

# JESUS ON GREED

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[ 0 : 00 ]     Father, we confess before you that we do not like it when your word talks about something that we don't want it to talk about. And Father, we confess before you that we see money as something very deeply personal.

And so part of us resents it, Father, when your son talks about money or possessions at all. We ask, Father, that your Holy Spirit would gently but deeply work upon our will and our mind.

But most of all, Father, we ask that your Holy Spirit would touch us at our heart, the center of who we truly are. We ask, Father, that your Spirit would touch our heart so that we might be receptive to the wisdom of your word.

And this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. So some of you might be saying, actually, this is going to be one of those interesting days.

The lights mean that I can see virtually none of you. So don't play a trick on me and all get up and leave me standing near the end of the service without realizing. So here's what I'd like to say to you folks, and I say it every time we have a passage on money and some other times as well, is that if you're here this morning as our guest and you haven't given your life to Jesus, to trust him as your Savior and follow him as your Lord, then we would actually prefer if you don't put any money in the plate or give money online or send us a donation later, we would actually prefer it if you didn't do that.

[ 1 : 37 ]     Because we're not interested in your money. Jesus isn't ultimately interested in your money. He's interested in you. And so that's the first thing. So whatever it is that I'm going to say, and really all I'm going to do is just try to bring out what Jesus is teaching us about money.

I just want you to be aware of the fact that you don't have to put money on the plate. Okay? So here's the thing. If you just heard me read the Gospel text a few moments ago, Jesus talks about money, and he talks about covetousness or greed.

And here's sort of two things that some of you are probably thinking, and even if you aren't thinking, I'm going to remind you of them because it's really important for us to keep this in mind when we talk, when we try to understand the words of Jesus.

We're just right next door to the province of Quebec, and the perception of many of our Quebecois friends is that for many, many decades, in fact, for centuries, the church used text like that to keep the people poor.

That the church used text like that to stop people from having ambition, starting businesses, getting educated, and getting advanced.

[ 2 : 53 ]     And many of our Irish brothers and sisters would probably say the same thing, and probably in other parts of the world. So is what Jesus is saying something that if we take it seriously, it means that we should be content with being poor and uneducated?

A second thing, just to sort of bring it home at a more personal level, is the other day I was in a Starbucks, no surprise to those of you who are regular, and there's a fellow that I've gotten to know over the last few years, and he's sort of an interest.

He's a really nice guy, working-class guy, salt-of-the-earth type. He sees that I have the Bible there. He shows no interest whatsoever, but he's friendly. He shows no interest in the fact that I have a Bible open.

But he's very friendly. He's living with his girlfriend. They have a kid. And I saw him the other day for the first time in a couple of months. And he said that he'd gotten, he'd changed jobs, that he'd got to work.

He's now working for another company, and it was a promotion, and he was making more money, and I congratulated him on that. So would Jesus say, would the Bible say that I sinned by congratulating him on switching to another company and getting a promotion and making more money?

[ 4 : 12 ] Is Jesus saying that, George, when the confession comes up later in the service, you've got to repent of that. You shouldn't have congratulated him.

Is that what Jesus is saying? Well, let's listen. Let's listen with fresh ears to what it is that Jesus has to say about possessions and about money and about greed.

So if you have your Bibles, if not, I'll read the text. You know, we'll go through it a bit slowly, but it's Luke chapter 12, and it begins in verse 13. Luke 12, 13.

And okay, there you go. So it goes like this. Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.

But Jesus said to him, man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you? I just sort of want to pause there for a second. In the original language, Jesus is angry at him, and the word man is sort of rude.

[ 5 : 21 ] Or not rude. He's putting the man in his place. It's not a gentle response. And from the context, it's obvious that it isn't so much that the man is looking for a disinterested judge to come and help sort out a problem.

The man wants Jesus to come and be on his side against his brother's side so that he'll get more money and more possessions. And so here, mindful of what I just said earlier, here we see something which is very, very important for us religious and spiritual types to hear.

The first point, Jesus rejects being used as a tool to further someone's plans. Jesus rejects in the strongest possible language being used as a tool to further someone's plans.

So, you know, obviously, if in fact our Quebecois friends' understanding of their past is correct, there's lots of different priests and nuns. They all probably had different motives.

But if any of them, in fact, were saying what they were saying to actually either maintain their own position or to help wealthy English or Quebecois keep their position, then these words of Jesus are a very, very stark rebuke to them.

[ 6 : 44 ] To the religious or spiritual person who, you know, to the politician who, when he's in trouble, comes to church to try to use the church to distract people and make them look like he's good when he's just been caught doing something very bad.

This is a very strong rebuke. That's using Jesus as a tool for your own advantage or benefit. A person who comes to a church so that he can sell or she can sell real estate or Amway or some other type of product, and they primarily see Christians or a church as a means by which they can prosper or their son or their daughter or their husband or their wife or their cousin to prosper.

This is a very, very, very strong rebuke. Jesus rejects being used as a tool to further someone's plans. Now, Jesus goes to the heart now.

Is this mic still working? Sometimes it seems like it's working and sometimes it doesn't. It's fine? Okay, good. I'm not used to not hearing any type of a feedback. So a few years ago, I had a guy who, he was somebody I knew through another Christian ministry, so you don't have to wonder who it was here in the congregation.

But he very, very, very seriously said that he had a plan for us to get a building. And the plan for us to get a building was that he was going to buy lottery tickets and I was going to pray for him.

[ 8 : 12 ] And as I prayed for him to buy the lottery tickets, when the lottery ticket won, half of the money would go to the church building fund.

And so, you know, at the time, I think the lottery was like \$10 million. He said, George, that'll get us a really, really nice building and a really nice location, \$5 million. And so first of all, I told him whatever anybody tells me when they ask me to pray, I tell them that I'm in sales, not management.

And so my prayers don't actually work any better than anybody else's. But then I had a variety of hopefully nice and gentle ways to tell him I wasn't going to do it. But what was going on with that man?

What would Jesus say about something like that? Well, if we continue to read, we see what Jesus has to say about it. Verse 15. And so Jesus is just rejected that he's going to be used as a tool by this fellow against the man's brother so that the fellow could become richer.

And in verse 15, Jesus says, and he said to them, take care and be on your guard against all covetousness for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.

[ 9 : 23 ] And some of your versions of the Bible might not say covetousness, it might say greed. Sort of the same word in the original language can be translated either way. Coveting means that sort of I see what somebody else has and I want it.

They have that nice house and I'd like that house. And in fact, often in older days like that, it meant quite literally you wanted that house, not one like it, but you wanted that house.

And you just wanted more and more of things. And so covetousness and greed in the original language is sort of the same idea, but you use two different words in English to translate it. And listen to it again.

It's very, very stark. In fact, there's a sermon from the time of the English Reformation by a fellow by the name of Latimer who was one of the English reformers who died a martyr's death.

And when he preached on this text, all his sermon was, take care and be on your guard against all covetousness for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.

[ 10 : 24 ] And he'd read it three, four, five times in a row. And then he paused and said, what if for the sermon this morning all we did was read this text over and over and over again? It's an important warning from Jesus.

And to put it up on the screen as the second point, Jesus warns me, beware of greed and covetousness. Jesus warns me, beware of greed and covetousness.

Now here's the problem. We never think that greed and covetousness applies to us. Or at least we rarely think about it. Now if you're a guest here this morning and you don't know much about the evangelical world, let me just tell you something about what goes on often in the minds and hearts of young men.

That many young men spend many anxious hours worrying about lust. And don't take anything I'm about to say to tell you that lust is all right. I'm not saying that lust is all right.

But they worry about impure thoughts about women. And yet many of these same young men in the churches they are, they're in, they maybe desire to have the Mercedes, to have the Beamer, to make lots of money, and nobody at all ever warns them that what they're desiring might be dangerous for them.

[ 11 : 44 ] That in fact in many churches a preoccupation with sex allows us to be fully devoted followers of mammon with not even the least shred of conscience or doubt.

And this isn't just a Christian problem, it's a human problem. So for instance, I've noticed lately, occasionally when I'm procrastinating, I read the obituaries in the paper.

So, you know, you know I'm really procrastinating when I start with interest to read the obituary. It means I don't, I should be going into work or doing something else, but there I am reading the obituaries.

But here's the very interesting thing about obituaries in the newspaper. The newspaper as a whole, when it's not talking about news, is telling you about how to live the good life.

And the good life involves having lots of experiences and getting promotions and being successful and being powerful and being popular and being able to get the girl or the guy that you want and that's what the newspaper gives you advice in.

[ 12 : 54 ] But when it comes time for the obituary, they want you to be known as a good person. I'll give you an illustration. Imagine for a moment that you're coming to a, you know, maybe it's your mother, maybe it's your aunt, you know, your grandmother, whatever, and you come to visit them and they know and you know that they only have a month left to live but they're still compass mentis.

Their mind still works. So on her deathbed, she says to you, by the way, what are you going to write in my obituary? And so you say, gosh, I'm so looking forward to writing your, I mean, I'm not looking forward to you dying but I'm so looking forward to your obituary.

I mean, you're amazing. Like my husband and I were debating whether you have, I think you only have a hundred pairs of designer shoes in your closets. He thinks it's 200.

We're going to count it and put it in the thing. And you have 300 designer dress and gosh, I think you must have at least 125 designer purses and we're going to put all of that in your obituary.

And the woman would look with a steely glint in her eye and she'd say, if you do that, I will haunt you. I want you to write that I'm generous.

[ 14 : 07 ] You see, the paper tells you how to get the best designer things and how to make the money. But when it comes to our obituaries, we don't want to be known as a person who owned 300 pieces of expensive clothing, 150 expensive shoes, 75 expensive or 125 handbags.

We want it to be known as being generous. We want it to be known as being good. It's a human problem. So Jesus says, beware of greed and covetousness.

We all agree. We all think it applies to somebody else. But what if it applies to us? And so Jesus tells a parable to try to start to unpack or get us to see an aspect of the issue.

And it begins in verse 16. And he told them the parable. The land of a rich man produced plentifully. 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.

[ 15 : 15 ] And just pause before you hear the rest of the parable. There's something very important to note in this parable, the beginning of this parable. Jesus isn't telling us that the man should be world-denying.

He's not going to tell us that the man should feel bad because his farm produces lots of crops. Jesus is not a Buddhist. He's not going to say that all desire in and of itself is our fundamental problem.

And Jesus is not going to say that godly people let the crops rot in the field. That that's a sign of godliness.

There's nothing wrong and all the rest of the story, there's nothing wrong at all with the fellow being thankful or pleased that his field has produced lots of crop and there's never any hint that his idea to build more barns is wrong in and of itself.

Jesus isn't telling the fellow to be impractical or to be wasteful or to be told that possessions in and of themselves are evil.

[ 16 : 25 ] Nothing that happens is going to say anything at all about that whatsoever. Jesus goes to the heart, to the man's response to what has happened to him and what's actually motivating at a deeper level his plans.

Beneath his prudence, there in computer language there's another program running deeper than his prudence and it's revealed in the words that begin on verse 19.

And I will say to my soul, I will say to my soul, soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years, relax, eat, drink, and be merry.

All the way through this entire parable, if you go back, it's always I, me, my. And even as he speaks to his soul, he speaks to his soul as if he is God speaking to himself, to his subject.

And in verse 20, 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.

[ 17 : 40 ] One second after death, Bill Gates and the poorest person in Ottawa who also dies, if they die at the exact same moment, a second after death, they have the same possessions in their possession.

None. You can't be poorer than dead. That's what Jesus is saying.

It's also the name of a Flannery O'Connor short story. You can't be poorer than dead. So, here's the thing. Is, is Jesus going to now give us sort of a bit of a radical hippie, socialist, left wing, walled and pond type of take on money and possessions?

I have a, another friend who, he and I have very, we have, we have public discussions about the Christian faith in Starbucks.

And, just recently we had one. He, he doesn't know anything at all. I don't think he's ever even read the New Testament, but he likes to tell me all about what Jesus actually thinks and believes.

[ 18 : 59 ] And, and so he, he told me, because he'd just read a book by a popular guy, he said it had to be true because he heard it on television. And, and it's funny, he said that, I said to him, you know, in his job, he has, I said, you actually think that just because it's said on television it must be true?

I mean, you don't believe that in the rest of your life. Why do you believe it about, about somebody saying something about Jesus? Anyway, he told me, it's a very, very common idea that Jesus was sort of like a radical and he was always going against the, the, the rich and the powerful and helping the poor.

He didn't use this, but I've heard many people, even, even evangelicals and charismatics and, and very, very orthodox people say that the point of the Bible is to afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted.

You know, afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted. Is that what Jesus is going to do? Is he going to afflict the comfortable? Is he going to say, is he going to now say, you know, come on, smell the roses, smell the flowers, you know, chill out, be more relaxed, less type A, you know, don't work so hard.

Is that what Jesus is going to say? Well, that's what many people, that's how many people read this. Just, just listen to what then goes on to, what goes on to be, to be said.

[ 20 : 11 ] It was a text like this that my, my friend was really referring to. Verse 22, therefore, Jesus said, 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 is more than clothing. Consider the ravens, they neither sow nor reap. They have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds?

Can't you just sort of hear this, that Jesus is saying, like, why are you so concerned about making money? Why are you so concerned about working hard? You got to take time and smell the roses. Like, it's all just going to work out.

Just chill out, you know? Like, be more calm. Get more centered. Turn off the cell phone. Get more in touch with yourself. Spend time.

Have long meals. It sort of almost sounds like it. And then he continues, and which of you by being anxious can add a single hour of a span to a span of life?

[ 21 : 08 ] If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? I mean, at first, at first glance, it's so easy for us in our culture to hear this as a message just to become more laid back, to become more hip, to spend the time to make your own craft beer, to make your own clothing, make your own art.

Like, just forget all of that rat race stuff. Is that what Jesus is saying? It sounds like it. Verse 28, Or verse 27, Consider the lilies, how they grow. They neither toil nor spin.

Yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothed the grass which is alive in the field today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith?

And do not seek what you are to eat and 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.

Vote for Olivia Chow and not for the Fords. Is that what he's saying here? But then all of a sudden, there's a sixth sense moment.

[ 22 : 30 ] If you've seen the movie, there's something that happens at the end of the movie that makes you wonder if you've understood anything that's taken place throughout the entire movie. I won't tell you what it is in case you haven't seen it, but that's a sixth sense moment.

Verse 32. Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. One moment. It's your Father gives you the kingdom.

Your Father gives you the kingdom. Like, what happens is Jesus does have some stern words about the person who dies leaving behind 300-plus designer dresses and 150 pairs of shoes and 125 designer purses and has really, in effect, lived an entirely self-centered life.

but when they die, they want to be known as generous. Less than 19% of the Canadian population gives enough money to charity that they can file an income tax return asking for a charitable receipt.

And the median amount of money given to charity out of that 19% is, I think it's only something like \$100. and yet Canadians, we, humanly speaking, like to be known as generous people.

[ 24 : 07 ] And I'm just, if you're making \$80,000 a year and you give no money to charity, not enough money to charity to actually ask for any type of income tax receipt at all, I don't know.

Should we put generous down in your obituary? I don't know. But, while it, it, it hammers away at us about that type of a preoccupation with money and prestige and all being completely and utterly self-centered, there, there's a way for those of us who are called about being, chilling out and getting more centered that in fact that whole language is in fact actually profoundly self-centered as well.

I need to get, I need to get in touch with myself. I need to smell the roses. I need to smell the lilies. I need to not worry about things because it's all going to work out all right for me and I need to spend time taking my long time to do this or whatever it is because you see, in effect, when Jesus says that the Father has to give the kingdom, what he's saying is that it's true that when Bill Gates, if Bill Gates and the poorest person and Ottawa die at the exact same instant, they both take the same amount of possessions with them, which is none.

The text here says that we don't take hipness with us, coolness, centeredness, relaxedness, valor, honor, none of that goes with us.

Everything we possess is left behind. In fact, what he's saying, if you could put up the third point, Jesus is not coming down here as part of an anti-capitalist rant and it's easy for us to fool ourselves that this text applies to somebody else and thinks that he's talking about other ways that merely leaves us being self-centered, only self-centered in a different way.

[ 26 : 17 ] What Jesus is talking about is this, that there are two ways to live. One is to have me and my idols on the throne of my heart or the throne of my life and the other is to have the living God, my creator, on the throne of my heart or the throne of my life.

That what Jesus is doing is he's addressing the heart. He's addressing the motivations that go underneath our prudence and our other types of concerns that reveal that we still want to be at the center and rule our hearts and rule our lives and that we make idols of things.

Idols of money, idols of being cool, idols of being religious, idols of being spiritual, idols of being artistic, idols of being communal, idols of being a high accomplishing individual, idols of sex, idols of control, that underneath it all, we are still self-centered and we make idols.

And at the very, very center of who we are, there is a throne. And God, because God created us, he created us to have a throne at the very, very center of who we are.

and part of our rebellion against God is that we decided that we wanted to sit on the throne of our lives and when we sit on the throne of our lives, we never leave ourselves alone there because we put our heart on many things.

[ 27 : 57 ] We have many, many things which we treasure, none of which will come to the other side of the grave. In fact, if you just go reading past verse 32, listen to how Jesus goes, 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.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. It's the memory verse for the week. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. And so what Jesus is doing here is he's setting before us two ways to live.

One is to have me and my idols on the throne of my heart or the throne of my life and the others to have the living God my creator on the throne of my heart and my life. So what then if you were to go back and to listen to what Jesus is talking about, go back to verse 21.

So is the one who lays, this is after the little comment about the parable about the man who's going to die, my soul, my this, my this, me this, I this, and Jesus' comment, so is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.

[ 29 : 15 ] The two paths, treasure for myself or the path of rich toward God. And the rich toward God has this great conundrum, and the great conundrum is that at the heart of being rich toward God is to be reconciled to him, and only God can do that.

how is it that Jesus could ask us to walk down a path that actually you can't accomplish the path because it has to be given to you freely and completely.

Well, what Jesus does is he actually asks us to think about things. So we'll just start, one thing, verse 22, 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.

So sort of pause there. Here's the thing which Jesus is going to try to get us to understand. The fourth point, if you could put it up, having money or possessions as an idol makes me anxious.

Having money or possessions as an idol makes me anxious. And the thing about an idol is it could be an idol for, a million dollars or a hundred million dollars or it could be walled in pond.

[ 30 : 40 ] It could be an idol about being as popular as the most popular movie star or it could be an idol of just being popular with that one girl or that one guy.

It could be an idol of being loved by millions or just being loved by that one person. that what Jesus is saying is that where our treasure is, there our heart will be.

And that's in effect describing an idol. And idols make us anxious. Idols make us anxious.

Part of being anxious is natural to being a human being. We're frail. Tiny little microbes, tiny little upsets in the balance in our body could make us have a mental illness, could make us have cancer, could profoundly affect our lives in all sorts of ways.

We are inherently fragile. There's always going to be a certain degree of anxiety to us. But we go to idols thinking that they will comfort us and protect us. But Jesus is going to say, and it's not just here but all the way through the Gospels and all the way through the New Testament, all the way through the Old Testament, is that idols make me anxious.

[ 31 : 53 ] And part of the power of an idol in my life is that my anxiety drives me to my idol rather than make me question my idol.

I'm anxious. I buy the expensive clothes. And it comforts for a short while but I get more anxious. It's going out of style.

There's a tiny little fray. It's not the right color for my eyes. It's not what the girl that I love or the guy that I love or somebody or my boss or somebody else has a better set of clothes.

And so our anxiety returns and we seek to put, to get the net. And before we know it, we have the 300 or the 75 or the 125.

And why? It's because idols make us anxious and rather than doubting the power of an idol, we continue to serve it. And that's why Jesus is talking about.



[ 32 : 54 ] Okay, just think about it for a second. Do you really, really actually think that the meaning of life is possessions? Like, if you really think that the meaning of life is possessions, does that mean that rich people have rich and meaningful lives and that everybody else have unmeaningful lives?

Like, why do the rich commit suicide? Why is it so common for movie stars who are rich and popular to commit suicide? So you really think that possessions are the meaning of life?

Do you really think that anything on this side of the grave will completely and utterly encapsulate the meaning of life? And Jesus goes through a series of thought experiments to ask us, why is it that these things that we make idols, why is it that we think that these things consist in the meaning of life?

Like, why do we do that? And then in verse 32, he sort of throws the zinger in it. Those of us who think that we can take our money, you know, if the meaning of our life, you know, if everything that makes life meaningful ends at death, there's a long tradition of philosophy that goes right back to the Greeks, that's response is, and therefore, nothing in life is meaningful.

And so Jesus says something about how only God, there's another path of living that does not involve me and my idols, that involves God being at the center of my life, who cares for my needs on both sides of the grave, and yet that caring can only be, only God can do that.

[ 34 : 29 ] I can't spend my way into his favor, I can't manipulate my way into his favor, I can't do anything. It's something that all of a sudden I have to put everything down because it's something that only God can grant or bestow.

If you could put up the fifth point, only the living God can bestow citizenship and life in his kingdom. I cannot create citizenship or earn citizenship or demand citizenship as my right.

Harder for me to say citizenship than I thought it was going to be. Only the living God can bestow citizenship and life in his kingdom. That's what the text says, that's what 32 says, fear not, little flock, for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

It's his pleasure to do something that only he can do that we cannot possibly do. I can't create it, I can't earn it, and I can't demand it as a right.

See, this is how, remember, everything that happens in the gospel, in this case, if you're a guest this morning, you haven't heard this before, but in Luke chapter 9, Jesus tells his disciples he's going to Jerusalem to die.

[ 35 : 38 ] And everything that takes place is all in the context of Jesus is constantly reminding his disciples that he's going to Jerusalem to die. And Paul, in 2 Corinthians, has a very, very powerful analogy for what Jesus does.

The analogy is that Jesus, God, the Son of God, sets aside his glory and divine prerogatives and splendor and majesty and adulation and all of that. He sets all of that aside while remaining God.

He takes into himself our human nature. He lives a simple working class human life. And then he dies upon the cross and you can't be any poorer than dead. He became poor that we might become rich.

That's how Paul puts it in 2 Corinthians. That by God's grace, Jesus becomes poor that we might become rich. Because he dies for you and for me on the cross.

And that death upon the cross, when we put our faith and trust in something that only God can give us to reconcile us to himself, we have this profound, asymmetric, unfair, in a sense, exchange.

[ 36 : 51 ] But it's not unfair because it's motivated and comes from love. That God gives us, who put our faith and trust in Jesus who died for us, he gives us citizenship in his kingdom.

freedom and we bring nothing into it but ourselves because he loves you and he loves me. Let's just sort of wrap this up to allow us to sort of, what does this sort of mean?

Just very, very quickly. If you could put up the very next slide, Jeremy, that would be great. And that's this.

In a world of money and possessions, the Bible has a simple rule of life for all who have received Jesus Christ crucified, God's free gift of grace. Give 10% of the money I receive to further the gospel and bring glory to God.

In a world of money and possessions, money and possessions which can become idols, the Bible has a simple rule of life for all who have received Jesus Christ crucified, God's free gift of grace.

[ 37 : 59 ] Give 10% of the money I receive to further the gospel and bring glory to God. How do you kick possessions and money off the throne of your life as an idol? Give it away.

Give some of it away. You see, the question is, when you go back over this text and it says, you know, give to the poor and give to this and give to that, the question is, well, how much does God want? Like, how much does he want?

Like, how do I figure that out? And the Bible has this very, very consistent, simple rule of life, and the rule of life is 10%. And enjoy the other 90%.

Do things that make your heart glad. And that's a very, very big step for my wife and I. I was ordained for quite a few years before my wife and I started tithing.

And at the time I was getting paid monthly and it was very, very hard. I started to get convicted about it. And because I'm not very brave and courageous, what I thought is, in obedience to God, I'll give an extra \$20 a month.

[ 39 : 00 ] And I did. And my world didn't collapse. And then after a couple of months of that, we gave another \$20 a month.

And our world didn't collapse. And then we had to give several hundred dollars. Oops. Then we had to give several hundred dollars. I won't stop.

We had to give several hundred dollars to sort of catch up to the tithe and our life didn't collapse. Some of you can do things quickly, some very slowly. But here's the thing. It's a very, very simple rule of life.

And it's a rule of life for those who have given their lives to Jesus and are free and receive God's free gift of grace. Some of you might say, George, if you knew my finances, if you knew how much trouble I was in, like how on earth could you possibly say that?

What are you saying to the single mom or the single dad or the person at very, very low income who's just overwhelmed with financial trouble?

[ 40 : 04 ] Here's the second thing that this text is saying to us. Jesus never tells me to ignore reality. He invites me to walk towards reality with him as my Savior and my Lord.

That point could go up. Jesus never tells me to ignore reality. He invites me to walk towards reality with him as my Savior and my Lord. Does Jesus know that you or I are in profound financial trouble?

Yes, he does. Yes, he does. Does he want you to engage in some some type of spiritual or other type of practice that makes you ignore it and deny it?

No, he doesn't. Will following Jesus take you away from the real world? Truly following the real Jesus will never take you away from the real world. In fact, the invitation of Jesus is to actually live in the real world, a real world where you die, a real world where there is a life after death where you have to give a count for your life.

That a real world where the living God actually does exist. Jesus is inviting us to actually live in the real world. And he wants us to walk towards reality with him as our Savior and as our Lord.

[ 41 : 19 ] To walk towards the source of our indebtedness. To walk towards the source of our financial problems. To deal with the bank or the credit card. Or the person from the debt collection agency who is ruining our lives by calling us at all sorts of odd hours and threatening us.

He wants to say to you and me, be my child, be my disciple, accept my offer of grace. And with me beside you, let's walk towards that problem and deal with it.

And then the final sort of takeaway from all of this on money, if you could put it up, is invite Jesus Christ crucified to throw out every idol from the throne of your life and ask him to sit on the throne of your life as your Savior and your Lord.

Invite Jesus Christ crucified to throw out every idol from the throne of your life and ask him to sit on the throne of your life as your Savior and your Lord. This should really be the first point, but I left it to the last as the one you'll remember.

And if you write down these points, you go on the webpage later on and find them, you start with this point and you move backwards. Start with this point to invite Jesus into your life and ask him to sit on the throne of your life and to cast out the idols that are there and then ask him to walk towards your financial and other problems, realizing that at some point along that way, he's going to ask you to give 10% of the money you receive.

[ 42 : 53 ] I told you it one way, live it the other way. Please stand. Jeremy, could you put the final prayer up on the screen?

Here's a prayer. For some of us, it's a prayer by which we begin the Christian life, but it's also a prayer that we have to pray for those of us who are followers of Jesus, because even those of us who are followers of Jesus, we try to do the unimaginable, which is to have Jesus on the throne of our lives and all sorts of idols.

And part of our sanctification is to first receive what only Jesus can give us for free and God gives us for free, the power of God for salvation. But then we need to remember what Jesus has done for us on the cross and ask him to look inside of our lives to see the idols which are there and confess before him that we don't have the strength to throw the idols off by ourselves and ask him to cast off the idols from the throne of our heart.

And so if this prayer is the whole, I think the whole prayer is there. Is it part of two? Is it two screens? It's three screens. I'll read it to you. And then if the Holy Spirit is convicting you to pray it, you can join with me and praying it out loud.

But here's what the prayer will say. Jesus, I repent from trying to sit on the throne of my heart. I repent of every idol that is on the throne of my heart. I thank you that you left the glory of heaven to die upon the cross for me.

[ 44 : 29 ] I thank you that you became poor, that I may become rich. Please come into my life as my Savior and my Lord. Please take your rightful place on the throne of my life.

Please remove all idols from the throne of my heart so that you alone sit on the throne. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, make your home in me and never leave. In Jesus' name, amen.

If you would like to pray that prayer with me, then let's do it now. Jesus, I repent from trying to sit on the throne of my heart.

I repent of every idol that is on the throne of my heart. I thank you that you left the glory of heaven to die upon the cross for me. I thank you that you became poor, that I may become rich.

Please come into my life as my Savior and my Lord. Please take your rightful place on the throne of my life. Please remove all idols from the throne of my heart so that you alone sit on the throne.

[ 45 : 34 ] Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, make your home in me and never leave me. In Jesus' name, amen.