

JAMES 1:9-11

"EXTRAVAGANT GIVING – IS RICH TOWARD GOD "

This morning we are concluding our time considering the new way the Lord measures wealth. James tells us it is not outward but inward. It is not material but spiritual. It is not having but giving.

Jesus pointed this out in one of His most moving stories. He depicts a man who by all outward appearances was a successful man. But then Jesus says

- Luke 12:20-23 "But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?'²¹ "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."²² Then He said to His disciples, "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on."²³ "Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing.

How do we become rich on the inside, where God sees us?

BY GIVING EXTRAVAGANT GIFTS TO JESUS

Extravagant giving is characterized by:

- Unearthly giving = laying up in heaven for God Luke 12
- Luke 21 Costly giving = letting go of my reserves; hurts give all
- Matthew 26 Timely giving = pouring out on Jesus loving worship

There are no less than 14 specific gifts given to Jesus in the Gospel record. Only two events are repeated in all four gospel accounts. These are the extravagance of Joseph of Arimathea and the anointing of Jesus by a woman. The 14 events are:

GIVING TO JESUS IS WORSHIP.

- Matthew 2:9-12 After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11 On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route. NIV

GIVING TO JESUS IS PROFITABLE.

- Matthew 19:27-30 Peter answered him, “We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?” 28 Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. 30 But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.

GIVING TO JESUS IS RECORDED.

- Mark 12:41-44 Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. 42 But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. 43 Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. 44 They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.” (Jesus used her example to teach His disciples the value God places on wholehearted commitment. This incident also illustrates Jesus’ total self-giving in death.) 12:41-42. From the court of the Gentiles (cf. 11:15) where He conducted His public teaching, Jesus entered the court of the women. Against the wall of this court were 13 trumpet-shaped collection receptacles for receiving worshipers’ freewill offerings and contributions (Mishnah *Shekalim* 6. 5). From a vantage point opposite (*katenanti*; cf. comments on 11:2) one of these receptacles Jesus was observing how (“in what way”) the Passover crowd was putting their money into the temple treasury (lit., “the receptacle”). In contrast with many wealthy people who gave large amounts (lit., “many coins” of all kinds—gold, silver, copper, and bronze), one unnamed poor widow gave two *lepta* (Gr.). A *lepton* was the

smallest bronze Jewish coin in circulation in Palestine. Two *lepta* were worth 1/64 of a Roman denarius, a day's wage for a laborer (cf. 6:37). For his Roman readers Mark stated their value in terms of Roman coinage, namely, a fraction of a penny.

- Luke 21:1-4 And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury,² and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites.³ So He said, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all;⁴ "for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had." Just before Luke records the widow's mite in chapter 21, he records Jesus words about incorrect giving! Luke 20:45-47. Jesus' words were designed not only to teach His disciples but also to instruct the crowds (v. 45). Jesus pointed out the dichotomy between what the teachers of the Law taught and what they practiced. Their lives were bound up in greed and pride—they desired:
 - (a) display (flowing robes),
 - (b) attention (greeted in the marketplaces),
 - (c) prominence (important seats in the synagogues and . . . at banquets), and
 - (d) more money, taking from those who did not have much (e.g., widows). Their pompous lengthy prayers were thus hypocritical. Jesus stated that these teachers would be punished most severely. Those who have greater knowledge are held more accountable (James 3:1).
- Luke 8:1-3 Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with Him,² and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons,³ and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance.
- Luke 10:38-42 As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. 39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. 40 But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" 41 "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."
- Luke 12:21 "This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."

GIVING TO JESUS IS BEAUTIFUL.

- Matthew 26: 6-13 While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper, 7 a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table. 8 When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked. 9 "This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor." 10 Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. 11 The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me. 12 When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. 13 I tell you the truth, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."
- Mark 14: 3-8 While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. 4 Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume? 5 It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly. 6 "Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. 7 The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. 8 She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial.
- Luke 7: 36-50 Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. 37 When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, 38 and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. 39 When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner." 40 Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said. 41 "Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?" 43 Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said. 44 Then he

turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. 46 You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. 47 Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little." 48 Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." 49 The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" 50 Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

- John 12: 1-8 Six days before the Passover, Jesus arrived at Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. 3 Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. 4 But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, 5 "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages." 6 He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it. 7 "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. 8 You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me."

GIVING TO JESUS IS COSTLY.

- Matthew 27: 57-61 As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. 58 Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. 59 Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. 61 Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb.
- Mark 15: 42-47 It was Preparation Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath). So as evening approached, 43 Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. 44 Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died. 45 When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to

Joseph. 46 So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock.

Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. 47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where he was laid.

- Luke 23:51-56 who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea and he was waiting for the kingdom of God. 52 Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body. 53 Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. 54 It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. 55 The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. 56 Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.
- JOHN 19:38-42 Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. 39 He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. 40 Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. 41 At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. 42 Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there. (Joseph and Nicodemus' act of love and respect for the body of Jesus was for them dangerous, costly, and without any personal gain. The service of Christians for their living Lord should be equally courageous and sacrificial, for their labor is not in vain (1 Cor. 15:58).)

TREASURES

One by one He took them from me,
All the things I valued most,
Until I was empty-handed;
Every glittering toy was lost.
And I walked earth's highway, grieving
In my rags and poverty,
Till I heard His voice inviting,
Lift your empty hands to Me!
Till I heard His voice inviting,
Lift your empty hands to Me!

So I held my hands toward heaven,
And He filled them with a store
Of His own transcendent riches,
Till they could contain no more.
And at that I comprehended
With my stupid mind and dull
That God could not pour His riches
Into hands already full.
That God could not pour His riches
Into hands already full.

The hymn writer puts this truth of extravagant giving into a song about Jesus. Lets read the words and then sing them.

Hymn #453 "I Gave My Life for Thee"

How? By the renewal of Christ's ownership of us. By giving ourselves back to Him.

Hymn # 358 "I am Thine, O Lord