

The Foundation of Generosity

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Preacher: Wendell Lang

[0 : 00] Take your Bibles, if you would, today and turn to the greatest sermon ever preached, the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew chapter 6.

! And we're going today to allow our fingers to do the walking through the pages of life. And we're going to examine what I believe is the third most significant issue I could communicate to any believer or any person, really.

The first being how to embrace Christ by faith through His grace. How to be born again. How to be a Christian.

Christian. That's the greatest thing that I could share with you. And today at the close of the service, we're going to give you an opportunity to talk with someone and to pray about what it means to embrace Christ as Savior.

The second most important thing I think I could share with anyone is how to walk in the fullness of the Spirit. I believe the Spirit still speaks to us through the Word of God.

[1 : 22] And I think if we walk in the Spirit, that's the second greatest thing I could possibly share with you. But the third greatest message I think I could share with anyone is what I'm going to share with you today.

And that is how to be rightly aligned with God in the area of your stewardship. And we're going to use that word a lot. And I think you're going to come to hopefully understand what that word means. There's a history tells us about the Spanish Armada. Maybe you remember that or you've heard of the Spanish Armada. And the Spanish Armada had 300 ships.

However, even with the 300 ships, the Spanish Armada was defeated by three ships.

Leadership, marksmanship, and seamanship. Now, many believe that the church is close to being defeated because of three ships.

[2 : 33] Discipleship, fellowship, and stewardship. And so today we're going to try to get a grasp about what stewardship really is.

And there's some interesting thoughts about stewardship running around our world. One is the theology of what's called liberation theology or poverty theology.

And many of our Catholic friends embrace this form of understanding stewardship. Poverty stewardship says this. You've got to go sell everything you have and give it to the poor.

And I want you to know straight up, Jesus did teach that one time to one person. There was a rich young ruler that his things became his God.

And so Jesus said to that guy, go sell all you have and give it to the poor. And that is poverty theology. Now, there's another stewardship theology that where we live, we understand this very well.

[3 : 47] Tulsa may be the mecca of what this view of stewardship really is. And it's called prosperity theology of stewardship.

Now, what that says is that God wants you to be unbelievably wealthy. And if you're not, it's because you don't possess enough faith to embrace all the wealth in the world.

You know what it is. It's name it and blab it and grab it. I mean, it's just, it basically is the converse to poverty theology of stewardship.

Prosperity theology of stewardship says, I can have it all. It's all about things. And if I don't, well, then it's because of a lack of faith. Today, I want to share with you a proper theological understanding of stewardship.

And that is that God has called us to be managers. God has called us to be ambassadors. So we have a video that's going to define for you exactly what I believe stewardship is in a way better than I possibly could.

[5 : 09] Let's go ahead and view the video. Thank you.

We've worked hard for it. So we think it's all ours. But is that what the Bible teaches us? Scripture like Psalm 24 1 make it very clear that God is the creator of everything and the owner of everything. But the story does not stop there. In the book of Matthew, Jesus commands us to wisely use everything he has given to us. When we understand that everything belongs to God and that we are asked to manage it for his glory, ownership ends and legacy giving begins.

We see all that we have as gifts, not possessions. We realize we are managers, not owners. So every way we spend our money, use our time, deploy our talents is full of powerful kingdom growing potential.

What if everyone started looking at everything they have as belonging to God and not themselves? How could that impact the church? How could that impact the world? How could that impact the church?

[6 : 35] For most of us, the biggest opportunity we have to be good managers of what God has entrusted to us comes when we die. But we can prepare for that moment today. Today, we can choose to make a legacy giving plan that honors not only our family, but also the one who gave it all to us in the first place.

Maybe God is calling you to continue giving to your church or to ministries you love, serve and support, even after you leave this earth. All to be used by him to reach a world that desperately needs Christ.

What would happen if we loosen our grip on the things of this world and learn to give back to God with an open hand, both during and beyond our lifetime? But how do you do this? And where do you start?

That's where we can help. We can help you create a legacy giving plan that lives well beyond your life here on earth. And what is the result? The result of all of this is Christians who are choosing to use their time, passions, and money with a focus on God.

Through legacy giving, Christians are sowing seeds that will bear real kingdom fruit and have an impact into eternity. Well, amen. Legacy giving.

[7 : 41] That's what I believe the Bible speaks about. So go ahead and find your copy of the word of God on your telephone or if you've got a hard copy. And turn to Matthew chapter 6.

I want to say something. Just look here if you would, church. How about those monitors? How about those screens? Amen? That's nice, isn't it? Yeah. Give yourselves a hand.

Praise the Lord. Very nice. Very nice. Well done. You know, I was here several weeks ago, and this is so good. Let me say just a word before we get into it.

I love your pastor. I want you to know how fortunate you are to have Pastor Mike as your leader. And this guy right here, his last name says volumes, and I've known his family forever.

Well done today. We worshipped in music, didn't we? That was great. So in Matthew chapter 6, we're going to look at some verses that I think really typify what stewardship, and I've used in the outline, generosity, is all about.

[8 : 49] So if you have your copy of God's Word, I don't know how we do it, and I'm only going to be here once. I may never get invited back. So in honor of God's Word, let's just stand today.

And we don't have to do this every time, but let's just do it today. Matthew chapter 6, verse 19, where the Bible says, Don't collect for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

But collect for yourself treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don't break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

22. The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.

So if the light within you is darkness, how deep is that darkness? 24. No one can be a slave to two masters since he will either hate one and love the other or be devoted to one and despise the other.

[10 : 01] You can't be slaves to God and money. Church, look here. This is the word of God. For the people of God. For the glory of God.

Amen. Thank you and be seated if you would. Verse 19 says, Don't collect for yourselves treasures on earth where moss and rust destroy.

The observation I glean from that is that our Lord wants us to have a life of generosity, but it brings a certain caution with it.

A certain caution. Notice the word don't collect for yourselves. Don't hoard wealth is really what it's referencing.

Don't store up for yourself treasures. There is a context within this particular caution in verse 19.

[10:59] Jesus didn't say, look here, Jesus didn't say treasures were bad. Some of the wealthiest people ever were these guys we've been singing about today, that Jesus is better than those guys.

Many of them were very wealthy. He just said, treasures won't last. And that's the significance.

They're not secure. They get eaten up, ripped off, and rusted out. So the context for us as believers and as children of God is this.

All Christians have some semblance of treasure. Now, it's not all money. You understand that this whole idea of prosperity theology is kind of a North American phenomenon.

You know, it doesn't fly that well in a third world nation. You might not have a lot of money, but you do have treasures. You have things that are valuable to you and for you.

[12:09] It might be your family. It could be your job. It could be certain things that you possess that are not necessarily monetary in value.

The considerations of the caution are this, that the text doesn't say it's wrong to have treasure.

Amen. It doesn't say it's wrong to save up treasure.

That's true. And the text doesn't say it's wrong to save up treasure for yourself. The considerations of the text is this. The text does say we are all laying up treasure, present tense.

I like what the Bible says in Proverbs. It says, cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, and they will surely sprout like wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.

Tyler, we sing about it. Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in his wonderful face. Listen, and the things of this world will grow strangely.

[13:18] What? By the light of his glory and grace. So these things constitute our treasures. And so we are to keep our glance on the world and our gaze on Jesus for too easy to put our gaze on things.

Now, where I come from, anyone know where Vertigris America is? Yeah. Yeah. I live in Vertigris, as we say in France.

And so we're in a very small town. We have a Casey's. Hello. We have a Sonic. And just like every little road sign hamlet across America, we have a dollar store.

Dollar tree. And so what happens if you go in Sonic, I like to go between 2 and 5 in the afternoon.

Okay? You know what I'm talking about.

We're talking happy hour here. All right? And so let's just imagine here I am in the line at Sonic.

[14:28] And I go to get my Route 44 Diet Dr. Pepper with Lime. Hello. Doesn't get any better for me. And I get up there.

And the way staff says, Sir, your order has already been paid for. Someone ahead of you paid it forward.

And that's what we want to do with our treasure. We want to pay it forward. And so there's this caution that comes with a life of generosity.

But I want us not only to see the caution, but I want us to see in verses 19 and 20 the challenge.

The challenge that comes as well. So in 19b, there's rust, thieves break in and steal.

Look at 20. But see the contrast? Collect for yourself treasures in heaven. In other words, pay it forward. Think Sonic here where neither rust nor moths nor thieves are going to take what you have.

[15:37] There's a certain, with this caution, there's a certain, in this challenge of generosity, there's also a certain challenge that comes with it.

Moth, rust, thieves. Think about your most prized possessions just sprouting wings and flying off.

Now, Pastor, I'm looking across this congregation and you're obviously a very erudite group.

And you're probably far too spiritual to watch TV. But at our house, my wife does. She's not here today.

If I want her to know I said this, I'll tell her. And so we watch some TV. I mean, we're just not that spiritual. I've got to tell you. And so I don't know if on your cable or how you get it, if you get this network called A&E.;

A&E.; And A&E; has this show called, need you to look here, Hoarders. I've never watched a full episode.

[16 : 45] Hello? But I watched part of it. And you know it's bad when you go into this house that has newspapers stacked from the floor to the ceiling, from wall to wall.

You've got 24 cats running around using the whole floor as a cat box. Exactly. And there's a certain stench.

And there are these people that are hoarders. Listen to what the TV says right before the show. They give this disclaimer.

Compulsive hoarding is a mental disorder marked by an obsessive need to acquire and keep things, even if the items are worthless, hazardous, or unsanitary.

And so what I want us to consider today is what are we hoarding up for ourselves?

[17 : 46] Well, the truth is heavenly treasure doesn't end. So let's start like this. Earthly treasure is temporal. Hello?

Heavenly treasure is eternal. Now, look here. I'm going to tell you, there's only two things that are going to last. Period.

The B-I-B-L-E. Hello? The Bible. And the souls of men and women and boys and girls. Now, Tyler, I used to have a youth guy that said, Oh, music's going to last as well.

Well, maybe, but to him I said, whatever. We know that the Bible and the souls of men and women and boys and girls are going to last. Can I get a witness? Amen.

And so wouldn't we want to be investing in that which is of eternal significance rather than that which is of a temporal, temporary significance.

[18 : 54] And so we see here that there are only two things that are going to last. Well, there's a challenge and there's a caution.

Notice in verse 21. I want you to see that a life of generosity also brings about choices. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Our choice determines the destination of our treasure. I must confess that for many years I thought that where your treasure is, there your heart is meant one thing.

But truly, where your heart is, your treasure will be. And if you kind of flip that, perhaps that helps us understand.

And so I'm originally from Tulsa, so I've been like a fan of Bartlesville. We wanted to live here. I love the cultural aspect of the smaller town.

[19 : 59] And I love everything about your town and about your city. The truth is, your economy historically has been more up and down than a roller coaster at Disneyland.

But every realtor would still tell you those three key words. Location, location, location.

Thus is true with our treasure. Look, location, location, location. Where do you invest your treasure? Here or there? Temporary or eternal? So, if you have your treasure in your 401k in the Dow Jones average, truthfully, that is nothing but a temporal investment.

So, I'm going to share with you some easy little things on how we're going to know where our treasure is invested. All right? Number one.

[21 : 16] Do you throw a fit if something you want, you can't have? Like sulking or anger? Or do you see yourself as a pilgrim passing through life as a steward?

Number two. Do you seek to justify what you want and go into heavy debt to get it? Number three.

Are you quick to serve personal desires or are you quick to give to someone else's need? Our Bible shares with us that to live this life of generosity is not really an easy thing.

Notice in verse 24. You can't serve two masters. A long time ago, there was this folk singer.

You've heard the name Bob Dylan. Bob Dylan has had a lot of iterations in his life. I mean, he was a Jewish guy. And then at one time, he said, I'm a Christian.

[22 : 25] So he wrote this Christian album called Long Train Coming. And one of the songs in the album went like this. You've got to serve somebody.

You've got to serve somebody. It might be the devil or it might be the Lord. But you've got to serve somebody.

Either God or mammon. Now, mammon is a Syrian word for the demon, the god of greed.

Of greed. And so we're either going to fulfill our wants and our needs or we're going to be greedy or we're going to help the needy.

You know what's interesting about those hoarders? I mean, can I just say this? This is a Greek word here. You'd have to have gone to seminary and know this. But that's just gross when you look at that.

[23 : 34] I mean, it just really, really is. And what happens is when people have, you know, paper from floor to ceiling and wall to wall and cats running everywhere in the litter box all over the house, we think they're a little bit cray-cray.

You know what I mean by that? However, if someone keeps more than they could ever spend, more stuff than they could ever use, they acquire more and more just for the acquiring, while people in their city are starving and hungry.

See, we put them on the cover of Forbes magazine. So to be a steward, to live this generous life that we've talked about, it's about giving.

Jesus typified that. God said, for God so loved the world that he what? He gave. And the whole stewardship thing is so wonderful because today, the best exercise in stewardship you could ever exercise would be to receive Christ, to embrace Christ.

And you say, okay, do I need to pray a prayer? I don't know. I know that to embrace Christ, the Bible says, whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

[25 : 06] So we just had Easter. This is a verse I've not heard many people preach on on Easter. But you know the verse, Romans 10, 9, if you confess with your lips out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks as man thinks so he is.

If we confess with our lips and believe in our heart that Jesus was raised from the dead. Hello, Easter. Easter is significant.

And so today, when you say, man, I clearly can't do this myself. I've missed the mark. And so I embrace you today.

I also want to encourage you, if you're not a part of this fellowship, this would be a great church to connect with.

They have brand new screens. Hello? And no, I'm telling you, folks have been so nice today.

[26 : 08] And I'd say this. I can't think of a better pastor I would want to sit under than Pastor Mike. He loves Jesus.

He loves his family. He loves his church. And so if you want to partner with this church, man, this would be a great day to do so. And so, you know, we've not even talked about this.

So I'm just going to kind of, I'm going to kind of lead us out here. Tyler, let's sing a song. And then as we sing a song, this is your opportunity to respond.

It's a time of response. Response to the message. Man, I need to be a good steward. I need to live a life of generosity.

And so for you, that may be your prayer. Maybe for you, it's I need to receive Christ. I've always wondered. I've always doubted. I need to do that today. Or for you, maybe it's I need to partner with this church.

[27 : 11] I rarely go in a church. I'm in a different church every week. Where there isn't someone who doesn't need to be baptized after the time of their salvation.

Okay? Now, these guys are moving like ninja warriors. So I just want you to look here. When we sing, this is your opportunity to respond to the voice of God's Holy Spirit.

Let's stand together. Father, Father, Abba, Daddy. May your will, nothing more, nothing less be accomplished today. In Jesus' name.

And we do what your word says, Lord. We cast our cares upon you, thanking you that you care for us.

Now, in a few seconds, I'm going to close the prayer. And we're going to sing. And as we do, you respond to that voice of God's Holy Spirit.

[28 : 14] Abba, Daddy. May your will, nothing more, nothing less be accomplished. In Jesus' name.

Amen and amen.