

Luke 16:1-18

God Wants You To Be Rich!

Good morning, it is wonderful to be here with you all.

This morning, we will be in Luke chapter 16 as we make our way through the Gospel of Luke.

If you are new here this morning, I want to be clear about something right off the bat.

We are a Bible Based church, now what that means for us, is the pastor here, which is me, I do not go searching through God's Word and pick the Topics that I think the church needs to hear.

As we go through God's Word, the Topics then are presented to us.

Once again this protects you all from having a pastor who tries to play Holy Spirit, and teaching only his favorite topics.

Because if I was picking Topics, our Topic that we have come to this morning is one I would avoid, if it were up to me.

But what we find as we go through God's Word is it brings a greater understanding of who our God is, and what He expects from us as believers.

We consider the whole council of God, and when a group of people endeavor to undertake such a goal, we find the scriptures bring health to our Church, yet they can make us uncomfortable at times.

Please know this morning, that God's desire for His followers, is that they understand that every area of their lives is His.

Oh, how we hate any kind of authority today in our culture, we just hate being told, that one way is right and another is wrong.

We love grey areas, and we believe really everything is relative to what I want to believe.

But when God's Word is the absolute authority in a person's life, it has to be taken as an absolute truth.

And this point must be clear, we believe God's Word is absolute truth.

Can I hear an "Amen" if you believe this?

Do you believe this that God's Word is absolute Truth?

Okay, that is wonderful, there are a lot of you here this morning that believe this.

Now, I understand your passion in what you just said, however, I am most certain that there is one topic in God's Word that many of you who said Amen this morning, that you are not willing to submit to God's Authority in your life.

That is our finances.

You see what we have done to God in our enlightened culture, is we have compartmentalized our faith.

And somehow we have justified that if we give portions of our life to God, than He will be appeased.

We think, well, I love my husband or my wife, God you reign supreme in my marriage, you might separate your business life, where you lie and scheme to earn your living.

Or you have a wonderful devotional life, every morning you are in God's Word, you just have that part of your spiritual life down, but you entertain yourself with filthy vial movies, and you are just not willing to give that part of your life to the Lord.

Maybe you serve in a ministry somewhere, you are faithful, you never miss a scheduled week, but when the offering comes around, you are not willing to contribute one dime to the work of the ministry.

And this is what we have done and even allowed in our culture, a compartmentalized Christianity, and because the overall, prevailing belief in our culture is that of relativism, we justify ourselves, as not being that bad.

Now, remember many of you believe in the Authority of God's Word, and Especially Jesus' Words, remember what Jesus said to that multitude that was following Him here in Luke.

Luke 14:33 So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

There is a cost to being a disciple of Christ, it will cost you everything in your life.

Jesus said in another place...

Luke 9:23-26 Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. 24 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. 25 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? 26 For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels.

Please hear the severity of Jesus' call to discipleship, every area of your life, is to be given over to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

To Love God Supremely, this is true discipleship.

This is not a legalistic mandate I have drawn up this morning, these are Jesus' Words.

Now, this includes our finances, and this morning Jesus will speak on that area of our lives that many of us have compartmentalized and kept God out of.

Let's pray before we get into the study...

Our message is entitled "God Wants You To Be Rich!"

Now, the great modern theologian Joel Osteen explains "God want us to prosper financially to have plenty of money, to fulfill the destiny He has laid out for us."

“It's God's will for you to live in prosperity instead of poverty.” <https://www.inspirationalstories.com/quotes/t/joel-osteen-on-money-wealth/>

“Life's too short to spend it trying to keep others happy. You can't please everyone. To fulfill your destiny, stay true to your heart.” – **Joel Osteen**

<https://wealthygorilla.com/50-joel-osteen-quotes/>

Another modern theologian, Creflo Dollar preached...

“Well, you need to hear about money, because you ain't gonna have no love and joy and peace until you get some money!” https://www.allchristianquotes.org/authors/67/Creflo_A_Dollar/33-48/

"God wants to see His kids operate as kings! I've never seen no poor kings!" [http://www.828ministries.com/articles/Creflo-Dollar-Eviscerates-by-Anthony-Wade-Tithing-150429-](http://www.828ministries.com/articles/Creflo-Dollar-Eviscerates-by-Anthony-Wade-Tithing-150429-718.html)

[718.html](http://www.828ministries.com/articles/Creflo-Dollar-Eviscerates-by-Anthony-Wade-Tithing-150429-718.html)

That is super appealing to hear, but is it true, that God is wanting to give us wealth, and He desires for us to live for ourselves in this life?

Well, for those of us this morning, who do hold that God's Word is the Authority we will let Jesus tell us what He desires from a disciple regarding their finances.

And understand, Jesus does want each and every one of His Children to be rich, but the context of what that means is missed by the modern American ideology.

God's Word actually has a lot to say about money and finances, and maybe this is an area of your life you have never handed over to Him.

May God work on your heart this morning, as in all areas of our lives, obedience brings blessing, and disobedience brings consequences.

Hear Jesus this morning.

Sometimes people claim that God has worked out some special deal with them, and they are exempt, but God's Will is laid out in His Word, not by how we feel He is speaking to us.

So, Luke 16, please note immediately that Jesus is not talking to the unbeliever, this instruction is for those of us who call ourselves Christians here this morning.

Starting in verse one,

The Parable of the Unjust Steward

16:1 He also said to His disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. 2 So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.'

Let us start very clearly here, Jesus is speaking to His disciples.

To His disciples, to the Christian He presents a possible parable here, but Jesus nor Luke calls this a parable.

This very well could have been a true story, maybe this was someone in the crowd listening that lived this, or maybe a well-known controversy that had taken place.

Usually the reader is told they are reading or hearing a parable.

But Jesus describes here, a certain rich man having a steward that had a pretty hefty accusation made against him.

He was wasting his master's goods.

Now, in the Ancient Eastern more affluent homes, the master would hire a manager or steward over a portion or all of their affairs and finances.

The master would allow them to deal with his money to buy the necessities for the well-being of the household.

If the steward was shrewd enough, and could manipulate a deal for less than the fair market value, then he could pocket the money.

A trust-worthy and wise steward was a very important part of the household, and nobody would be upset over him making a profit on his deal making.

It would be considered earned income.

Now, just as it was a possibility for the steward to make profits for himself and his master through thrift, it was also possible for a steward to be unfaithful and waste what was entrusted to him.

If he was a reckless buyer, and kept dishonest books, and he was found out, his job and prestigious position could be taken from him.

We see this here in this story.

This dishonest household manager was wasting the master's property, and the confrontation ensues.

In verse 2 we see the master calling his steward out and asking for an accounting, he wanted to see the books, and he was given a notice.

If you have ever been fired, you can kind of feel the weight of this story.

I remember working at Little Caesars at 16 years old, and wanting to go to a party where a girl I liked would be at.

I called in sick, and went off to the party, when another co-worker showed up at the party, and she ratted me out.

I knew I was in for, so I brought in my apron and collared shirt, and before the confrontation could begin I surrendered with some kind of dignity, I left the food business that day never to return.

But the emptiness and embarrassment that comes with being fired is terrible.

In Jesus' story this steward is scoundrel and a squanderer and he is terminated.

This is depressing even for a thief.

And Jesus, being the only One who can read a person's mind, lets us in on what the man's inner thoughts and plans are...

3 "Then the steward said within himself, 'What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. 4 I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.'

After being canned, the man goes into deep thought, he reflects, and realizes now, that he has been a white collar worker for some time now, and he no longer has callouses on his hands.

His skin now refine, and untouched from the suns scorching heat.

He cannot even fathom going to work as a laborer.

And he thinks even harder, now if manual labor is out of the question, "I might be forced to beg."

In the non-canonical book of Ecclesiasticus it says, in Chapter 40 verse 28, "it is better to die than beg."

He had been a deal maker for some time, and his money came by the quick tongued bargaining of the Middle East.

So this man is too soft to work hard, and too proud to beg, so he does what he is good at, he comes up with a scheme, a plan pops into his mind, and you see now a forward motion to put his plan into play.

He had resolved what to do when he was put out of the stewardship, that others may receive him into their houses.

Look now, as his plan comes together...

5 "So he called every one of his master's debtors to him, and said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' 6 And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' So 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?' So he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' 8 So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.

So the unfaithful steward calls every one of his master's debtors to himself.

And we get a little insight of what he did here, with two examples, one who owed one hundred measures of oil, was told to cut his bill in half.

The steward was cutting his own profit out of this, and you can get an idea at how these guys made their money.

The next person owed a hundred measures of wheat, and we see he worked 20 percent of the deal into his favor, and he cut it out of the deal.

Now, this was not a last ditch effort to save his job, it was so he had friends when he left his master's house. And the master saw the wisdom in his former steward.

We are told, when the news of what he did came to his ears he commended him and his shrewdness.

He was willing to cut his own commission to his master, to look out for his future.

Now, during his unemployment, over the years, he would be able to leverage new deals with these men.

And as he made his rounds, he would be able to have a seat at the table.

He was a creative crook, a survivor, and a manipulator.

Now, you can imagine as Jesus was saying this, the disciples were expecting a rebuke, or a lesson on lying or stealing and they were expecting the story to end with the crook getting his due.

The last thing they expected was Jesus to do what He does here, ending the story with the master commending this unjust steward.

But it was not his sinning that Jesus was using for this illustration.

Jesus was using what was perhaps a popular story at the time, and using it as a point for His own expectations of His own followers.

Kent Hughes explains here, “*Jesus did not approve of what the ex-employee had done, but he certainly admired his foresight and astuteness.*”

This man loved and looked out for Number one, he was a quick thinker, because he was important to himself.

Jesus then says at the end of verse 8, the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.

You can picture the disciples processing the surprise ending of the story, and then Jesus turns it on them.

The worldly steward owned up to reality, he didn't live with his "head in the sand."

He used all that he had to make a way, his wit, his knowledge, his energy, even his resources to ensure a secure future for himself.

Yet the sons of light are living carelessly, as though eternity would not come.

They lack vision, they have no will to do much for the Kingdom, only as much as their comfort would allow.

The sons of light do not give as much attention and concern to eternity as they do worldly comforts and business.

If only they could be as spiritually astute as this crooked manager was in temporal things.

Jesus now brings home His point, and understand Jesus did not pull any punches, He was very direct, and clear.

I am so fascinated at how supposedly mature spiritual men and women think somehow they are exempt in what Jesus asks of them.

I am a super literal person, and I appreciate the directness of God's Word.

It says go here and no further, it instructs us on life, and how to relate to people, and it is not as confusing as people make it seem.

Jesus now gives them the pitfalls of money, and we cannot close our ears to this lesson and instruction here.

Remember, Jesus says the cost of discipleship is all of you, every nook and cranny, even our finances.

So this is our application...

Look at verse 9 here...

9 "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home.

This verse has puzzled many but the meaning is not too difficult to grasp at all.

Jesus is speaking of making friends with the correct use of wealth.

The word mammon means wealth, or even power.

It was the original name of the Canaanite god of wealth and power, and the word had been carried over into Israelite language to mean riches or treasure.

We make transactions here on earth with money, this was not the original plan of God, but after the fall, transactions began, and this is the plight of man right now.

We cannot exist without making some kind of transaction with money, Jesus calls it unrighteous mammon, because it is this fallen world's system.

But we exist within this system, and Jesus is making the point, that we are to make friends with unrighteous mammon, use our money for others.

The people or friends that have spiritually benefited from our wealth in this life, will receive us into our eternal dwellings.

Those who have been reached by the Gospel from our giving in this life, will be there to welcome us into the next.

The Grateful Souls of those who have heard the gospel because of our sacrifice.

Jesus is making it very clear that our wealth and possessions are to be used to win eternal friends.

Our giving generously to further the Gospel's cause is expected by Jesus.

Understand if God is supreme in our life, everything we have is His, we are stewards, managing it, using it for His cause.

Is your home open to others, orphans, widows, Matthew parties, or is it “Mine!” My refuge, my comfort, my protection?

Is your paycheck His, or do you fill your fancy first, and maybe give leftovers to His cause?

Most of the commentators I read on this explained that the true spiritual stature of a person will be determined on how they use their resources.

Are they tithing, are they giving to the storehouse or church where they are fed, do they have a heart to support the Gospel work.

You know, I personally do not know how much anyone gives here, but I do make sure from time to time that our elders are tithing to the ministry, I will ask them, and this is the expectation for anyone who teaches God’s Word, from Home Fellowships, to Men’s Bible Study, Most importantly Our Pastor’s, all must tithe, it is hypocrisy for them to teach the scriptures yet live another way.

I hold myself accountable to the Elders, there is no way I would be allowed to preach God’s Word to you each week, if I was not giving at least a tenth of my check back to the Work here.

Now, some of the guys I heard and read for this study, they even ask the Usher, who passes the bag each week to tithe, they believe it is hypocrisy for someone to be receiving tithes from people to and not be contributing.

Their worship team, all of them, one pastor said how it is shameful for someone to be raising their hands to the Lord, and singing, "I give you all my life."

And in reality they are lying to the Holy Spirit, because they have not given over their finances to Him.

The Lord here is impressing upon the disciple the importance of stewardship.

Jesus is trying to get His followers to think passed this life, into eternity.

You see there is no escaping the reality that one day everything we own will be in a hospital bag, all of our lives will one day be displayed on a picture show at a memorial, and that will be all of this life.

Jess even now jokes with her mom, she snaps pictures of her with the kids, and will say, "Oh, that will be perfect for your slide show."

This is not cruel, this is reality, we will all die.

The only wealth that will endure is that which has been invested into others for the sake of Christ and His Gospel.

Someone might say, “I do not have much money to give, I will start tithing when I have more.”

Jesus answers this thought next...

10 He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. 11 Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? 12 And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?

There is a principle that runs through God's Word, that is evident in the millions of Christ followers who have implemented this principle.

I have seen it in my own life, and have heard countless testimonies and read numerous accounts.

When you are faithful with little, when you trust God when you have little, and put Him first in your giving, when you use this world's currency for transactions in the Kingdom of God, you will be entrusted with more.

True riches, blessings from God, not always more money, but blessings non-the-less.

Some people say, “I'll play the lotto, and God if you let me win, I'll give then,” But if they cannot do it with a little then more than likely they won't with much.

Look money to God is a very little thing, to man it is often the greatest thing.

Someone once said, “Money is the universal provider for everything but happiness.”

Some people think of it as the most important thing, but to God it is very minute.

How you look at and treat money is a true test of your character.

I know, some people turn into Gollum from Lord of the Rings, “My Precious.”

You can mention anything else about their spirituality, but once the Word of God speaks to their pocket book, they turn into a different person.

The same people who walk with a spiritual arrogance, often struggle in this area.

1 Tim 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

People’s greediness with money, often pierces them through with many sorrows.

They cannot let go, and invest into true riches, they think this life is all there is, and they live for themselves, and they are so good at hiding it behind spiritual overtones and holy talk.

And it is a great sign of the times we are in....

2 Tim 3:1-2 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money,

Jesus says if you have not been faithful in unrighteous mammon, this world's currency, how can you be entrusted with true riches?

Verse 12 says, "if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?"

Remember we are stewards of a life that belongs to God.

In this life, we give away, well how much?

You see the Old Testament standard, and really the principle laid out even from Genesis on is a tithe.

God told the Jews to test Him in this, **Mal 3:8-12**

8 "Will a man rob God?

Yet you have robbed Me!

But you say,

'In what way have we robbed You?'

In tithes and offerings.

9 You are cursed with a curse,

For you have robbed Me,

Even this whole nation.

10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,

That there may be food in My house,

And try Me now in this,"
Says the Lord of hosts,
"If I will not open for you the windows of heaven
And pour out for you such blessing
That there will not be room enough to receive it.
11 "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes,
So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground,
Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,"
Says the Lord of hosts;
12 And all nations will call you blessed,
For you will be a delightful land,"
Says the Lord of hosts.

The Jews tried to cheat what God asked of them, and He is pleading with them, and even gave an ultimatum, "give to Me, and I will bless you."

You see when you give to the Lord in Obedience, there is promised blessing.

And our New Testament instruction, is to bring our gift on the 1st day of the week, which is Sunday.

1 Cor. 16:1-2 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: 2 On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper

Paul said again in 2 Cor. 9:6-8 But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

It is a joyous thing to give to the work of the Lord, God loves the cheerful giver, who gives in faith, and looks to their heavenly reward.

Are we mandated by a tithe, which is ten percent of our income?

Well a tithe is a good starting point, but I like what H.A. Ironside says here, “If you had been a *Hebrew* under the Law you would be required to give ten percent. As a Christian under Grace you surely do not want to give less than a *Hebrew* gave under the Law.”

He who is faithful in the least will also be faithful when there is much.

God has given each of us a measure to be faithful with, we are stewards and He is the owner.

If you find this teaching is just making you uncomfortable, first, remember this is Jesus' Words not mine.

But if your grip on your money is a hindrance to you, try giving some of it away, and I guarantee, you will

find more joy in obedience than you ever will in hording it.

What a blessing to think that when you come into Glory, and there waiting for you, are those whose faces you have never seen before, but because you lived open handed, and gave to the Gospel work, they were reached.

Verse 13 now...

13 "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

Much of American Christianity is a false form, where they are trying to find this grey area of compromise where they can be a disciple of Christ and also serve mammon.

Church hear Jesus this morning, over all the other compromised voices teaching people today.

If your wealth, your possessions, and your money is yours, please know you are worshiping a false god this morning.

But if you can look at your life, and see that you are steward of God, you are servant of the Most High, I imagine you have found that you cannot out give God.

Please know that the poorest in our Land are filthy rich compared to the rest of the world.

When our missionary from Africa is here, he notes that even the homeless have more in their possession in the carts that they are pushing around than the average South Sudanese.

If you find it hurts to give to the Lord, be fearful that covetousness is getting a grip on your soul.

This world is enamored with the rich, oh they admire those who have done well for themselves.

But we see, so often that the rich are miserable, suicidal and out of control.

Jesus has laid out the better way, and this is consistent with the rest of Jesus' teaching, give yourself away.

Your time, your resources, your gifts, your talents, and live with understanding that God's heart goes out to the person who lives for the benefit of others and uses what they have for the Gospel's cause.

Some people think that they can overlook their money, by serving God with their time, but God is interested in every nook and cranny.

And if you have never experienced the joy of giving to the Lord, I want to encourage you this morning, that God's Promises have never once failed.

There are countless stories even from those within this church, testimonies of the blessings that people have found in giving to the Lord.

Start with a tithe, give the Lord a tenth, and it will not be long before you are experiencing the blessings that God has promised in His Word.

I will say this, you cannot out give God.

Now, God's Word is clear, Jesus has spoken, and there are always those, who just cannot give this part of their lives over, money is the last stronghold in many churchgoer's lives.

But we see even from Jesus' original teaching here on money, it was immediately rejected.

The Law, the Prophets, and the Kingdom

14 Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him. 15 And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

16 "The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it. 17 And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail.

18 "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery.

Now, although Jesus had directed this teaching toward the disciples, we see others were listening.

The Pharisee, as the religious phony usually does, derided Jesus and mocked the fact that a person could not be devoted to material goods as well as God.

They had not accepted Jesus' teaching, as many do not today, they wiggle free from any obligation or expectation to give to the work of the Gospel.

And Jesus here tells them that they justify themselves before men, but God knows their hearts, and what they think is highly regarded is actually an abomination in the sight of God.

Jesus once again unmasked their hypocrisy, and exposed their false religion.

They passed themselves off before men, but God was not fooled.

It is interesting how many today live for man's eyes with total disregard to what God expects.

They live content as long as everyone believes their show, and their false pretenses.

But God is not fooled.

Then Jesus explains that John the Baptist ushered in a new era of faith.

The old dispensation was coming to a close, and would end at the cross, Jesus is saying in the meantime the kingdom of God was being preached and men were

being invited in through the door of repentance and faith.

No Word that God has spoken will fail, it would be easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for the Words of God to fail.

Every law and all of its demands must be met, either by those who come under condemnation, or by Jesus who came to bear its curse for others.

Jesus was the Word made flesh, the fulfillment of God's Word, and they were deriding His teachings, and mocking His Word.

They in the end would be the fool, but not without warning.

Jesus, inserts another very controversial topic in the midst of His teaching on money.

Something that no doubt is effected by finances.

He says "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery.

In Jesus' day, the modern theologian just like today, treated this sacred relationship lightly.

God's Law stated **Deut. 24:1**

When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her

a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house

Now, Jesus in another place said only if adultery was committed could a bill of divorce be given.

But the rabbi's defined uncleanness by all kinds of ridiculous ideas.

A Rabbi by the name of Hallel says uncleanness could be many things. If she puts too much salt in your broth, that's cause for divorce. You found an uncleanness in her. She oversalts the food. One Rabbi by the name of Achabba said if you have found a prettier woman, then you're looking now with disdain at your wife and so, that's an uncleanness. Chuck Smith

Jesus is making the fact known that no matter what a modern day scholar teaches or tries to manipulate God's Word is the True Standard.

And today, I hear people twist and squirm and try to justify themselves, but God's Word is the standard.

Now, with everything else, He has given you freewill, and this morning you can choose to disobey God's Word, or you can seek to obey, remember obedience is where blessing is found.

Maybe your finances are troubled this morning, please know, that God wants to be involved in your finances, in fact, you will find no greater joy and freedom in your

finances as to when you allow God to be Lord of your finances.

The only wealth that will endure is that which has been invested in others for the sake of Christ and His Gospel.

Jesus made it clear that one's use of money and spirituality are inseparably bound together.

The sooner we do something about it, the better it will be for our souls.

Invest into the Kingdom of God.

You know, your investment into your storehouse, this church, is serving a greater good than you may be aware of.

I want to take a minute and talk to you about where your investment is going, and how important it is to keep giving to the work of the Lord here at Calvary Chapel Victorville.

Your giving here goes to support 11 missionaries all over the world even here locally.

You are a supporter of life, in our culture's fight over life and murder of the unborn as you support the Rose of Sharon, our local pregnancy care, monthly our church supports them.

The map is in the foyer, please look at them, and know that your giving is investing into the lives they are reaching.

You see you may never step foot on foreign ground, and the reality is those friends waiting for you in your everlasting home will be from places you had no idea your investment reached.

What a greeting committee that will be.

But not only in distant lands, but more and more it is becoming increasingly clear that our church, here in Old Town is a mission front line.

Now, since this is ours collectively, this church, this facility, we are stewards over it.

The Word the Lord gave us in the beginning was **Ex. 23:30 Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land.**

And little by little we have been taking ground for Jesus here.

Our facility little by little, we are fixing it up, bringing order to it.

But every day that the staff working here, we are seeing the work is great that we have been tasked too.

You know, we pray every morning in the office, and we pray over the Body here, and we ask God for our neighbors, to win them for Jesus.

We have especially been praying for the kids and the youth in this area.

And this, our third year into this work, God has been answering that prayer.

The kids almost over night are spilling into this place, especially on Wednesday night.

It seems like for the longest time, we had a handful of kids in the youth, sometimes only 10 kids in that building.

But now, the classrooms are bursting, do you Wednesday night people see the kids that are coming. Now, as a staff we are finding ourselves overwhelmed as the neighborhood kids, the street kids, and others in the community are here during the week.

We cannot figure out why they are coming, we have nothing to offer them, as far as activities, but they are coming here, just hanging out here, and wanting to be on our side of fence.

I had about five of the kids in my office on Wednesday, and I just asked them point blank, “why are you guys coming here, what was it that brought you to us?”

You know every single one of the kids could not answer, we are not fun, we are dull adults, we have cheap snacks to offer them, and water on a hot day.

But they could not tell me why they are here, but they love being here.

And it clicked in that moment, it is by the power of prayer the Lord is bringing them to us to minister to them.

Listen to me, exciting things are happening here that perhaps you do not see, but I am hoping you can see why your investment into the work of God is so important.

And I am hoping to stir and excite those of you who have not given to the work here to obey the Lord in this, it is only meant for blessing for you.

Now, in January we paid off the bank note on this church, we have no mortgage payment, how many churches can say this?

But, something happened after we announced this to the Body here, people stopped giving to the work.

Our income dropped substantially, and earmarked giving increased.

Earmarks are when you tell us where to put the money, it ties up our overall budget, when you give to a certain ministry or place, we have to use that money where you tell us, and the church has many bills.

Please know your giving already goes to missions if you give here, we have it built into the budget, when you give here.

Now our Mortgage payment was only \$1100 a month, I imagine your own mortgages or rents are more than that.

So that was helpful to our budget, but it was only a little tiny piece of the overall budget to keep the church operating.

Through the summer staff had to go unpaid, and things got a little worrisome for a while.

But God came through, and things are stabilizing for us.

But know, our mortgage being paid off is wonderful, but we have more ground to take for the kingdom of God.

God is the ultimate provider of course, but He works through the obedience of His disciples, that is a lot dependent upon freewill you can see.

But, as I see these kids coming during the week, little ones, some of these kids are 4 and 5 years old, running passed the drug dealers and prostitutes to get here.

We feel ill-equipped and understaffed and greatly underfunded to meet the need.

Now the first step for us is to bring pastor Jason on full-time, that is step one, he is still driving up and down the hill sometimes 6 days a week, and then doing everything he needs to do here.

The need is too great for us, we need him here.

But I am hoping you all can pray with me about a what I believe the Lord has planted in my heart for these kids.

I close my eyes and see it as clear as day, out there in the courtyard, where Grace Cafe is now, but a building, connecting this building with the Children's Ministry, with a basketball court, and rooms with computers in them, and an activities center to give these kids something to do here during the week, with an emphasis upon discipleship, and having a program to reach these kids.

We are seeing, at about the age of 13, they are gone, the streets grab them, they start drinking, and smoking pot, having sex, and that's it, we do not see them again.

But if we had a way to fight Satan back, pastor Joe tutoring, and running the facility.

This is the long-term vision, it would be wonderful it happened sooner, the impossibility of it all makes it seem like foolishness, but I know my God, and I know He is bringing these kids to us for a reason, and these kids who don't even know why they are here will have a God story.

I want to read to you, what happened with the younger kids from the streets this Wednesday at service, with Pastor Jason.

He says...

I was teaching that night for the 7 year olds through 5th graders. The lesson for the night was being reborn or becoming a born-again Christian.

So after worship, and after going over the memory verse for the month all together in the CM sanctuary and after watching the movie clip that went over the lesson of being born-again, I took my class back into our room. On the white board I had drawn a real quick "city scape" with two twin towers. And a plane in the sky heading towards one tower. I wrote the time of 8:46am on the board with 9-11-2001 as the date. I had the kids sit down started to explain what had happened 18 years ago. I explained that 2,977 people went to sleep on the Sep 10th not knowing what was going to happened the next day. I told them the grandmas and grandpas, moms and dads, brothers and sisters, went to work that morning like normal. They had pancakes, and cereal for breakfast. They grabbed their briefcases and backpacks. They had orange juice and coffees in hand as they walked out the door. I really wanted the kids to understand that what happened was real life. I wanted to give them a sense of perspective they may not have heard before. I told them about the "bad men" on the planes and their agenda. I told them about false gods and listening to Satan. I told them about people stuck up in the higher floors and them jumping from windows to escape the inevitable. I told them about 343 firefighters and 71 policemen died trying to save as many lives as they could. I had told them that many of these men and women did not go to heaven because they did

not choose Jesus. That they may or may not have heard the gospel but did not accept the free gift of salvation. I let the kids know that once you no longer have breath on this earth, you are immediately met face to face with the Creator of the universe and that He'll ask you what you did with the name of Jesus. (Accept or reject). The time is now to choose because we are not promised tomorrow. I had all the kid's attention. And all throughout my explanation the kids kept raising their hands to ask different questions. Hard questions. Questions about heaven and hell. Questions like, why does Satan not like God? Why did he become Satan? What does he look like?

One of two brothers that have been coming for the past month and a half on Wednesdays asked, "what if you're just using God just to get into heaven?" I told him that God knows the true intentions of the heart. And that you will be compelled to tell the truth when face to face. One little girl raised her hand in earnest asking if there is a list of things to do to ask Jesus into her heart. Another girl raised her hand and said I want to accept Christ. Another girl also wanted to choose Jesus. I then asked the whole class who would like to accept Christ. All in the class raised their hands with the exception of Rebekah and Jason (Pastor Jason's own kids). One of the boys said, "hey those two are not raising their hands." I

told him that Rebekah and Jason already have asked Jesus into their hearts. That made me proud as a father.

I had the whole class repeat after me. As I started to pray Rebekah gets up stands next to me and lil J. The kids finish out loud the sinners prayer and Rebekah and J started clapping for joy for all of them. It was a really awesome moment for me. And I truly am excited to see these kids grow.

Pastor Jason voiced his frustration in wanting to be here the next day, to catch the kids in the neighborhood and keep up the discipleship.

He said he is ready to be here full-time, and we are ready too.

That is step one of the vision of reaching these kids, so we are moving forward little by little and taking the land, and it is so important that you all stay in this with us.

We need teachers, to mentor these kids in the children's ministry.

You know, Jess said something profound, she said if we are going to have the greatest impact possible on these kid's future, we need to ask God for their parents too.

And Pastor Joe and her have already been reaching out trying to build relationships.

Many do not even have parents, they are staying with an aunt or uncle.

Please pray where your place is in all of this, you must have heard enough by now, that you are not here by mistake, God has you at this church for a purpose.

Please pray, give, and pray some more, but we have work to do.

Remember the only wealth that will endure is that which has been invested in others for the sake of Christ and His Gospel.

Now, once again, and as always, if you are having trouble with this teaching, please don't hesitate to call the office, and Pastor Joe will take all complaints.

But seriously, we cannot let up, God's Word is so clear on where to invest and there are few excuses that hold up against God's Word, it is willful disobedience when you are not faithful to God in your giving.

You cannot serve both God and money, one must take precedence over the other.

Serve God only, use your money to serve Him, and you will find there is no loss at all in your finances.

God wants you to be rich, in your heavenly home, and that is the context of our title this morning.

Amen

Let's pray...

Next week, we continue in our study of the Gospel of Luke, and we will deal with some details about heaven and hell, that are pretty interesting as Jesus gives great detail about what afterlife entailed during His time on earth.

These guys are here to pray with you all, please take advantage of this time to come up for prayer.