors for some folks so that I’ll scratch their back and then when I need a place to go work,” and I think when he says homes here he means the home of another wealthy person where he can be a house manager of some kind and have a livelihood again and be taken care of.

So, he's got a shrewd plan and he begins to put it into action. Now, let's see, look at verses 5-7 now and let's watch what he does. “And he summoned each one of his master's debtors, and he began saying to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'” So, he calls in these guys who owe money to his master. Verse 6, “And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.’” Let's just change it and you won't have to pay a hundred, you'll just have to pay fifty. And then the next verse says in verse 7, “Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said, 'Alright, look, quickly just write this down, don't tell anybody. Just write eighty down, you don't have to pay the hundred.’” Well, he didn't have authority to do that. He's stealing. He's a thief. He's a crook. He's doing this for his own gain. “If I do this favor for them, they're going to help me later on.” You see, he's saying, “I know how power and influence and how money works. I'll scratch his back and then I know when I get fired, then maybe he'll scratch mine.” You know, money has a way of providing you a welcome. Have you noticed that? Money has a way of getting you noticed. Money has a way of getting you recognized. Money has a way of getting you included. This fellow knows how it works. He's a shrewd, shrewd man.

Look at verse 8, if you will, the first part, “And his master,” this is the interesting thing, “his master praised the unrighteous manager because he had acted so shrewdly.” Now, he's not praising him that, “Hey, thank you. You stole some of my money. Thank you that you cheated me out of what was rightfully mine.” He's basically saying this, “You're a sorry scoundrel. You are a rascal and a thief but I'll give this to you, you're clever. You are shrewd. I'll give this to you, you knew how to make it work for yourself.” He might have been saying, “You know, with your ability if you'd add some character and some morals and some ethics, you could be a great employee for somebody but you've got a great character problem.”

I'm going to throw this in, I've used it before but it impacted me so powerfully and it is so true and, oh God, help us in life, in ministry to observe this principle. There was a man who was working in a great corporation in America and he was a young man and he was bright, he was a hard worker and he was working his way up fast and the president of the company was very impressed at him. He told him, he had lunch with him and he was going to announce to him that day at lunch, “You're going to become my Executive Vice President.” A huge promotion, a huge salary increase. And they were in the company cafeteria. This was years ago and they were putting their trays down the line and that's back when they had the little pats of butter. I think I remember back when they were one cent, a little pat of butter. And fellow did something that he saw his daddy do and he just had been in the habit of doing it, he put it on his tray and he took his little finger and he

pushed the napkin over that pat of butter so that he wouldn't have to pay for it. It was just something that, "Just a little bit I can get by with," and put his napkin over the top of it and the president standing beside him looked out of the corner of his eye and noticed what he had done, watched him as they checked out and sure enough, he didn't pay for that one cent pat of butter. They sat down, they ate and they finished their meal and the young man had no idea why he was getting to eat with the president that day but the president looked at him and said, "You know what? I had lunch with you today that I might promote you to Executive Vice President of this corporation but I am not because you stole that one cent pat of butter and if you will cheat and steal at that level, you'll cheat and steal at a greater level." And he lost his place and lost his promotion over a little pat of butter. Character. Character.

Young people, young men, let that be a statement to you: you let your employers know you will go to the end of the earth and back to be honest and straight-forward. Others may take things, others may steal things, others may bend the corners, you don't do it.

Well, let's continue on and let's look at what this master says. The master says, "I'll say you're a crook, you're clever, you're shrewd, I'll give you that." Then he says something here in the last part. Here's what we want to get to, verse 8, second part, "For the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light." Here's what he's saying, he's saying, "The sons of this age, the unsaved men who live for this world because this world is all they have, they're more effective at using what they have at their disposal for their advancement than the children of God, the sons of light are at using their things in their world that's been given to them for their own advancement." The Lord is in effect saying, "I wish I could get the sons of light to be as effective in using the things of light for their own gain as the sons of darkness use the things of darkness for their own gain. Wordlings," he says, "are smarter than Christians because wordlings know how to plan their future better than Christians do. They're of this world, it's their home, it's all they have and so many times Christians live like they don't have a home or they don't know where their home is. They're not making use of this eternal heavenly home that's been given to them." Jesus is saying therefore, "In effect, I wish my children had the same wisdom concerning their future as the average unbeliever has for his future which is only this temporal world."

Now, he says in verse 9, "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they will receive you into the eternal dwellings." Notice the parallel here: this manager said, "I'm going to scheme and be clever and be shrewd and I'm going to do some favors for some men who owe my master so they'll welcome me when he fires me." Now, Jesus is saying, "Now, Christians, my children, the children of light should be clever and creative and use the temporal world, this unrighteous wealth," he calls it and it's not unrighteous in that it's unrighteous to have wealth or to use wealth, it's just that this wealth is a part of an unredeemed world and it is so often used for unrighteousness. But his point is: Christians ought to learn to use this temporal wealth to the end of advancing ourselves eternally. He says, "They just don't do it. They just don't do a good job at that. They seem just to drop the ball there." He says, "Make friends by use of unrighteous mammon." I think simply what he's saying here,

“Invest in the expansion of the kingdom of God. Invest in the expansion of the gospel and the winning of souls and the planting of churches.” These things we have been entrusted to us now, “Invest it wisely so that it pays dividends for you.” That's not sacrificial, that's smart. You're not going to inherit this present earth, you'll inherit a new created earth but you're not going to inherit this present earth so be smart: use this present, temporal, passing, unrighteous earth to the end that you might gain rewards for eternity. That's exactly what the Lord is saying.

In verse 9, he says, “And I say to you, make friends for yourselves,” that can only mean winning others to the faith, “by means of the wealth of unrighteousness,” now, here's a phrase, “so that when it fails.” When it fails, isn't it neat that we can take something that...by the way, money always fails. There is no eternal value in human physical money. It can't last. It ultimately fails. I mean, just think about it: when your body wears out and it's just your time, you can take all the money of a million of the wealthiest men who have ever lived and spend all you want, it's not going to matter, it won't help. Money fails.

I found this somewhere: a man who was close to dying, he gave his doctor, his lawyer and his accountant \$10,000 apiece. He said, “I want to take it with me and I want you to place it in my casket when you come by and see me after I die.” His doctor, his lawyer, his accountant, \$10,000 apiece. Well, the man died and the doctor came by his casket and the doctor took out \$2,000 and only put \$8,000 in. He said, “Well, I took care of him so that's my fee. I'm going to keep \$2,000.” The lawyer only put in \$5,000 of the \$10,000 he was given. He said, “Well, I was his lawyer. I represented him. That's my fee. I'm going to keep \$5,000.” The accountant put something in and took something back out but they weren't sure what he did. Well, the doctor, the lawyer and the accountant were talking a moment later and the doctor said what he did, “Well, I kept \$2,000 out because I represented him. I put the \$8,000 in there.” The lawyer said, “Well, I kept \$5,000 out. I put \$5,000 in the casket because I represented him. That was fair.” The accountant said, “Well, I just wrote him a check for \$30,000 and put it in there and took the cash out and kept it for myself.” He knows that check's never going to be stamped.

Money fails. When you're dead, it's no good and that's what the Lord is saying, “It's just no good.” But his point is: if you pass it on into eternity, hundreds and thousands of individuals will be heaven and welcome you into eternal dwellings as this shrewd, worldly, thieving manager worked out a shrewd deal to be welcome into human homes, he says, “You ought to be smart enough to use unrighteous mammon to reach souls so that when you get somewhere that's going to last forever, they will welcome you with joy when you get home to heaven.” I'm not talking about working your way to heaven. He's talking about the kind of reception and rewards you'll have in heaven. It's going to be yours forever. Invest in it, that's what he's saying.

So, it's getting kind of interesting. The Lord uses this God-given desire for pleasure, for joy, for rejoicing, for fellowship, to motivate us to build a kingdom we're going to have anyway. 2 Peter 1:11, “For in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be abundantly supplied to you.” Again, he's not speaking of

a works into heaven, he's saying that there will be a huge welcoming into eternal dwellings awaiting you if you invest wisely. The point is: if you manage wisely the resources God has given you, there will be a glory, a grandeur in heaven beyond what you can conceive.

I think sometimes we get a little too mystical about heaven because there's some concrete things about heaven. The Bible says the New Jerusalem is a physical place. The Bible says the New Jerusalem is a city which means we will have individual dwellings in it. Jesus says he's preparing a place for us. Luke 24:39, Jesus says, "See my hands, see my feet," he was glorified. We will have physical bodies, glorified but physical bodies there in heaven. We will recognize one another. Moses and Elijah came back on the Mount of Transfiguration. They knew who they were. We'll know each other in heaven. We will eat and drink in heaven. The Scripture says in Matthew 8:11 that we will sit down with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob at the banquet table. We'll experience a literal pleasure in heaven. It'll be like the pleasure here only perfected and infinitely greater. Is that not neat to think about? Think about what gives you great joy now and you have to have faith in it because you can't comprehend it but the pleasure will be purified and magnified and last forever. He says, "In heaven, there'll be no more tears and there will be no more death." So, it's literal, it's physical. Literal bodies, literal joys, literal pleasures, a literal place lasting for eternity.

And here's what he's saying: meditate on this and know that when you invest in that place, you're building for yourself a larger and more enthusiastic welcome when you finally get there and get home. You're building for yourselves an eternal residence. It could very well be, I can't say this dogmatically but I've got some reasons for it, it could very well be that the majesty and the glory of your literal physical house in heaven is based on how well you managed unrighteous mammon here for that kingdom. Now, why did I say that? Why did Jesus tell the 12 apostles, "You'll sit on thrones in that kingdom"? He didn't say that to everybody. We're joint heirs but he didn't say everybody would sit on them. Why? Because they gave all and were called to a role and an office of great giving for that kingdom.

You say, "Well, I'll just be satisfied with a little old shack in the corner of heaven." You're just dumb. I say that on biblical authority because Jesus says you ought to be smart, you ought to be clever like this guy was. He was smart. He was wicked, he was a thief but he was smart. He says, "You ought to be smart about eternal things and heavenly things in the kingdom of God."

Now, verse 10 gets a little bit difficult to me but I think we can come to a conclusion about at least the minimal of what he's saying here. "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much." I believe the Lord is saying that if you take the little thing of earthly wealth, little in the sense that it's not going to amount to much because it doesn't last forever, if you don't manage that rightfully, you don't have the kind of heart that is fit for my kingdom and my eternal dwelling place and that's much. The wealth of this world is little, the wealth of that kingdom is much. Listen, a man's character about how he

handles the things of this life corresponds with if he's really anchored in that kingdom. There is a parallel. This thing of once saved, always saved but I live like an alley cat and I have the character of a conniving shrewd thief. No, no, no, no. The ones who are truly converted show it in the character of the way they handle this life. If you're faithful in the little things of this life, you're one of those who is connected to the much things of a greater kingdom and a greater life that is to come.

Look at verse 11, "Therefore if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you?" So, there he clarifies it quite a bit, does he not? If you live your life down here as a child of light, claiming to be a child of light, and as a lifestyle pattern you could not find it in your heart to joyously invest in the kingdom of God, then how do you think God would ever entrust to you the great kingdom of God? In other words, it's inconceivable. We ought to have the heart. It's a heart issue to want to strive to spread his gospel, plant churches that he might get glory and his kingdom be advanced in the earth.

Then he continues in verse 13, "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." So, his point is: if you love the material wealth of this earth, you cannot love God and the one who loves God, he may enjoy some things wealth does and gives him but it's not his heart, it's not his love, it's not his final joy. Brothers and sisters, we ought to walk with that holy tension, not condemning ourselves for enjoying nice things that money might give us if in God's will you have a peace about getting nice things but understanding this isn't my joy, it isn't my life, and God, should you tell me, I want to yield it up for your kingdom.

Once again, be supportive, be mature. One family over here may feel that they want to be very sacrificial this year and do something and deny themselves, a family over here may have done that ten years ago but this is not the year they do it. I don't know how that works. That's the Spirit of God, that's your business with God but it's your heart. Jesus said, "You can't love the earth and its wealth." Love means it's your final purpose. It's what you're all about period. You can't have that heart and be one who has a heart for God. It's impossible.

Let me just conclude with this thought: here we are on this pilgrimage and we have a choice before us, will you be wise? Not crooked and a thief but wise like the unrighteous manager and use what's entrusted to you to advance yourself? As a child of light, will you use the resources God has entrusted to your stewardship now so that you might gain greater in the eternal kingdom?

Henry Morrison was a missionary to China for 40 years. He faithfully gave all that he had. Spent all of his life and really his health preaching the gospel and planting churches in inland China. This was the day before airplane travel and Henry Morrison came to the point where his health was breaking and he was no longer effective so he was going to come home and be with his family for a while and just die. He came home on the long voyage and docked into New York harbor as the story is told, but the President of the

United States was also on that cruiser and the President was coming home from overseas visits to national dignitaries. As they docked at New York harbor, the bridge was put out and the President and his entourage get off first and thousands of people are waving and cheering and banners are flying and a band is playing. It's just a grand and glorious reception. And after the President and his company depart, Henry Morrison with a suitcase in each hand walks off the ship, walks across the bridge and stands on the dock. No band is playing. No one is cheering. No banners are waving. As a matter of fact, no one is there. Henry Morrison says, "I just closed my eyes and it's as if God gave me a vision and I was standing at the Pearly Gate and all of a sudden from the north, from the south, from the east and west, came tens, no hundreds, no thousands of Chinese who had come to faith in Jesus Christ because of my ministry." And he thought, "I'm going to have a grand welcome. I'm just not home yet." That's what our Lord is saying, "Give your life here so that you'll be welcomed into eternal dwellings for the glory of God."

Let's right quickly look at our slides of the folks we are presently personally involved with. Just go through them, roll through them, a couple of seconds on each one and this is where our wealth is going as we support these folks around the world. We have supported some of these folks for a long, long time now. Kevin in Brazil, he was in Albania. Leland planted a church in Chicago. He's doing good, by the way, and seeing some blessings there. Leland was saved when he was a Sam's manager here and was called into the ministry. Juan in Peru. What a blessing Juan has been to oversee our two church plants in Peru. Barry King, has about 20 church plants in those old closed up church buildings in London and they're growing. I'll be going over in August to teach leadership again. Ally in Scotland, doing the same thing in Scotland Barry is doing in London. And we get to be a part of all that because we send a check every month. These are the guys who started their church watching our broadcast in South Holland and the UK. Great guys. I hope they get to come some time and you get to meet them. Harold P. We've supported Harold P. I think 25 years or so or close to it. He's retiring now but what a great work he did spreading the gospel and planting churches in Africa. The G. We can't disclose exactly what they do, they work mostly among Muslims. Conrad, they call him the Spurgeon of Africa. Conrad is a great brother and has planted a lot of churches across Africa. We're talking theologically sound, doctrinally pure, Christ honoring churches. I've preached in a lot of them. It's a real blessing to support them. We always support 2-3 of his interns. He trains these men to go out and plant churches so we support them. Pastor E. in Brazil works with Kevin M. in training pastors there in Brazil. I preached at the conference for them a couple of years ago. Tim M., he is one of our new ones. Tim's church is now the Grace Life Church of the Philippines and he asked that he do that and we said, "Well, sure." Jordan Bush, a missionary in Uruguay. Our church plant in Nebraska, Dallas, Pensacola, Des Moines, Iowa. These congregations are already quite a bit bigger than this as far as attendance. Wisconsin, Forest City, Huntsville, Tennessee, Northeast corner of the state. Pryor, Oklahoma, wonderful folks. I can't wait for you all to fellowship with them some more this year. I think they're bringing about 35 people. Then our two church plants in the mountains of Peru. It's been baptizing in a 50 gallon drum. Grace Life Church in Hong Kong. Boy, it was tough to get that one going but we're seeing some new open doors and we're hopeful there.

But this doesn't just happen. It takes the use of the unrighteous mammon that we have now so this year when you make your faith commitment, I think I put my envelope on the pew, but when you fill out your faith commitment envelope, this isn't just, "Well, I ought to do this, this is a good thing." Listen, here's what Jesus said, he said, "This isn't a sacrifice, this is smart. You're investing in what you're going to enjoy forever. You personally, now." That's what the Lord said, "You personally are going to be blessed immeasurably on what you send on ahead. But if you just have a heart for down here, money fails and it's all gone."

And all of God's people said, Amen.

Let's stand together in prayer.