

True Riches
Part II
An Adult Conversation About Money
Sunday, April 28, 2024
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Good morning, Lighthouse, are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

About two months ago I preached a message to you about True Riches.

Today is the second part; the sub-title of today's message is "An Adult Conversation About Money".

Some of you might remember, our message began with a story about three guys out on a lake fishing: a typical made-up preacher story.

They met an Angel out there on the lake.

When they understood the Angel had been sent to give them a blessing;

The one fellow who was hard of hearing asked the Angel to heal him of his deafness. The Angel reached out and took his hearing aids off and threw them in the lake...immediately, the man had perfect hearing.

The second fellow, who was nearly blind, asked the Angel; "if I could just see without these horrible, thick glasses?". The Angel reached out and took off the man's glasses and threw them in the lake...immediately the man had perfect 20/20 vision.

The third man, seeing all that happened, yelled at the Angel, "Don't touch me, I'm on disability"!

That really bad, obviously fictional story illustrates that not everybody wants Jesus to change their life!

How about you? Has your life really changed since you trusted Jesus to save you?

Some of you could shout a resounding YES!

I've some good news for you! Jesus is only getting started. The things He has yet to teach you are going to literally re-write your life story.

But this conversation today is about money.

As a Christian, God has provided for you everything you are ever going to need in two categories.

2 Peter 1:1-4

1 Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteous-ness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

God tells us here that [He] has given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness!

Now we're going to that second passage in Luke sixteen.

Luke 16:9-13 Jesus said:

9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches*?

12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall 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 hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Mammon is from Greek 'mammonas', which means 'greed for wealth or money'.

Here it becomes obvious to us that money, which is of course, among things of value and importance, is that which ranks the least.

But what are these "true riches"?

Let's go back to our original text in Second Peter.

God tells us that His divine power has given to us everything we will ever need in two categories:

Life and Godliness.

We all want the things that pertain to life, like a good job, money in the bank, a pantry full of groceries, good health insurance and much more...but Godliness, not as much.

Two categories; Things that pertain to life, and things that pertain to godliness...

2 Peter 1:4-8

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

In which of these two categories lie the true riches?

All of us know the answer to this; we may not live like we know the answer, but we all do.

The good news is that God has provided everything you will ever need in both of these categories.

Ok, here is where our conversation becomes one for grown-ups:

I have spent the last twenty-some years teaching you many things, certainly to tithe and to give.

I know you probably don't think so, but the truth is that I have, somewhat, tiptoed around this subject for a long time, because I know that for some of you it is hard to handle.

When we give baby Christians meat when they are still on milk, they choke.

Well, the Lord must think you are ready to hear this, so here goes.

What do you think? Are you ready for an adult conversation about money, or would you rather I continue to treat you like children?

Ok, here we go.

I. I know of nowhere in the Bible that the Lord actually commands us to tithe.

A. No, it's true.

1. God does not specifically command us to tithe.
2. God simply told us what a tithe is.
3. Tithe means tenth. That is ten percent of all with which God blesses us.

B. God told us that the tithe is His, that it is holy to Him.

1. **Leviticus 27:30** And all the tithe of the land, *whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD.*

2. I don't recommend this, but I told my wife that I loved her (and I certainly do) and if that ever changed, I would let her know. (again, I don't recommend this).

3. When did the tithe ever quit belonging to the Lord?

C. God told us that if we keep His tithe for ourselves, that we are robbing God.

1. **Malachi 3:8-10**

8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

9 Ye *are* cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, *even* this whole nation.

10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it.*

2. I know that the storehouse was the Temple, and that the Levites were responsible for the handling and use of God's tithes.

3. I also know that this is the Church age, and that Jesus is the direct Head over all His Churches.

4. Therefore, I don't have any trouble knowing where to put God's tithe.

II. So, is the tithe really a big deal?

Is the answer a yes or a no? Or maybe yes *and* no.

A. On the yes side:

1. It does belong to God.
2. Yes, we are robbing God if we keep it for ourselves.
3. Yes, there will be consequences if we do that.

B. On the no side:

1. If you think that it takes a lot of faith to tithe, that is nothing compared to the kind of faith you are going to need to face what the world and the Devil are going to throw at you in the days to come.
2. God gives you dollars every week and you don't want to spend a dime to support your Church?
3. Give me a break; I'm a cheapskate if I ONLY tip 10%.
4. God says money is the least of what's important; the tithe is only a tenth of what is already considered by the Lord to be the least!
5. Yes, becoming faithful to tithe is a step in becoming a mature Christian, but it is only a baby step.
6. Okay, are you still up for this adult conversation about money?

III. Okay, here's some of what I have taught you.

A. I have taught you to give according to Biblical principle.

1. This includes choosing what you will give. We even do that together every year.
2. I have taught you to give by percentage, as the Biblical example shows us.
3. I have encouraged you to start somewhere; just get started and go on from there.
4. Many of you are doing those things, but let me ask you an adult question:
5. Most of you would appreciate a raise at work; when is the last time you gave God a raise?

B. Oh, yes, I've taught you correctly.

1. The Bible commands us to choose what we will give.
2. The Bible teaches us to give by percentage.
3. I've taught you the promises and I've taught you the principles by which they work.
4. Yet, I'm still speaking to you like little children.
5. Are you sure you are ready for this adult conversation about money?

Okay here we go:

IV. Whatever you believe about tithing and giving, there are some things you do know for sure.

A. Wealth, for a Christian, comes only one way.

1. **Deuteronomy 8:18** But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for *it is* he that giveth thee **power to get wealth...**

2. Power to gain wealth, for us, comes from only one source.

3. You know this! Whatever else you may think you know, this you DO know!

4. "Preacher, I've got it. I tithe and I give, so at least in the area of money, I consider myself a mature Christian".

5. Let's hear from God's Word about that:

6. **Luke 12:16-21**

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry.

20 But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

21 So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

B. Do you think God just arbitrarily chooses who He gives wealth to?

1. Maybe he does, Maybe He doesn't.

2. Here's what I know: Our Church has prospered all these years because of individual members who faithfully tithe and give... and... because of a few individuals who are rich toward God.

3. All of us are rich toward ourselves...and we, all of us, had rather be rich.

4. I'm no different, neither are you.

5. About those few who are rich toward God, where did the riches come from that they gave to the Lord?

6. The answer is, the exact same place your resources came from, with which you tithe and give.

7. God doesn't have to wait until it happens to know what you will do with what He gives you.

C. One more story before we close:

1. **Luke 17:7-10**

7. But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

8 And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

9 Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

Conclusion:

Are we mature Christians?

Are we something special because we have finally learned to tithe and give?

This message title is "True Riches Part Two", but it's not about the True Riches, it's about money; plain old nasty, necessary money.

Our problem is that we can never manage the True Riches until we can finally master the money.

Maybe today is the day that we set our sights higher than they've been before.

Yes, the Lord knows what you will do with what He gives you...

But only you can determine what that will be.