



[Giving]

Pastor Ken Shigematsu, a pastor in Vancouver, shared the following story about his wife's pet chipmunk:

My wife's family loves animals. They regularly take abandoned cats or dogs or even an abandoned ferret into their home. In the city of Osaka, Japan, her family's home has become the neighborhood's *de facto* pet refuge. At one point she even took in a wild chipmunk. This chipmunk had been the runt of the pack and the veterinarian had said it would probably only survive for a few days. She named him Forte—with the hope that he would **grow strong**. He not only survived but he began to thrive.

When Sakiko came back to her apartment in the evening after work, Forte would wake up and run excitedly around her apartment doing figure eights. Or if she was working on her computer at home, he would scamper up and down the keyboard, pressing on random characters.

She noticed that Forte would take his most treasured possessions—his walnuts—and place them where he slept. Apparently, this was a kind of hibernation instinct for him. But as his relationship with Sakiko developed, he began to take half his walnuts and put them under her pillow.

He somehow came to understand that his master was the one who provided for him and was his family. So out of gratitude, he wanted to share with her what he had so freely been given.

This is the essence of Christian generosity. Today we continue (Part III) a new series entitled Back 2 the Start: getting back to the basics of our faith. Today's message is entitled Giving 101. **How do we live as generous people in light of the Gospel?**

Read [Luke 18:18-30]

The story of the rich young ruler is found in all **three Synoptic gospel** accounts (Matt, Mark, Luke). Jesus has much to say about your finances. Every seven times the Savior taught he relates

it to money or treasure. Biblical generosity is so critical to your spiritual vitality that Jesus answers the question: what must I do to inherit Christian life with an exhortation to give. Our task today is to ask: **How does the Gospel change the way we live and give?**

Theological Implications

How important is status to you (Luke 18:18)?

In Luke 18 we find a ruler (*archōn*—probably a synagogue official) in the presence of the Son of God. We know little about this man, however Matthew 19:20 relates that the man is young (*neaniskos*, a term that could encompass ages twenty to forty); and in v. 22, that he is rich. So all together we know he is a rich-young-ruler. Think of him as a **morally religious wealthy start-up entrepreneur**.

He finds Jesus, we are not told how, and asks a fantastic question: Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? Listen again, carefully, to what he asks **good-teacher-inherit**. Immediately Jesus reacts to the word “good”. We must remember that context is king. It is most likely this rich young entrepreneur already sat under the feet of Jesus and heard the **preceding teachings**: persistent widow and the judge, Pharisee and the Tax collector, and the rebuked children. Teachings on **juxtapositions of status**. Now this young man calls Jesus good: the ruler is engaged in a word game deeply rooted in concerns with status despite Jesus’ preceding instruction.

This young man comes to Jesus as a person of status asking Jesus because the “**good teacher**” was a person of status. What happens? The man became sad at the answer because he was very rich (a man of status). Seeing this, Jesus said how hard it is for those who have great wealth. **How important is status to you (What are your status symbols –Car, House, Neighborhood, Church)? For the rich young man, his status in life mattered more than eternal life. You will never give or live like you should if you value “status” over the Savior.**

How important is comfort to you 18:18)?

Not only did the young man address Jesus by status “good” but he asks how he can “inherit” eternal life. **It’s a word that means a valuable possession to be received**. It’s the same word Jesus used when He said that meek will inherit the earth and everyone who as left houses, brothers, fathers, mothers, will inherit eternal life (Matt. 19:29).

I believe what he is really asking is Jesus: **I have a comfortable life and how can I maintain what I have and have a comfortable life forever?** Jesus says: give up your comfort today and I will give you eternal treasure in heaven. **Today’s comfort is an eternal threat to spiritual generosity in your life.** How important is comfort?

This is why we have too much consumer debt. This is why we can't live generously because we have the biggest house, or the newest car, or have to eat out and socialize every evening. *If you were really honest, what comforts are untouchable?* **What if Jesus asks you to sell it all today? Will you?** What instead if he asks you to simply live faithfully and generously to his Word and to the world? What if faithfulness = simplicity and not luxury? ***Today's comfort is an eternal threat to spiritual generosity in your life.***

Am I a follower of Christ (18:22)?

The young man calls Jesus "good teacher." In Luke, this language reflects the inadequate understanding of one who is not a true disciple. **Master**—a word used only by disciples or near-disciples (Marshall). This question shows the man's current identity. **He is sympathetic to the teachings of Christ but not a follower.** As a follower of Christ, I should not ask whether I should live generously for the Kingdom but **how**. Are you a follower of Christ? **Is He teacher or master?** If so- **your identity in Christ leads to your submission to Christ.**

Following Me- is an invitation for salvation. The command to sell all was the ruler's first step in following Christ (NAC, 458). This young rich man went away sad because he was not willing nor ready to submit. It burdens me that some will leave sad today because you are unwilling to submit to Christ.

Three Questions we MUST ask: How important is status, how important is comfort, am I a follower of the Way?

Practical Implications

How do we practically forsake status and comfort for the sake of following Christ?

Commit to live in obedience

When we grow in Christ we grow in the knowledge of His Word and truth. **It was the Sacrifice of Christ that allows us to live in obedience.** **Sacrificial** giving is foundational to our worship and obedience. Able presented an offering of the first (Gen. 4:4). In the OT 1/10 (10%) was the standard minimum measure of faithful giving. Abram gave 10% of ALL to Melchizedek (Gen. 14). And this obedience is commended in the NT (Hebrews). In Malachi, the Lord reminds his people that they are robbing Him through disobedience not giving (Mal. 3:9). In the NT Jesus condemns the Pharisees for tithing while neglecting the counsel of Scripture. From the dawn of time the tithe (10%) has been the standard minimum measure of faithfulness in God's community (Pre-Law- OT-NT). **Christ –Followers must commit to live in obedience and full surrender.** *Hold nothing back → Then come follow me.*

Live generously

By the grace of God we are no longer under the law! Yet, this man who lived by the law went away sad—“*He loved His money too much.*”. He kept what he had losing nothing, but he goes away ‘sad.’ His possessions do not satisfy but he cannot let them go—which is how our possessions become idols. **I believe the Christ follower should be the most generous man on the planet!** **Generosity is the antidote to covetousness.**

When a man becomes a Christian, he becomes industrious, trustworthy and prosperous. Now, if that man when he gets all he can and saves all he can does not give all he can, I have more hope for Judas Iscariot than for that man!” —John Wesley.

Because we have been given much, we must choose generosity and grace giving. **Living generously is not something we do, in Christ, it is who we are.**

Pray intentionally

You must ask the Lord daily to expand your generosity and allow you to give. *Our Family. Great Day Offering 2018. I remember praying and telling the Lord how much we would give (sacrificially might I add). And the response: why would you give a minimum?* I cannot tell you the financial and spiritual freedom of praying: Lord let me give more than ever and I trust you to provide the way! **Are you praying for God to bless you so you can give more to the kingdom?**

In all of my years of service to my Lord, I have discovered a truth that has never failed and has never been compromised. That truth is that it is beyond the realm of possibilities that one has the ability to out give God. Even if I give the whole of my worth to Him, He will find a way to give back to me much more than I gave – Spurgeon.

Trust Him Fully

The heart of the command to give generously, abundantly, and sacrificially is this: Do I fully trust Jesus to provide? **Jesus does not need your treasure, Jesus is the treasure!** What do you treasure, and who do you trust? **When I give I say God I trust you more than I trust in the strength of myself.** Do I truly believe that He is Jehovah Jireh? The rich young man will never fully trust when he is holding onto earthly treasure. My pastoral heart breaks for those who think that giving is peripheral. Are you ready to trust Him? If your budget could talk, what would it say you trust?

The world asks, “What does a man own?” Christ asks, how does he use it?” —Andrew Murray

Conclusion

What Must I do to inherit eternal life? **Money? Why is this so important? Because money is our God. We don't call him mammon, Demeter (Greek), Abundantia (Roman), Happi or Anuket (Egyptian), or Lakshmi (Hindi). We are civilized and above that. No we worship the God called luxury, comfort, and excess.** Today: may we surrender fully to the King of Kings!

For the one who **gives faithfully and sacrificially**, thank you! May you never be puffed up by your giving. Jesus has a word for faithful tithers who are self-righteous: Pharisees (Luke 18:12). Don't stop there: pray that God would open your heart and bless your life to give even more! **And let His faithfulness lead to celebration.**

For the one who is not walking in faithful obedience. Are you a Christ follower? If so, why are you not following Christ with His treasure? **Debt, status-Savior, comfort-Words of Christ, lack of spiritual intentionality?** You know what Christ wants for your life, don't go away sad today.

Consider the chipmunk who hid his walnuts where he slept. When he realized that his master provided, cared, and loved him – he freely gave.

No more important question could ever be considered: What must I do to inherit eternal life?

Jesus invitation is simple: **Follow me.** 84 times in the Gospels the word follow is used. **Follow = walking the same road.** You can't walk on the same road if you don't know the WAY.

What is keeping you from following in this moment? While you were still a sinner Christ Jesus died (removed the barriers) so that you may have life.

Will you go away sad or saved?

Notes

The story of the rich young ruler is found in all three Synoptic accounts.

The episode draws upon several soteriological images: eternal life, treasure in heaven, and being saved. What is essentially a concern with future salvation on the part of the ruler (18) leads to a message about the presence of salvation and its demands (NICOT, 653).

Luke 18:18 A ruler asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

19:16 Matthew gives few details about this individual. In v. 20 he will tell us that the man is “young” (*neaniskos*, **a term that could encompass ages twenty to forty**); and in v. 22, that he is **rich**. Luke calls him a “ruler” (*archōn*—probably a synagogue official—Luke 18:18). Matthew adds the expression “good thing” to clarify that the man was asking about what kind of deeds could earn him eternal life. Along with v. 29, this is the only actual mention of “**eternal life**” in Matthew. What the rich man calls “eternal life,” however, Jesus calls the “kingdom” (v. 23) and the disciples call being “saved” (v. 25). Rarely do these three terms appear together in the same context in Scripture. In light of the synonyms, eternal life must have both temporal and qualitative aspects to it (cf. Dan 12:2–3).

Good- the ruler is engaged in a word game deeply rooted in concerns with status in spite of Jesus’ preceding instruction (NICOT, 655).

“**Teacher,**” as in 8:19 and 12:38, reflects the inadequate understanding of one who is not a true disciple. Still, there is no indication that this man is trying to trap Jesus. His question may well be genuine, revealing his own sense of some personal inadequacy.

Teacher

Master—a word used only by disciples or near-disciples (Marshall). In Luke it replaces “teacher” which Luke allows to stand on the lips of non-disciples.

In any case the word reflects an attitude of obedience (Marshall). Despite the fact of a fruitless and wearisome night's fishing trip, Simon is prepared to lower the nets.

Simon is beginning to articulate his faith, which then expresses itself in the beautiful, "yet at your word." (Bovon).

Luke 18:19 "Why do you call me good?" Jesus asked him. "No one is good except God alone. 20 You know the commandments: Do not commit adultery; do not murder; do not steal; do not bear false witness; honor your father and mother." Luke 18:21 "I have kept all these from my youth," he said.

Jesus focuses on the second table of the Decalogue, presenting the Fifth through Ninth Commandments in the order six, seven, eight, nine, five (cf. Exod 20:12–16 and Deut 5:16–20). He appends Lev 19:18, the second half of his own twofold summary of the law, which he will present in 22:37–39. All of these commands focus on external and observable behavior that others can evaluate. The reader wonders if Jesus is setting the man up for the logic of the Sermon on the Mount, if he will teach again how no one can ever truly keep these commandments.

Commands- For a ruler of elevated status, and one who exercise authority in the synagogue, the commands Jesus lists are unremarkable (NICOT, 655).

Jesus final statement of 19:17 might be paraphrased like this: "If you insist on pursuing this impossible, self-dependent avenue toward eternal life. I will tell you just how good you must be. To begin, perfect righteousness requires absolute obedience to the Old Testament commandments." (Holman)

Luke 18:22 When Jesus heard this, he told him, "You still lack one thing: Sell all you have and distribute it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." Luke 18:23 After he heard this, he became extremely sad, because he was very rich.

What a promise! The Lord promises this man treasures in heaven if he forsakes treasures on earth for Him.

Following- is an invitation for salvation. This was not a second command independent from the first. The command to sell all was the ruler's first step in following Christ (NAC, 458).

The Babylonian Talmud (*b. Ketub. 50a*) forbade giving up more than 20 percent of one's

income, though exceptions did occur in practice (cf. *b. Ta'an* 24a). The two commands to sell all and follow Jesus must be kept together. Giving up all that one possesses, without the love that only a relationship with Jesus can produce, profits nothing (1 Cor 13:3).

The man's response confirms that Jesus has uncovered the facet of this fellow's life that has been haunting him (v. 22). The young man refuses to make such radical financial sacrifice because he has *many possessions* (NIV's "great wealth" is less literal, too exaggerated, and too easily makes most of us think we are poorer than this man). He was, in short, at least in the small middle class of first-century society, which seemed "rich" in the eyes of the vast majority. The man goes away *grieving* (*lypoumenos*; NIV's "sad" is too mild), just as the disciples grieved after Jesus' second passion prediction (17:23). Neither this man nor the Twelve are prepared for Jesus' suffering servanthood and the concomitant self-denial which discipleship demands.

Sad—"He loved His money too much." He kept what he had losing nothing, but he goes away 'sad.' His possessions do not satisfy but he cannot let them go—which is how our possessions become idols. We are sad with it, but we must have it!

The wealthy ruler comes searching but at the moment of discovery turns away (NICOT, 654).

In short, Jesus' answer to the ruler's question takes seriously how wealth is intricately spun with issues of status, power, and social privilege (NICOT, 656).

Luke 18:24 Seeing that he became sad, Jesus said, "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! 25 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."

But many who have claimed to trust in Christ are still unprepared to serve him with all of their possessions.

True Christian stewardship will examine mortgages, credit, giving, insurance, investments, and a whole host of areas of life not often brought under Christ's lordship.

90% of Americans buy things they cannot afford

83% of Americans do not have enough to cover an emergency

15% of everything Jesus Christ said related to the topic of money more than his teachings on heaven and hell combined (every 8th sermon)

- Do you want to know where your heart is? Follow the money
- Our approach to money is not just **important**, it is **central** to our spiritual lives.
 - Show me a follow of Jesus what is generous and I will show you one that is maturing in their faith. Show me a follow of the way that is a miser, greedy, and stingy, and I will show you man who lacks faith and trust.
- **When we give first, it shows the Lord is a priority in our life**
 - Look at who you let go first at meals: special guests and special persons
 - If you give to God **last** what does that say about your faith?
- We don't expect God's leftovers

- **Because God gives consistently (daily bread) and abundantly He expects the same**
 - Tithe = 10th
 - For the NT believer it is unhealthy to view tithing as a place to stop, but it can still be a good place to star.
 - Far be it for us to ask “Lord what is the least I can give?”
- "Give according to your income, lest God make your income according to your giving." –unknown

Illustrations

The idea that among your still-professing Christians the vast majority are non-practicing reveals this is the last and asked Cindy to come back home with him. The two will be married 17 years in October.

Application

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Notes

Randy Alcorn, Treasure Principle

- God sees our faith and finances as inseparable, 5.
- In fact 15% of everything Christ said relates to this topic (money) – more than his teachings on heaven and hell combined.
- Our approach to money and possessions isn't just important – its central to our spiritual lives, 10.
- The greatest indictment against him (luke 12:20) – and the proof of his spiritual condition—is that he was rich toward himself, but not rich toward God, 11.
- You cant take it with you but you can sent it ahead, 18.
- A steward carries no sense of entitlement to the assets he manages, 25.
- Wesley's reaction want denial (his house burned down). Rather, it was a bold affirmation of reality—God is the owner of all things, and we are simply his stewards.
- Giving isn't a luxury of the rich. It's a privilege of the poor, 29.
- My dear friend Dixie Fraley told me, "we are most like God when we are giving," 31.
- Apart from faith in Christ, there is no explanation for such a life" (epiteth on tombstone), 37.
- The Egyptians believed in an afterlife – one where they could take earthly treasures, 37.
- Jesus is keeping track of our smallest acts of kindness, 39.
- God keeps an account open for us in heaven, and every gift given for His glory is a depot in that account, 41.
- Because we give, eternity will be different – for others and for us, 41.
- My heart always goes where I put God's money, 43.

- He who spends his life moving away from his treasures has reason to despair. He who spends his life moving toward his treasures has reason to rejoice, 45.
- Giving is the only antidote to materialism, 58.
- Sam Houston said, “my pocketbook was baptized too.” 61.
- Jesus raised the spiritual giving bar – he never lowered it, 63.
- Its unhealthy to view tithing as a place to stop, but it can still be a good place to start, 64.
- “I used to rob only 6 convenience stores a year. This year by his grace im going to rob only three”, 65.
- God is the greatest giving in the universe, and He wont let you out give him, 73.
- God prospers us not to raise out standard of living to but raise our standard of giving, 75.
- 5 minutes after I die, I will know exactly how I should have lived, 81.

John Piper, Don't Waste Your Life

- life is wasted if we do not grasp the glory of the cross, cherish it for what it is, and cleave to it as the highest price of every pleasure and the deepest comfort in every pain, 41.
- The opposite of wasting your life is to live by a single, soul-satisfying passion for the supremacy of God in all things, 43.
- Fleeing from death is the shortest path to a wasted life, 63.
- It is not wrong to pray for healing, to take medicine, to put locks on your doors, to flee unruly mobs. The bible does not call for suicide, 74.
- What about now? Are you caught in the enchantment of security, paralyzed from taking any risks for the cause of God?, 89.
- What paths of risk and sacrifice should we take in our passion for the supremacy of God in all things, and in our zeal to magnify Christ, and in our single commitment to boast only in the cross? 105.
- Why don't people ask us about our hope? The answer is probably that we look as if we hope in the same things they do, 109.

- If we want to make people glad in God, our lives must look as if God, not possessions, is our joy our lives must look as if we use our possessions to make people glad in God, especially the most needy, 111.
- In wartime we ask different questions about what to do with our lives than we do in peacetime, 118.
- How to make much of Christ at our jobs, 136.
- No beaver, hummingbird or ant consciously relies on God, 140.
- So one crucial meaning of our secular work is that the way we do it will increase or decrease the attractiveness of the Gospel we profess before unbelievers, 143.
 - Of course, the great assumption is that they know we are Christians.
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Suppose you buy shares of General Motors. What happens? You suddenly develop interest in GM. You check the financial pages. You see a magazine article about GM and read every word, even though a month ago you would have passed right over it. Suppose you're giving to help African children with AIDS. When you see an article on the subject, you're hooked. If you're sending money to plant churches in India and an earthquake hits India, you watch the news and fervently pray ...

Do you wish you cared more about eternal things? Then reallocate some of your money, maybe *most* of your money, from temporal things to eternal things. Put your resources, your assets, your money and possessions, your time and talents and energies into the things of God. Watch what happens. As surely as the compass needle follows north, your heart will follow your treasure. Money leads; hearts follow.

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[*Ted Olsen, "Go Figure," Christianity Today magazine \(November 2008\), p. 18*](#)

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Widows and widowers in the U.S. who say they give 10 percent or more of their income to the church: 17.6 percent

Non-widowed Americans who say they give 10 percent or more: 8.6 percent