

# Luke 12:15-21

*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: 15 July 2018

Preacher: Nathan Raynor

[0:00] Please take your copy of God's Word and turn to Luke chapter 12. Over the past couple of months on the Lord's Day, we've been studying the Sermon on the Mount together.

And we've arrived at Matthew chapter 5 at a text that has created quite a bit of debate throughout the history of the church. The text I'm referring to is Matthew chapter 5 verses 31 and 32 and it's on divorce.

I am very thankful that our church is devoted to verse by verse exposition because it forces us to deal with tough matters such as this. I am also thankful that our church trusts me at least.

It's my perception that you trust me when it is decided that we should wait a few weeks before considering that topic together. So, if you came this morning with great anticipation that I would work out all of the complexity of what the scripture says concerning divorce and remarriage, just wait.

Give it a couple more weeks. We will get to it in its proper time, I promise. Today, instead, we're going to take a step away from the Sermon on the Mount to consider kingdom giving.

[1:24] And we're going to do so for two reasons. Besides the reason that I think we should wait on the issue of divorce and remarriage. Firstly, as a church, we are under budget for the year.

We're going to have a members meeting and part of that members meeting this afternoon will be to discuss the details of that shortage. But it matters. It matters that we're not upholding the budget that we carefully prepared, prayed over, presented to you, and that we as a church, as a fellowship together, decided to support.

Secondly, and more importantly, kingdom giving is a matter of the heart. People really don't like talking about money in church.

There's probably a lot of reasons for this. Certainly amongst them is that people apparently need private jets to be ministers of the gospel.

This is not so amongst us. I have a private Prius. And I'm doing just fine. I think for us, we don't want to talk about money.

[2:42] We get uncomfortable talking about money. Because any attempt to tell someone how they should or shouldn't spend their money touches them at the level of their heart.

It addresses their very values. And in fact, if as a church we do not concern ourselves with each other's finances, we would prove ourselves to be most unloving.

Jesus spoke about money more than any other one topic, any other single topic. So, today my intention is to meddle, not really in the affairs of your wallet, but rather in the affairs of your heart. And if it makes you uncomfortable for someone to open up what the Bible has to say concerning your finances, then you need to pay extra special attention to why.

My suggestion to you is that your discomfort is a symptom of idolatry. You love your stuff, your house, your car, your clothes, your toys, your experiences.

[3:58] You find your identity or your security in it. And beloved, this is idolatry. So this is a gospel issue.

We have been saved by grace through faith to a God who loves us immensely and has a purpose in this world. And He intends to use His people and their finances to bring about this purpose.

We should want in grateful obedience to submit our whole selves to Him in every way. We've spent much time so far in the Sermon on the Mount addressing this very thing.

What is it that the citizens of God's kingdom look like? Peculiar in so many ways. Devoted to God and to His kingdom.

And before I proceed any further, I want you to know that I wholeheartedly share the Apostle Paul's sentiment when he wrote to the Corinthian church in 2 Corinthians 12, verses 14 and 15.

[5:08] I seek not what is yours, but you. I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls.

So this is a heart matter. It is of concern to a shepherd of God's people. That God's people steward God's resources well.

So let's look a bit this morning at Luke 12, verses 15-21. And before I read it, beloved, let me remind you that this is God's Word to us.

It was written for His glory and our good. We would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands. Beginning in verse 15.

And Jesus said to them, And there I will store all my grain and my goods.

[6:31] And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years. Relax, eat, drink, be merry. But 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.

Jesus begins this morning's text with a warning. Take care. Heed what I'm about to say.

Take care and be on your guard against all covetousness. Whether you have abundance or not, which is where most of us find ourselves.

Be on guard against all covetousness. Jesus says to them, Do not break the tenth commandment.

[7:34] This covetousness is a boundless grasping after more. And I find that to be the very definition of American culture.

A boundless grasping after more. Never satisfied. It's never a nudge. The thirst for things is never quenched.

This covetousness is a dissatisfaction with what one already has. And the opposite of covetousness is expressed by Paul in 1 Timothy 6, verses 6-8.

This would be the opposite. And listen to what Paul writes to Timothy. But godliness with contentment is great gain.

For we brought nothing into the world and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.

[8:40] If we have our basic needs met, oh, the contentment that the Christian should have. So Jesus begins our text with this warning.

Be careful. Caution against covetousness. And he punctuates his warning with a principle. He says, For one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.

You are not who you are because of what you have. We are so apt to think that our lives are complete or will be complete, that they are lacking and will be complete if we can just have blank. And you should ask yourself that question. Run that phrase through your mind. My life would be complete if I had blank.

That house. That car. That vacation that I can post lots of pictures about. A baby.

[9:58] Things that cost money. They cost great Harley Davidsons as another example. Jesus here tells us that this is not what a life consists of.

One's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. And then he continues with the parable to help us understand what it is that a life consists of.

And we see the story of this man who speaks to his own soul, which I just really love about the reading of this particular parable, who abounds, right?

He has plenty. And I know it's easy for us to look at this man and go, that's not me. I have no need to tear down barns and build bigger barns. But, beloved, each and every one of us has plenty.

We have far beyond our basic necessities being met. When is the last time you wondered where your next meal would come from? If our family stopped buying groceries today, we would be fed for quite a while with the groceries we have at our house.

[11:09] I think weeks, possibly, we could stretch and make it work. I have clothes beyond the clothes that I need. We have abundance.

And I'm not saying any of this is wrong, that we can't have the food and the clothes that we have. But we have an abundance. But listen to what God says to him.

As he looks to this abundance, and he speaks to his soul, and he says, Oh, lay back and enjoy and spend that abundance on yourself.

What does God say to him in verse 20? Fool. He declares him. He gives him the title of fool.

And why? Because this man's life is short. As each and every one of our lives are short. Passing by as a vapor. It is the fool that looks to this life for reward and doesn't look to the eternal place for reward.

[12:18] Who's so concerned about the day and the now that we're altogether unconcerned about the forever. When we do that, beloved, God says to us, fool.

Fool. What are you doing? Your life will pass as a vapor. And then all of the stuff, all of the things you have amassed.

Whose will they be? And it's a rhetorical question. No one's. It's all turning into dust. One day. And verse 21 says, So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.

So the way of the fool is to invest in an earthly kingdom. To build your kingdom by spending money on yourself.

This is the way of the fool, Jesus tells us. And then in the adverse, the way of the wise is to invest in a heavenly kingdom by being rich toward God.

[13:32] God, which we can see later in Luke chapter 12, means spending money on others. By being generous with our abundance.

Of course, doing so in the right way and at the right time. But this is what it means to be rich toward God. Using what God has given us to leverage for the kingdom of God.

Luke chapter 12, verse 33 and 34. Jesus says, 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. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Jesus says, listen. Listen to the parable I've just told you. Now do not be anxious and take the abundance that you have and do the wise thing with it.

[14:45] Stop being fools. Right? Investing money into old money bags. Putting it into things that will be destroyed and taken away.

But instead, invest in those things that are eternal. I hope that you, with me, want to be wise.

That's a genuine desire of yours. That you would rather have wisdom than stuff. You would rather pay attention to and heed the warning of Jesus.

And walk in the way of God. And look to the eternal. Rather than be concerned about such and such. Probably the thing that as I make statements and read scripture, you're going, does that mean I can't have?

Yeah, probably that. That you would desire to be rich toward God. There are three ways that you can think about your finances.

[15:52] Two of them wrong and one of them right. First, the wrong ways. First, you can think that everything you have belongs to you and can be spent or saved however you wish.

It's all yours to decide what you would do with it. And this is wrong thinking. This is the way of the world. Second, this would be a wrong way of thinking.

You could think that a percentage of what you have belongs to God. But the rest belongs to you and can be spent or saved however you wish.

If I just simply write off a percentage of what is mine, then I can do what I would like with what is mine. This is also a wrong way to think about our finances.

The third way, and this is the right way, this is the way we want to think as a church, is that all that you have belongs to God and should be stewarded according to his purpose in the world.

[17:02] So your checking account balance belongs to God. The home in which you live belongs to God. The car that you drive belongs to God. Everything you have should be stewarded according to his purposes.

But I mentioned at the beginning that we're under budget. So I want to talk specifically about giving to the church. There are many ways to steward God's wealth in the world.

But where does this leave us in thinking about what we should give to our local fellowship? So we're going to look broader at financial stewardship when we get to Matthew chapter 6.

There's so much more to be said here. But today I want to talk specifically about moving toward a biblical practice of the tithe.

In a 2008 study entitled *Passing the Plate*, it was discovered that American Christians are growing increasingly stingy. And I couldn't find a more recent extensive study.

[18:20] But I did find a number of statistics stating that giving is still quite a bit down. This study though, entitled *Passing the Plate*, you can find it if you simply Google search it, defined committed Christians.

This is the category of giver that we're talking about. Committed Christians, and very sadly they define committed Christians as those who self-reported that their faith is very important to them. And who stated they attend church at least twice a month. I think that's a sad definition of committed Christian. But this is what we're talking about. This is the demographic that we're referring to.

And this study found that this group, this committed Christians, American committed, quote unquote, committed Christians, make collectively \$2.5 trillion a year.

Which means that this group could be admitted to G7, which is the world's seven largest economies. Big meetings of G7 that get around and talk about world economic politics.

[19:26] So this group could be admitted. We would bump somebody out of the G7 conference. If this group, this is just a hypothetical, if this group were to give 10% of their income, that would be \$46 billion more than is currently given in any year.

\$46 billion more than is currently given. So just to give you an idea, \$46 billion. This is American, quote unquote, committed Christians giving more.

Just coming up to 10% giving. \$10 billion of that would sponsor 20 million children for a year through Compassion International.

Just \$330 million would sponsor 150,000 indigenous missionaries in countries closed to religious workers.

Just \$330 million would sponsor 150,000 indigenous missionaries in countries that are closed where we can't go. Those dollars could go.

[20:38] \$2.2 billion would triple the current funding of Bible translation, printing, and distribution. And after all that, after we accomplished these things, sponsored 20 million children for a year, sponsored 150,000 indigenous missionaries, tripled the Bible translation and distribution budget, after that, we would still have \$33.5 billion left to spend.

A great amount of equity for the kingdom of God. However, the median amount given by these, quote unquote, committed Christians is just \$200 a year, which is just over half of 1% of after-tax income.

It's an astoundingly low amount. So what does the Bible teach concerning the tithe? I will tell you that I desperately want to make the tithe a law.

I feel like we'd just fix all that real quick if we would just say, you must, right? To be accepted by God, you must give 10% of your income. But I can't. And I won't.

Because I don't believe that the Bible does. Our dear friends, Wes and Liz Sheldon, are now living in Salt Lake City. Mormonville, I like to call it.

[22:09] And Wes has a co-worker who is nominally Mormon, but he's marrying into a family that are very committed Mormons. And so they therefore must be married in the temple.

Otherwise, the marriage isn't an eternal marriage. It's just a temporal marriage. So it's a very unloving thing to not marry a Mormon girl in the temple. Because you're just saying, yeah, for now is good, but not for forever.

And in order for them to be able to use the space, he has to catch up on his tithe. And I said, how do they know?

And he said, they have to submit all their tax records. Wouldn't that be wonderful? Boy, the end of the year would be a lot more fun around here.

But I can't do this. But here's the danger. We go, okay, let's look at what the Bible has to say about the tithe. And I believe that it's no longer a law.

[23:13] We're not committed. If we don't do this 10%, we're not pleasing to God. What is the adverse of that? People go, okay, well, I'll give what I feel like giving.

What I can remember to give. After I've taken care of all of my other obligations, I might have a little bit of change left over. And then I'll contribute.

Half of 1%. Half of 1%. Right? So what does the Bible say? How do we properly walk into this and balance this out as an issue of the heart?

Okay. So let me show you. There are two types of giving taught in the Old Testament. The first type of giving taught is required giving in the Old Testament, which was meant to support the administrative work of the government.

And at this time, remember that Israel was a theocracy and the Levites, the priests, were agents in God's governance.

[24:18] Right? So this commanded giving was part of the function of the nation state of Israel. So we see the very first time in which the word tithe is used, this first commandment using this.

Literally, it means tenth part. It's found in Leviticus chapter 27 and verse 30. Every tithe of the land, whether the seed of the land or the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's.

It is holy to the Lord. To be set apart to the governance of God's people. So it was like the income tax of the day.

It was used for funding of national festivals. You can read about that in Deuteronomy chapter 14, verses 22 through 29. And there were smaller tithe requirements that were intended to provide for the poor.

So it was also social welfare. It was safety netting for them as a society. An example of that is Leviticus chapter 19, verses 9 and 10.

[25:28] When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge. Neither shall you gather the gleanings after you harvest. And you shall not strip your vineyard bare.

Neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner. I am the Lord. God in His graciousness provided a way for His people to leave behind some leftovers for people to come along and glean after.

To be cared for. So this is the required giving. The second type of giving taught in the Old Testament was voluntary giving.

And this was voluntary given to the temple. Exodus chapter 25 and verse 2. God says, Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution from every man whose heart moves him.

You shall receive the contribution for me. I'm commanding you to take up, right? However people have been moved to give.

[26:37] 1 Chronicles chapter 29 and verse 9. Then the people rejoiced because they had given willingly, for with a whole heart they had offered freely to the Lord.

So those are some examples of this other type of giving that we see in the Old Testament Scripture. So these are the two types of giving, right? Voluntary from the heart and required, which went to support governance.

And this would be my case for this Old Testament command no longer being a present command, right? Because we do give to the governance of our land.

We participate in the giving of taxes. Matthew chapter 22. Jesus talks about paying to Caesar. What is Caesar? Paul talks in Romans chapter 13 about submitting to authority and paying your taxes.

So we have that type of thing covered, right? And don't try to get out of that one because they'll come with guns. Which is the weirdest thing that IRS agents carry guns.

[27:45] I digress. So, tithing cannot be taught as law. I don't believe so. But, it can be taught as a principle.

It can be taught as a principle. Something for us to pay attention to as we question this in our own lives. It can be taught as a principle. That is to say, 10% is a really great place to start.

It's a really good place to start. Now, if you find yourself in a position where you cannot, in giving in that way, you would actually become a burden to the church.

You would have to turn around and then with our post-tax dollars support you. Maybe you ought not to and very prayerfully consider such a thing. But I think, by and large, for most of us, I'm going to venture to say all of us, but at least most of us can and should use 10% as a starting point.

And then, I suggest, it should be a principle that is exceeded, if possible. We should be looking for further ways to store up treasure above.

[28:55] Right? We want to be rich toward God. Not toward ourselves, but toward eternal matters. So, let's take a look at what the New Testament has to say on the matter.

As I give you just four reasons. I think there are some more, but four reasons. To give, to look toward, and hopefully give at least a tenth, and then go above and beyond, if possible, that.

So, try to settle into these and really hear. Look at both some Old Testament and some New Testament texts. But let's try to tie the teaching together. So, first, giving at least a tenth today is in keeping with the purpose of the tithe in its day in part.

We're going to talk about the governance portion of it, but it also provided for the Levites. Numbers chapter 18, 20 and 21.

And the Lord said to Aaron, You shall have no inheritance in their land, neither shall you have any portion among them. I am your portion and your inheritance among the people of Israel.

[30:01] To the Levites, I have given every tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service that they do, their service in the tent of meeting. So, the Levites didn't have a portion in the land where they could profit from it.

They were instead given to a very specific task of administering temple worship. And so, they received a tenth portion. And there are still men and women who set aside vocational employment, the ability to earn money in secular employment, in order to serve the needs of the church at home and abroad.

Right? We have ministry partners that our church supports for this very reason. Right? The Whetstones, Osiyama Obeye in Brazil, the Zwingke's in Germany, they could not do the work they're doing if Christian people didn't give generously to that very work.

Myself. I'm included amongst these people who, for many years, worked a job, but the strain of our church. I love working for our church.

I shouldn't say it that way. The many things that our church needs done, right, at some point necessitated me stopping working a job in that way and being able to be supported and to be able to support my family by working for the church.

[31:25] Paul writes to Timothy in 1 Timothy 5, verse 17 and 18, Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.

For the Scripture says, and this is Deuteronomy 25, 4, You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain, and, this is quoting from Luke 10, 7 and other places, the laborer deserves his wages. Interestingly here, Paul is saying to Timothy, right, that the elder, especially the one who labors in preaching and teaching, right, should get paid for the work that is being done.

And I find it really fascinating that he actually says that it is worthy of double honor. And I actually think he's referring to pay in that case, although I'm not complaining about my income and would not suggest I make twice as much as you do.

But there are a lot of churches, a lot of churches, that will figure out what the average income is of the members of their church and pay the pastor that income, right, because they don't want him to think too much of himself.

[32:35] Oh, pay the man for his work that he's doing. 1 Corinthians 9, verse 13 and 14, saying, do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple?

And those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel. So, principally

speaking, giving at least a tenth today, right, is keeping with that purpose of its provision for the Levites.

And so we look to provide for those who are not doing secular work, but rather are doing work specifically for the church and beyond.

Secondly, giving at least a tenth today honors God as the owner and giver of all things. It is a wonderful exercise to carve off a substantial portion of the income that you receive as an exercise in remembering that this belongs to God.

Everything I have is His. And when I take that time to stop and write the check, to make it a mental exercise, to actually have to consider it, it's so good for our hearts.

[33:50] That's why I've told you guys again and again and again, it would make sense for me not to give to the church because I'm getting paid on dollars to get taxed and I turn around and I give that money back to the church.

It'd actually be more fiscally efficient for me just to take a pay cut for what I would give back. Are you tracking me on that? It doesn't matter if you don't. It would be.

And I will not do that because I need it to hit my account and I need to turn around and write a check back out of my account. It's not as efficient fiscally, but it's really good for my heart.

It's good for Sam and I to talk about what we will give to the church in this year. And that's why we don't do automated online giving, both because it's silly to pay a percentage to somebody to process that kind of thing, but also because you need to go through the exercise of doing it.

That's why we pass buckets. I look back, the last time I preached on giving was when we actually started passing buckets, and I think it was six years ago when we did that. And we do it not to guilt you into giving, but to remind you that it matters.

[34:58] So all those Sundays that you go, next Sunday. I know we're forgetful people, but do something to set a reminder. Help yourself to do this because it's good for you to consider that God is the owner and giver of all things.

Deuteronomy chapter 14, verse 22 and following. God commands, you shall tithe all the yield of your seed that comes from the field year by year.

And before the Lord your God and the place that He will choose to make His name dwell there, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, of your wine and of your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and flock.

Listen to why. Begin to verse 23. That you may learn to fear the Lord your God always. To reverence Him rightly as we should, as the giver of all good things.

It is such a healthy exercise. And I'm suggesting to you that if you will practice this principle, which is not the easiest principle to practice, a tenth bites in to the income that you have.

[36:12] It really presses upon you to stop and consider. God is the owner and giver of all things. Paul says in 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 26, citing from Psalm 24, 1, For the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.

So, giving at least a tenth is keeping with, at least in part, this Old Testament purpose of the tithe. It helps us honor God as the owner and giver of all things.

Thirdly, it protects our hearts from the wiles of money. The deception of money.

The writer of Hebrews writes in Hebrews chapter 13, verse 5 and 6, Keep your life free from love of money. How many of us can honestly say, My life is free from love of money.

I think I struggle with that statement. I think many of us would. Oh, it is deceptive. Boy, does it tug at our hearts.

[37:26] And be content with what you have. For he has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you.

So we can confidently say, The Lord is my helper. I will not fear. What can man do to me? Keep your life free from the love of money.

The deception that everything depends on these zeros and ones. Because you are God's.

And God is yours. Let me read to you from Matthew chapter 6. And we will look at this text at greater length when we're back in the Sermon on the Mount.

But verse 19 and following, Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount, Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal.

[38:24] But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body.

So if your eye is held through, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If in the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness?

No one 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 this language, this use of this term eye, it's not talking about the physical eye, but also could be translated heart.

The heart is the lamp of the body. So if you are devoted in the way you should be devoted to God and His coming kingdom in your heart, then you will be in all things devoted to Him.

[39:31] In the way that you arrange yourself, the way that you steward your finances, the way that you love your family and your neighbors, the way you're concerned, or not concerned, about your house.

And this thing is so clearly punctuated at the end of verse 24. You cannot serve God and money. I'm going to give you an example from history.

I'm going to give you a man named John Wesley. Yes, we are okay quoting John Wesley here.

Now, I wouldn't give you this as a complete example, but I want to give it to you as an example of lavish, expounding, growing generosity.

In his first year as a pastor, his income was 30 pounds. And he found he could live on 28 and so gave away two.

You see why I'm not using him as an example in that case. I figured it would have been good for him to give to the church that he was a pastor of. But I digress. So he gave away two because he could live on 28.

[40:42] And this is the part I really want you to pay attention to. In the second year, his income doubled, but he held his expenses even. And so he had 32 pounds to give away, which was a comfortable year's income in that time.

He gave away a whole other living. In the third year, his income jumped to 90 pounds. I don't know what he was doing to make this happen, but he had tripled it in three years, but it jumped to 90 pounds and he gave away 62 pounds.

In his long life, Wesley's income advanced to as high as 1,400 pounds in a year, but he rarely let his expenses rise above 30 pounds.

So there was a man that saw, I have needs, clearly, a place to live, clothes to put on, food to eat. I am sure that Wesley traveled, took a holiday from time to time.

I don't think that he was a pauper, but he found, I can live on this. What should I use the excess for? Heavenly reward.

[41:56] That's what I should use it for. You see why it's so unloving to withhold this kind of teaching from people? I fear someday, many Christians will be in heaven and they'll go, oh, if our pastor had only told us.

I could have had that kind of a house, but instead I live in this kind of a house because in my short years on earth, I spent it on myself.

I tore down my barns and I built bigger ones. Fourthly, giving at least a tenth today is a means for good works which glorify God.

We ought to care, beloved, primarily as people about the glory of God. God would be known as he is in the world. And we get to accomplish that certainly with our words, primarily even, but also with our good working, spending generously to solve the issues of our world.

If there's anybody that should be pushing back against the curse and all of its effects in the world, it should be the church. He's saying, we're a people who are set against the curse.

[43:10] We want to see it reversed. It finally will be when our Lord and Savior returns. Paul writes to the Corinthian church, 2 Corinthians 9, verse 6 and following, whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly.

And whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

And God's grace, God is able to make all grace abound to you so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

As it is written, Psalm 112, 9, He has distributed freely, He has given to the poor, His righteousness endures forever. He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.

So we've been given resource for the sake of bringing forth the fruit of righteousness. That's the Nathan version summary of that, right? So we ought to do it cheerfully.

[44:25] We ought not do it under compulsion, under a law, but we ought to do it because we want heavenly reward, right? We want to see God's kingdom come that we might rejoice in its riches forever.

And the primary way that Christian people should do this is giving to their local church. And I know our culture, we have a lot of churches that just seem to not need any more money.

And that very well may be true, right? Big and elaborate and lavish budgets. Just don't be part of a church like that. Be part of a church where you can look at the budget and wholeheartedly agree with it.

Say, yes, this is spending that is consistent with God's purpose in the world. I can support this. Just imagine if a church that's devoted to God's word and spending money in God's way, if those people would pour out wealth, what could be accomplished in that way?

Wouldn't we love to see some of our ministry partners fully supported by our church? Not having to worry about fundraising efforts. Not having to constantly call and remind their supporters that they need them to actually do the thing that they said they would do so that they can feed their family.

[45:43] Wouldn't it be good for that to happen? Wouldn't it be good for us as a church to be about praying for unreached people and have a young couple in our church just burn with the desire to go to that unreached people and for us just to say, go.

We've got your back. Right? We can cover this because we have all this money and we don't know what to do with it. Clearly, the Lord was setting it aside for you and for that people to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Right? That is so much more valuable than our homes and our cars and our whatever it is that we're investing so heavily in. What is the storehouse that God is talking about in Malachi 3, verse 10?

I would suggest to you that it's the local church. Collectively stewarding these resources together. God says, bring the full tithe into the storehouse that there may be food in my house and thereby put me to the test, the Lord of hosts.

Says the Lord of hosts, I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. A wonderful thought that is.

[47:01] What a wonderful thing that would be in our church that we would be able to have the means at our disposal for every possible good work that we could come up with to the glory of God.

So those are four reasons that giving at least a tenth today is something that ought to be seriously considered. And if you stop to consider the very front edge, I know many of you don't even have budgets.

Let me presume for a second that you do. You sit down and you start with giving. And you ask the Lord, Lord, would you have him give a tenth and possibly beyond?

And then you begin to arrange everything out beyond that. How very neatly the rest works itself out. You begin to say, I'm going to devote all that I have to the kingdom of God and then see what may fall out and beyond that.

I could say so much more about tithing, about saving, about retirement. I mean, there's a lot of things to be said. I don't want us to be foolish with our dollars. I think that we need to very prayerfully on the front end seek God's will and how he would have us directly invest in kingdom things.

[48:24] Bring the tithe into the storehouse and just see what God might do in your life and in the life of our church. So in conclusion, giving at least a tenth of days and keeping with the purpose of the tithe in its

day because it honors God as the owner and giver of all things.

It helps protect our hearts from the wiles, the dangers of money and it's a means for good works which are to the glory of God. May we be a people set apart in every way with hearts so devoted to the worship of our living God and so set on the coming of his kingdom that we would gladly spend and be spent for the sake of others.

May we be a people who are rich beyond our wildest imaginations with heavenly wealth, a wealth that moths and rust cannot destroy and that thieves cannot break in and steal.  
Let's pray. Amen.