

# Christ and Money

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 24 June 2012

Preacher: Nathan Raynor

[ 0 : 00 ] Take out the copy of God's Word I hope you brought with you today. Go ahead and turn to 1 Timothy chapter 6.

! And we started out this series in 1 Corinthians chapter 9, kind of set as our theme for it, verses 22 and 23, which read, I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessing. And so we see that Paul was in this process as he lived in this world of self-denial and self-control, of denying himself some of the privileges bought for him in the gospel, but for a greater joy.

He was willing to trade some of his liberty to do certain things, act certain ways, in order that he might see some come to know Christ and share with them in its blessing.

And so we have picked up a number of topics and addressed it from this perspective. And this morning's topic is Christ and money.

[ 1 : 32 ] And we certainly live, as Americans, in a culture that is incredibly consumeristic. I would say if there's a defining characteristic of American culture, it is consumerism.

It controls how we think. It controls our desires. We live in a place that is about consumption. So how should we as Christians think about this part of our culture?

How should we act in regards to it? And how should we interact with it for the sake of the gospel, to advance God's kingdom in this world? The scriptures certainly are not silent on this topic.

It doesn't take me long to find a main text or proof text. The hard thing about preparing a sermon of this nature is to decide what to disclude.

What do we not talk about? What proof verses do I not use? Because the Bible is full of conversation about money.

[ 2 : 37 ] Christ talks about it. Paul talks about it. John talks about it. James talks about it. It is everywhere about the scriptures. So before we begin plowing through much of that, let's pray together.

And I'll get cranky. Father, we love you and I thank you for these people. I thank you that you have drawn us together this morning and that you care about all of our eternal souls.

I thank you that we hold in our hands the written word of God that certainly was written by men and addressed to men, but was inspired by your Holy Spirit.

And it means something for our lives today. So I pray, God, by your spirit that you will apply the truths we discussed today to our individual lives.

We might understand what it looks like to worship you with all that we have. And I pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. So let me start not with the main text that I had to turn to.

[ 3 : 42 ] Although I promised to get there very briefly. But let me start in Mark chapter 4, verse 18 and 19, which is the parable of the sower.

You're welcome to try to keep up with me, but I'm going to cruise and not wait for the flipping pages to stop. Okay. The way I want to start this is with a stern warning.

Wealth, money has been given to us for our benefit, but it has many, many dangers. And so I want to start this morning by setting the stage of the danger of possession.

So Mark chapter 4, verses 18 and 19, towards the end of the parable of the sower. Jesus says, And others are the ones sown among thorns.

They are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

[ 4 : 45 ] These are those who the truth of Christ has been sown into their lives, but because of the deceitfulness of treasure, the deceitfulness of consumerism, that truth is choked out.

1 Timothy chapter 6, verse 10, For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains. Luke chapter 18, verses 24 and 25, Jesus says, How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God, for it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.

Because why? Because they love their money. And I'll remind you that right after that, his disciples said, Then how can anybody get in? He said, With God, all things are possible. But that's an aside. Luke chapter 12, verse 33 and 34, Jesus instructs, Sell your possessions and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with money bags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys.

[ 5 : 56 ] For where your treasure is, there your heart will be awesome. Where your value, where you place value is what you desire.

It's reflective of what you most desire. Money has value, right? In America, the value of our money is declining rather rapidly.

But the bills that we pull out of our wallets, the coins that we carry, the zeros and ones that are represented by our bank accounts and on our cards, have value.

We've all decided together that we will use this currency to buy and sell goods. But beyond that, it has value to show what we value.

College students, you value education. So you spend money on education. Lots of money on education. We all value entertainment.

[ 6 : 57 ] I'm sure way too much. So we spend money on Netflix and baseball games. Things of that nature. I'm not saying these things are bad. But what I'm saying is that the way we spend our money shows what we most care about.

And nothing, nothing in this world is free. Save the free gift of the gospel. But nothing else is free. A group of us yesterday from Christ's family went with Set Free Ministries out of Gainesville to Atlanta to minister to homeless people living under bridges.

Doesn't sound like an expensive thing to do, but we rode together in a 12-passenger van that consumes fuel. And we had to fuel it up to get down there. And gas costs money.

Everything that we do as a church and as Christians is going to cost us something to accomplish it.

So how we're spending our money is going to show what we most value.

[ 8 : 04 ] Luke chapter 16, verse 13. Jesus says, No servant can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and money. And here's the shocking truth about American Christianity. The church is failing, failing to serve God with its money.

I'll say I believe that this church does a much better job of this than most. So I'm not mostly getting on to you at this point. But the American church is failing.

I read a, I was going to say a great article, it was actually kind of a repressing article in Christianity Today that was written out of a study called Passing the Plate.

And in this article I discovered that Christian evangelicals, so not all Christians in America, but just those who claim to be evangelicals, those who believe that the church's modus operandi is to share the gospel and to carry the gospel to the world.

[ 9 : 13 ] The average evangelical Christian gives 2.3% of their income. 2.3%.

Now, get this. If they gave 10%, which I believe is the easy minimum, if they gave 10%, Christian evangelicals would be giving \$85.5 billion more per year.

What a staggering figure. I can't even begin to tell you what that would accomplish. I can't even wrap my mind around \$85.5 billion more.

That's a figure, I abbreviated it. We don't even write that out. That's a crazy large number. \$85.5 billion per year. Now, of those Christians who say they're committed Christians, I would argue the definition here, but committed Christians who say they attend church at least twice a month.

But we're narrowing the field a little bit more. Those who attend at least twice a month, catch this.

Those who make less than \$12,500 a year give 7% of their income, which is a figure that's not even touched until a household makes more than \$90,000 a year, and they give 8.8%.

[ 10 : 48 ] So if you have any idea that someday when you make more money, you'll begin to give. You don't really give now because things are real tight now.

But, you know, someday you're going to get freed up to give more, and you're planning on doing that. The statistics say you're not going to until you hit six figures. And even those still aren't reaching 10%, 8.8%.

These are these six-figure salaries. It's shocking. The American church is failing to serve God with its money. And the world looks on.

We are totally disillusioned if we don't think that unbelievers are watching what we're doing. They pay attention to the buildings that we build.

And I'm not against large buildings. Large buildings house lots of people. I think that's great. But I am dead set against decadent buildings. People drive by and see what we care about when they look at our buildings.

[ 11 : 56 ] I went through the drive-thru at McDonald's this morning. You know who else is going through the drive-thru at McDonald's this morning? People going to church. Everyone, I would guess, going to church.

The people working minimum wage at McDonald's pay attention to the kind of cars we're driving. They pay attention to what we're ordering.

They notice what we care about. And if we're going to live in a consumeristic culture, I think this is one way, not the only way, but this is one way that we can so easily, as believers, set ourselves apart from the rest of the world.

Not without personal sacrifice. I'm not saying it'll be easy personally. But a simple thing that can change about the way we live and show people that we care about something different than what they care about.

So this morning, I want you to hear me so carefully that my heart is the heart of Paul in 2 Corinthians 12, 14, when he said, I seek not what is yours, but you.

[ 13 : 05 ] This is not a guilt you into giving sermon for our sake. This is a guilt you into giving sermon for your sake. We have denied you discipleship.

We don't teach you that you ought to give all that you have for the cause of Christ. We are denying you immense joy. We don't do that.

So let's look. 1 Timothy, chapter 6, verse 17 through 19. All right.

As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

[ 14 : 11 ] Well, this morning, I just have two points from our exegesis of this text, and then four practical steps that we can take. Let me begin by saying many of you already may have dismissed this text previously or maybe even this morning as I read as for the rich in this present age in your mind immediately said, great, I'm off the hook.

Fantastic. You're not rich from your perspective, but you are rich from the perspective of the rest of the world.

College students, you are in the 90th percentile of income earners in the world. 90th percentile. 90% of the world makes less money than you do.

As strapped as you are, you are wealthy in comparison. Now, I understand the cost of living in America is higher. I'm not saying that you should live on a dollar a day like some people in the world are able to do.

I get that. But I believe that Paul's writing as he's carried along by the Spirit of God is for us as for the rich. none of us.

[ 15 : 21 ] Probably shouldn't just say that, but I don't think any of us have ever really been hungry. I'll be hungry later. I mean, probably that's how I'll know I should be wrapping things up.

My stomach will begin telling me I'm hungry, but I've never really been truly hungry. I've never really lacked. I might think I've lacked. I might think I haven't had something that I really needed.

I've always had everything I needed. I never worried about where my next meal would come from.

There's always been food in my cabinet and in my fridge. I have never walked it for anything.

We are rich. If we have any lack, it's so easy to go get what we need. There's so much wealth in this country.

We are the rich. So point number one, hope in money is no hope at all.

[16:20] Hope in money is no hope at all. Verse 17, Paul instructs Timothy to instruct us that we ought not to be haughty.

Why? Because riches are uncertain. The NASB renders the word haughty as conceited. The Greek word means high-minded or proud.

We ought not think we are something because we have things. We ought not think we have figured it out, that we have earned it, that we are something to be bragged about.

Why? Because God gave it to you. You may have a high-paying job, but you have worked very hard to get. But you have worked very hard by what power?

God's. The talents that you employ to earn income given to you by God. You have nothing apart from him. Previously, in this chapter, chapter 6, verse 7, Paul writes, we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of it.

[17:33] I'm sure you've heard this before, you never see the U-Haul behind the hearse. It can't go with you. All throughout history, wealthy men have been trying to take possessions with them.

That's what the pyramids are about, massing up their wealth so that they could have it in the afterlife. Guess what? It was dug up, and people took it and put it in the museum. It didn't go with them. You cannot take it with you.

It was given to you as a gift, and it came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord is taken away.

Now remember, he says this right after his whole family is taken from him, and all of his possessions. His health hasn't been attacked yet, but everything he owned, gone.

And then he says, blessed be the name of the Lord. Did Job hope in what he had, or in the God who had given it to him? Most certainly, the God who gave it to him.

[18:33] God richly provides for us everything to enjoy. Have you ever heard this pulled right out of its context?

I have, about every time I've ever talked about money, any group of Christians. Yeah, but Nathan, God gives us everything to enjoy. Yeah, you should read the rest of that chapter. It concludes in a much different way than you think.

Let's look quickly at 1 John chapter 2, 15 through 17. The little context, even if we don't read the rest of the text. In 1 Timothy, John writes, Do not love the world or the things in the world.

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh, and the desires of the eyes, and pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away, along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

This word abides is the Greek word meno, and it means to live, but it means it in a much different way than we would use the word live. Some of your translation may say does the will of God lives forever, but the idea behind it is a tarrying in Christ.

[19:45] It's life in Christ. It's true life. It's not just being cognizant and aware, it's being with the one we were meant to be with.

It's about being found in Christ that our redemption is complete, that our relationship with God is restored. True life.

Which brings us to my second point. Firstly, hope in money is no hope at all. Secondly, we are given money for our eternal joy.

And that's what people miss when they read this and think that it's a justification to just amass for themselves stuff and things to enjoy here and now. They miss that there's an eternal purpose for the things that they've been given.

Verse 18 and 19, they are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share. Thus storing up treasure for themselves is a good foundation for the future so they may take hold of that which is truly life.

[20:51] life. The things given to you are not given to you to enjoy the things. They're given to you as a resource for what?

Verse 18, to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, ready to share. That's why they were given to you. Why? For your eternal joy, that you might store up treasure and take hold of that which is truly life.

life in Christ. That you might have more of Him, not more stuff. And you see the deceitfulness of the stuff.

You see that we have it and we want it and Satan tells us it's okay to have it. And constantly throughout the scriptures we're taught it's for you but for a greater thing. You trade it for greater joy. That's the way we're called to live. Good works. Ephesians 2, verse 10, for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

[ 22 : 01 ] I can't tell you exactly what you should do with all of your resources and where you should serve and how you should spend that money, but certainly God can. Because you're His workmanship, created in Christ.

You have the Spirit of God within you. For good works, prepared beforehand that you should walk in them. God's got marching orders for you, so don't ask me what you should do with your money. Ask Him. I promise He'll tell you. And we're to be generous and ready to share. I don't know how often you read your English translations and wonder why things seem redundant. That felt redundant to me when I read it. Paul, why did you say generous and ready to share? Those are two things kind of synonymous, and that always causes me to learn Greek a couple of days ahead of you so that I can help you understand it.

Fascinating here. Both of these words in Greek are adjectives. They are speaking of, they're modifying the subject, which is the rich, us, we are to be generous and ready to share.

[ 23 : 13 ] And they mean simply we're to be generous actively. So the word translated generous is a pretty good translation. We're to be philanthropic, giving.

We're to hold loosely to money and be willing to share it with others. The Greek term translated ready to share carries with it the idea of maintaining social activity in such a way that you are forcing others to take what is yours.

So it's a constant pouring out of the things that have been given to you into the hands of others. Generous actively. I think that's cool.

And we are to live in this way with the things that we have not to be depressed, not to God's called me to give away the things I have.

I'll do that because I'm going to be obedient. We're not stoics. Stoicism was a horrible movement in Christian religion and it still kind of infects us.

[ 24 : 20 ] All of this is for our greater good. And it's so cool how every time we're bringing more honor and glory to God, we benefit. It's so rad that as we exalt him, we get more of him, we are involved in his process, we get to see him, and it's good for us.

You just think certain things are better for you than Christ. That's never true. Never. It's idolatry to think that.

In your life, ask the question, would I be happier if I had, fill in the blank to that, I would be so much happier if I had, whatever drops into that spot in your mind is an idol.

What you should put in that spot, Christ. I would be happier if I had more Christ. Awesome, because that's a free offer. And he's going to keep on giving himself to me. Never going to run out of more Christ.

I am not a decadent person. I am actually not very tempted to live lavishly. But there's an area of my life that I do this in because I hate car trouble.

[ 25 : 38 ] I just despise it. It's such an inconvenience. I'm kind of mechanically minded, but I never really learned how to work on cars. Some guys are like, cool, the car's broken. I get to spend some time fixing it.

No thank you. And I don't want new vehicles for the cool factor of a new vehicle. I don't care about that at all. I just want reliable cars.

And Sam and I have cars that are paid for. We believe that we've been led to do that. They're not incredibly reliable. And I'm just nervous driving everywhere I go.

And I'm going to get to the place that I'm hoping to get to. My truck has over 200,000 miles on it. I don't know what's going to happen. And often in my mind I think I would just be more comfortable if I had a newer car.

I would just feel a little bit better about my life if I had a car. No car reliable.

[ 26 : 36 ] It's all turning to dust. It's all fading away. It's not eternal. And I should say praise God that I can hope in him. He gave me this truck. If he wants it to run it'll run.

If he wants it to die it'll die. And I'll have the time to fix it and the money. because he cares about it. That should be our attitude. 1 Corinthians 15.32 Paul talks about the resurrection.

And he's talking about the trouble of Christian living. And he says if there is no God if the dead aren't raised what should we do? We should eat and drink and be merry for tomorrow we die. We should spend everything we have on us if there is no God. But there is. 1 Timothy chapter 5 verse 6 Paul's talking about widows who are self indulgent and he says but she who is self indulgent is dead even while she lives.

If you live to serve you with your resources you're dead. And the two options are that you're not found in Christ. You don't know him. You've never placed your faith in him.

[ 27 : 48 ] He hasn't changed your heart at all. You don't desire him. If you spend all of your money on you because you're not a Christian that makes a lot of sense. You have it acknowledged with your heart or with your mind that there even is a God.

That the eternal state even matters. So you better eat, drink, and be merry because this is all you've got. The rest of your existence is going to be hell. But if there is a God and there is and you are known by him, you're found in Christ, and you don't live for him, you just need to wake up.

You've been lulled to sleep by our culture. You have been told that you need certain things to be happy. Begin really paying attention to commercials.

You know what marketing people do? Their job is to convince you that you're not happy, that you're less of a person, that you can't possibly be content if you don't have the thing they're trying to sell. It's with everything. Ladies, makeup, all of that is about making you feel ugly so you'll buy the products so you can be pretty like the girl commercial.

[ 29 : 04 ] Guys, have you noticed how many guy products are sold to us with women? If you use this deodorant, you'll have these women. It makes no sense whatsoever.

We are so stupid. We buy it. We buy it. We swallow it right up. For a while, I lived with Jamie and Chris. They were gracious enough to me when they were living in Swanee, and I worked for Chris. Every day, I had to drive through the Mall of Georgia, make that little trek through there. Even just going through an area like that where everything is shiny and new, and there's all those new cars, and everybody's driving new cars, and I think at the time I was driving an old Jeep, and it just suddenly starts to work into you.

I'm not happy. I don't have everything else that everybody else has. Dead. How miserable. You've been granted true life now to experience Christ by moment of each day, and to have him forever.

Why do we spend money on the things we spend money on? Turn with me to Luke chapter 12. Derive this point with a parable that Jesus told.

[ 30 : 27 ] Luke chapter 12, and I'm going to start reading in verse 13. Luke records, someone in the crowd said to him, Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.

But he said to him, Jesus said to him, Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you? So he basically said, you're asking me a question that's not my job. My job is not to tell you how the inheritance should get worked out.

That's not why I came. So then he turns to the crowd. Notice the pronoun change. Verse 15, and then he said to them, so all those who were gathered to hear him, he says, take care and be on your guard against all covetousness.

My assumption is he knew this man was coveting the inheritance. Against all covetousness. For one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. Now, note here, he says all covetousness.

You don't have to have things to worship things. You can certainly worship things and have nothing. And he told them a parable saying, verse 16, he told them a parable saying to the whole crowd, the land of a rich man produced plentifully.

[ 31 : 40 ] And he thought to himself, what shall I do? For I have nowhere to store my crops. And he said, I will do this. I will tear down my barns and build larger ones. And there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years.

Relax, eat, drink, be merry. That's not familiar? God said to him, fool, this night your soul is required of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?

So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God. That's an interesting phrase. It's the only place it's found in the New Testament is not rich toward God.

And I think it means simply this, that we are to take the possessions we have and in being rich toward God, we're meant to tell the world what we value.

Certainly not what this rich man was doing. His sin was not that his fields produced plentifully. It's okay to have a job that pays you well.

[ 32 : 45 ] We'll get to that. I hope you do. That was not his sin. His sin was that he took it and he used it for him. He said to the world, what I care about is comfort.

I care about parties. I want to just hang out, eat, drink, be merry. It's a common Greek phrase. It was a c'est la vie, enjoy life, hedonism. That's what that phrasing meant. He used that and said to the world, I don't care about God.

I'm not going to be rich toward him, I'm going to be rich toward me. And so why ultimately was his soul required of him? Why was he damned? It's because he didn't treasure God.

He treasured himself. Now note he turns, again we have a turning of attention in verse 22. He says to his disciples, so he's making a general call to the crowd to say, if you are part of my kingdom, you're not going to be this fool.

[ 33 : 58 ] Then he turns to his disciples, those who were part of the kingdom, and he raises the bar a little bit, explains it a little bit more, and says, therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on.

For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. I believe he's talking about that true life in him. Consider the ravens that have sowed or reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them.

Of how much more value are you than birds? I hope you know this morning you're way more valuable than birds. Created in the image of God, you're of infinite more value than birds.

And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to a span of life? If then you are not able to do a small thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? Which time do we spend doing things, orienting our lives in such a way, even financially, thinking that we're extending our life?

Jesus says that's a really small thing, and you can't accomplish it. Consider the lilies how they grow, that neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

[ 35 : 08 ] But if God so clothes the grass which is alive in the field today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, or you of little faith? Do not seek what you are to eat or what you are to drink, nor be worried.

For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you. Seek Christ.

Take hold of that which is truly life. Store up for yourself treasure in heaven, for moth and rust does not destroy. Find your pleasure in God, and the necessities of life they'll be there.

Fear not, little flock, for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with money bags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys.

The writer of Hebrews talks about a kingdom that cannot be shaken. For where your treasure is, there your heart, will be also. I fear that none of us really use our riches as a proper reflection of what we say we believe.

[ 36 : 32 ] Wes picked out two phenomenal songs before I got up here and preached. If we all really believed the verses of those songs, if we could sing them with such gusto and actually believe them and our lives reflected that, I have no need to preach this morning.

I could have gone up and said, amen, and sat down. But we don't really, I don't, I say I treasure Christ above all else, but I don't always show that the way I use my resources.

resources. So four practical application points from this text. Now I will tell you that I am really probably not the source of information on how you should manage your money.

I probably could write a book about what not to do with your money and maybe a short essay on what you should do with your money. I praise God that I married a woman who is very careful with money.

certainly a way that I am being sanctified and that we are better together than I was apart from her. Sam and I have rules in our house.

[ 37 : 41 ] We don't spend more than \$20 without talking to each other. And that's really good for me because I tend to be a little bit impulsive. And it's good when I have to go, ooh, I'm going to have to talk to Sam about that and give it five minutes and I go, I don't need that.

That is not something necessary in my life. Sam has actually no idea how many things I don't buy, because I know I have to talk to her about it. So there's a chance you might be in a relationship or some day will be where you're both really, really weak in this area.

And I'd suggest that you have somebody who's not be that accountability for you as a couple. But I don't intend to be quite that practical with you because I'm really not qualified for it.

But here's the four things. Number one, treasure Christ more each day. The way you fend off the lies of this world, of this consumeristic culture, I mean, we're in a tough place to stand against this lie.

It is all around us. You treasure Christ more each day. How do you do that? Take a look at him. Spend some time with him in his word.

[ 38 : 51 ] Get into the word of God every single day. That when you walk out the door in the morning, you're armed against that kind of stuff. Guys, I know a lot of us don't function well in the morning.

Our brains don't really click along well. And you might say, I do better in the evening. My quiet time is best spent in the evening. What are you doing all day then? Where's the armament?

All day. If you're going to study in the evening, fine, that's good. Spend some time in the word of God before you head out the door in the morning. Number two, pray that God would kill the idolatry of your heart.

All those things that you do worship, those things that you do need, you think you need, pray daily that God would kill that in you, that you might desire only him.

Thirdly, earn so that you can give. again, I am really glad that the rich farmer's produce yielded well for him.

[ 39 : 56 ] He had a great opportunity to use his riches for his eternal joy. You should do the same. Young people, I don't know what you're supposed to major in.

There are some better majors out there than others. I was a sociology major. I believed I was supposed to be. You can't make money as a sociology major. I hope that some of you are being called to and obedient to becoming businessmen, studying international business.

I hope you go and make millions of dollars and then you spend it all generously on the kingdom of God. We need that. The kingdom of God, that 85.5 billion needs to be 300 billion.

We need people who are willing to go out and spend their lives spending for the kingdom. So earn so that you can give. John Piper is famous for saying it's okay to have a six figure salary but not a six figure lifestyle.

I agree. You didn't earn it. It's not yours. It's given to you as a gift. We have to really begin to talk about what we want and what we need and how that plays into our Christian living.

[ 41 : 08 ] I could ramble for hours about that and not really arrive at anything tangible for your life but I constantly ask myself that question. I don't think it's wrong for me to have some things I want.

Okay? But mostly my life is about me. What's the trajectory of my life? Where is God taking me and how does he intend me to go along that way?

And I mostly find that he directs me to spend my money only on things that I need and not really much that I want. I really used to have a dream of owning a Porsche Speedster, 1952 Porsche Speedster.

It's the model of car that James Dean died in. If you've ever seen him, that's a cool car, Porsche Speedster. And as God began to get a hold of this area of my life, I had to realize I'm not going to ever own a Porsche Speedster.

I had to die to that dream of having a Porsche Speedster. And some of you might be thinking, maybe someday, God gives good things to enjoy. If somebody gave me a Porsche Speedster, if one of you has a Porsche Speedster in your garage right now and you gave it to me, I would sell it.

[ 42 : 23 ] I'm not driving through McDonald's drive-thru in a Porsche Speedster. I'm not going to do it. I'm not going to do it. I want to say to this world, with everything that I have, price is more precious to me than, I don't even know what that costs.

I don't want to know. Probably an \$80,000 vehicle. Right? So if you care about it, don't give it to me because I'm going to sell it. It would be painful. But you're going to recognize that some dreams of your life are going to have to die.

And as you work hard and do things and you attain and you rise up in your company and you do all that which you should do, you're going to feel like in those moments that you've earned a little larger

flat screen TV.

Got the money now. We should do it. Please trade those things for greater joy. The value of those things is so fleeting and passing.

With a greater joy in Christ, you will appreciate forever. Have a kingdom, eternal mindset and earn so that you can give.

[ 43 : 27 ] And then number four, be a disciplined, cheerful giver. I don't think that we here have actually put enough emphasis on giving.

I know that personally, I've kind of treated money as the necessary evil to do things. We kind of go, we want to give. I'm sure Chris will mention it.

There's a can on a table as you go out the door and that's where you put your offering. It's kind of like we want to not make a big deal out of it. We don't want to guilt people by passing a plate.

Things like that.

I don't know if we're going to change it. I don't know. But I don't think we really emphasize it enough. It's been a disservice to you. It's an act of worship to come together and give money to the work of the church. That's the primary place you should give your money.

I'd say first and foremost you should give your money to the church. Sam and I have this little bookmark, so I bookmarked the text for today. We give to Compassion International. We have a little guy that we sponsor named Shevchenko.

[ 44 : 29 ] I call him Shev. \$35 a month and we do that, but I wouldn't do this in the neglect of giving to the church. You ought to do that first and foremost.

My generation, I'm now 32, I went to a very large church coming up through middle school and high school, and I saw no value in giving to that church.

They were building massive buildings debt-free. I didn't see the point. And I wanted to see directly, I wanted to see my check go to something really good.

I actually started sponsoring a child in those days, and I didn't give to the church, to my regret. I didn't give to what was going on there. No one who comes here wants the money that they give here to go to electricity.

Am I right? In fact, if I said, hey, why don't you give to the kingdom by turning the lights on? People go, no, no, no, I want to see it go directly to ministry, but you know that lights are valuable. You can see what we're doing this morning as a result of them.

[ 45 : 28 ] You can hear me talk because we're running AC. If it were, I'm guessing, 105 degrees in here, if we weren't running the AC, you would be totally checked out. There's value in those types of things.

And for us to be able to as a church to go beyond that and begin to reach this community, it's going to take money. We have kind of a directive that we've prayed about together as a church and decided that we're working toward what we call the 90-10 endeavor.

I don't know that we'll ever get there. I hope that we will, but what that means, it is our hope one day that 10% of the money that comes into our church will go to the administrative types of things, paying utility, things of that nature, replacing light bulbs.

But the rest of it will go to directly affect people's lives. Set that out ahead of us. We get a little closer to it every budget year. I hope one day that we'll achieve that.

I'm not even sure if it's mathematically possible, but we put that before us because we want to see money go and change people's lives. Help us go. Take us to Atlanta to share our day with people on the bridges.

[ 46 : 38 ] But we have to have it to be able to do those things. So it's important that we be disciplined and cheerful givers. So just as an example, and I don't do this to praise me because I'm more of a failure with money than I am a success with it.

Sam and I give more than 10% to the church. We do it every month, first of the month. I write a check, and I won't get into the details, but we do do more than 10%.

Guys, 10% is biblical tithing. In the Old Testament, God gave that to the people of Israel to provide for the Levites. That's how they made their living because they spent all of their time serving the people in the temple.

That's how they lived. We're beyond that now. So it's not a, oh, freedom in Christ, let me just figure out, let me pray about what I should do.

2.3%. Those things should still be happening. Jesus chastises the Pharisees because they were so legalistic about the tithe.

[ 47 : 44 ] They tithed even their herbs, their herbs, their dill, their mint. They even tied that. And Jesus said, this you should be doing. You should be giving 10%, but you should also be seeking justice.

And he took them even beyond that. And so I have no hesitation to say to you, start at 10%. If you're not doing that already, start doing it, and then pray about going up from there. I don't think you even need to pray about 10%. Just do it. And then go up from there. And I know because I've been there in my life, I'm there right now. Honestly, I would say to you, I can't afford to give 10% of our income.

You can't do that. You can. You can. God has given you everything that you have. He's commanded you to give to the work of the church. He's going to reward that. He's going to keep it coming. I promise. He'll do that. There is a generation of givers, sadly, that's passing away.

[ 48 : 49 ] Sid and Ruth are hanging on. I'm so glad that they're here. These are people that understand that. They've given faithfully year after year after year after year. And Sid, in our times together, has said, God has never failed.

Sid, 83 years? 83 years. I've got 32. He's never failed me. Let my life and Sid's life be a testimony of you that he will never fail you.

So give. Be disciplined. Be cheerful. Start at 10 and go up. You know, a lot of churches now do online giving. You can automatically have it deducted out of your account.

I don't want to say we'll never do something like that, but I find that so easy. I want you to have to think about what you're doing. Not be forgetful.

Don't forget that part of what we do together is give for the kingdom. Consider it an act of worship. Be disciplined in it. And be a cheerful giver. So I hope that this morning, as we talk about Christ and culture, that you're allowing this truth to run into you.

[ 50 : 00 ] I can't see how it's possible that any of us is just okay with this. That we've all, that we've just got it figured out. And so I believe as a result that some response is necessary.

I think after any sermon, we ought to be responding to God. As he's spoken to us, we ought to speak back to him. So we have a time that we do every Sunday together, taking the Lord's Supper together.

It's one of my favorite times. I hope that it hasn't become dogmatic for you. Another motion to go through. But we believe that together, if we haven't already, we ought to really point to the cross of Christ.

Where his body was broken, his blood was spilled on our behalf. That if we're going to treasure him more and more each day, we certainly should do that on Sunday as we gather together as his redeemed people.

We ought to celebrate the work that he did for us. And it's not just that. We're looking back to the sacrifice of Christ for the redemption, but we're also looking forward to his return.

[ 51 : 05 ] That's a guaranteed thing, that our redemption is going to be completed, that he started it and he's promised to finish it. He's coming back for us. Eternal promises.

We should live for that. Take hold of that which is truly life now, and that which will be forever and ever. Praise God.

And the guys are going to come play right after I get done praying. We'll have some stations set up. I just ask that you take some time to ask God to examine your heart and reveal to you any hidden sin.

I don't expect that you'll get this all figured out in the next five minutes, but that you'll take some time, that you might take the Lord's Supper with a clean conscience. Let's pray together. Let's pray together. that.