

Why is God so bossy about money?

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[0 : 0 0] Father, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us. Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us. Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us. Father, we ask that you help us by your Holy Spirit to use the very best of our mind and our heart and our imagination and our will to listen to your word and to listen to you.

At the same time, Father, we ask that your Holy Spirit would humble our imaginations and our hearts and our wills so that we will acknowledge that unless you move and work within us, we are powerless.

So, Father, we ask that in your mercy and in your kindness, you would do this double powerful work of your Holy Spirit in us this morning. Father, it's your word.

We want and need to hear you speak to us. And all this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. We had a hymn sing last night and I had to, I was, I didn't had to, I had the great privilege of leading it.

Acapella without a mic, so that's why I'm hoarse. I sang Christmas carols very loudly for 70 minutes last night, so now I'm hoarse. Some, you know that I, there's a particular Starbucks where I usually work on my sermons on weekday mornings.

[1 : 2 1] And so now there's several people there who will often, not every week, but there's people who regularly ask me what my sermon's going to be on. And so this one fellow who's quite a skeptic, usually he asks me what the sermon's going to be on and then he gives me a lecture as to why I'm all wrong, why Christians are wrong.

And this week he said, what's your topic on? And I said, why is God so bossy about money? And he literally took a step back and said, I can't believe you're going to talk about that.

He said, that's absolutely dynamite. That's, he was actually, it was the first time, one of the few times I'd seen him a little bit speechless that I was going to talk about why is God so bossy about money?

And as we all know, one of the great perceptions of non-Christians, about Christians, but also I think maybe spiritual or not spiritual, not religious people, of even religious people in general, is that God is very bossy about money.

Not only is he bossy about money, he's intrusive, harmful, not helpful, and not realistic.

[2 : 4 3] And I think that would be a very common view about religious people in general, and Christians in particular about money. So here's my opportunity. I'm going to just say, if you're a guest here this morning, maybe as a seeker, maybe you just got dragged here by somebody, or if you've been coming to this church for a while, and you are not a follower of Jesus, on behalf of Jesus, I want to say that we don't want you to give us any money at all.

And I'm very serious. And it's not because your money's not good, or we don't like you. Just we really, literally, this is an opportunity. I know for some of you, it's a bit of a scary topic.

You are maybe glad that I'm going to raise it. But this is a real opportunity. And you'll hear it's not just me, it's actually what the Bible says, is that it would really, really be good if you give us no money whatsoever.

Instead, after the service, have as many cookies and as much coffee as you can on us. We want to be generous to you. But you'll see in a moment why it is that I say, please don't give us money.

Now, the fact is that many Christians and many churches, too many, are bossy and intrusive and unhelpful about money, and are fixated about money, and probably worship money.

[4 : 00] I mean, in fact, actually, one of the judgments that you can see in a lot of the churches in the city of Ottawa that are closing, is that the congregations, rather than giving their buildings to, let's say, an immigrant church, a new Canadian's church, they sell it to developers because they want the money.

So, in fact, it is a problem in churches and for Christians that they're, like, fixated with money, bossy about money, or maybe, anyway, it is an issue.

But the question is, is that a Christian problem and a human problem? Or is it, in fact, what God wants us to do? I mean, if you think about it for a second, just sort of take a little bit of a time out with this whole question, the world is pretty bossy about money.

The liberal, the provincial governments and the federal governments don't think we use our money well enough so they want to make changes to the Canada Pension Plan. Every Saturday, if not more often, there's regularly a whole raft of columns and articles in the newspaper to tell us how we should be spending our money, foolish ways to use money, smart ways to use money.

In fact, there's a bit of a human problem about being fixated with money and being bossy and intrusive about it. But the question is, is that a human problem of which Christians share because we aren't listening to the Bible or thinking about Jesus or is in fact the Bible bossy about money?

[5 : 29] Is the God who is revealed in Scripture bossy and intrusive and foolish about money? So it'd be a great help if you get your Bibles out and we're going to look at that. If you're wondering why on earth we're talking about this, it's one of the things that we do in this church is we preach through books of the Bible.

And that means we just take the topics as they come up. It's not that I have a fixation with this. It's just, in fact, I'll give you a warning. We're going to be looking at two chapters and 39 verses, not all today, but this week, next week, and then in January when we come back to 2 Corinthians that talk about money.

And it's just the way the book moves. It's just the way that the flow of the book moves. So if you get your Bibles, look to 2 Corinthians and it's chapter 8, 2 Corinthians chapter 8 and let's start reading it.

Verse 1 and 2. We want you to know brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia. That's an area of Greece at the time.

This is originally a letter which was written about the year 56 or 57. And it's to the areas that now be known as Thessalonica, Berea, Philippi, and that's what he's referring to.

[6 : 44] So I'll read the sentence again. We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia. For in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.

Now here's the first thing, if you could put it up. The really surprising thing is we begin, when we hear that the Bible is going to talk about money, we begin with this cultural assumption that the Bible is going to be bossy about money, but the Bible begins in a very surprising place.

It begins by, God wants us to know about grace. God wants us to know about grace. So it's a bit of a surprise that that's how it's going to begin.

And some of you might wonder, well, what does the Bible mean by grace? And Andrew, if you could put up the second point. This is just, if you go throughout the New Testament in particular, but the entire Bible, the Old Testament as well, because the Old Testament teaches that God is gracious and that he is filled with grace.

He is a God who is characterized by grace. This is, I think, a very good summary of how the Bible teaches what grace is, God's grace is.

[8 : 06] God's grace, or grace, is a justice without compromise and a love to the uttermost, which has real power to enter into human lives and change us for our true good.

I think that's what the Bible means by God's grace. It means, it is, God's grace is a justice without compromise. This is very, very important.

It's not favoritism. It's not, you know, that we're going to favor one social group over another. We're going to favor one age group over another. We're going to favor one ethnic or national or racial group or sexual type over another.

It is justice without compromise and it's also love to the uttermost. And it's great, it's justice without compromise and love to the uttermost, which, because it's from God, has the real power to enter into your life and mine and change us for our true good.

So, this is something that God wants us to know about. It's not just something that he does to amuse himself like a hobby.

[9 : 23] That's a very nature of God and he wants us to know about it and he wants us to know about how it actually has become powerfully real and present for people's good in this area of Macedonia.

Now, and that's how it begins, verse one, we want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia. Now, some of you, if you've come to the church before, you'll notice, you'll know that, in fact, I got an email just recently, I knew I did it but I never really put it in these terms, but George, and in fact, often I start to walk to the side and I go, but George, and then I raise the objection of somebody and this is often where I would have a but George moment, but I'm not because the Bible, in fact, is implicitly asking us a question.

The Bible is, in fact, saying, but Canadians, but Canada, here's the question, here's the question, does money, having lots of money, create and encourage generosity to others?

Does having money, here's a question for Canadians, does having money, does having lots of money, having more money, does that naturally create generosity in human beings, in Canadians?

If we're honest, I think we'd say it doesn't. And it's often very hard for us to say that, and one of the reasons it's hard for us to say that, and this isn't really a topic of this sermon, because this whole sermon, the way it's talking about money, isn't talking about idolatry, but money is often a very powerful idol in our hearts, in our imaginations, and idols don't like to be talked about bluntly.

[11 : 32] When we have an idol in our heart and our mind, it will cause our mind and our heart and our will to be evasive and less clear, because idols never like to be brought into the light.

But I think you would agree if you look not only in Canada but around the world that the mere presence of extra money does not usually elicit, just by the money itself, a feeling of now I can be more generous.

That's not normally what arises in people's hearts. In fact, if you want evidence of this, just go to either the Citizen or the Globe and Mail or the National Post and read the financial sections for the last six months and see how many times they say, this is how you save money on your taxes and this is how you make more money and you're doing all of this so you can be more generous.

My guess is that you will find no articles about that or maybe you'll find one. So just for a second here, this is one of these time out moments and it's fine.

God has big shoulders and God is quite fine. In fact, one of the things about the Gospels is that Jesus loves honest questions but at the same time if you read the Gospels, Jesus often asks honest questions and so here we have this cultural fear, a human fear that God is going to be bossy, intrusive, hurtful and harmful and unwise about money and as we start to get into it, we discover that in fact, the Bible is asking us a question.

[13 : 11] The Bible is asking me a question. Okay, just to think about this, does the mere presence of more money in our lives make us more generous? So here, if you could put up the third point, Andrew, what is going on in this text is that money does not naturally create generosity to others but God's grace grows generosity to others.

this is cultural dynamite. Just even within our own culture, you know what, often at a level of common grace, having more money doesn't usually create generosity but you know one of the things in our culture that creates generosity?

Love. Love. Love. I mean, many of you can maybe even think in your own offices or your places of work that there might be a woman who would really, you could tell when the card comes around to give a gift for somebody who's leaving or something's happened to them and getting that toonie out of the purse and letting go of it for that person is really hard.

But that same person might talk about her daughter's wedding and talk about how she's hoping to have a big raise so she can give the money to her daughter. So we see right here this is a cultural thing.

It's not that there's no generosity in our culture but it's not usually created by money. It's created by something else like love. And as we're going to see this is actually sort of a truth that the Bible makes clear that Marxism doesn't tell us, queer theory doesn't tell us this, deconstructionism doesn't tell us this, Ayn Rand doesn't tell us this, Nietzsche doesn't tell us this, it doesn't sort of instill it within us.

[15 : 09] But the Bible makes this clear. So the Bible shows that money does not naturally create generosity to others but God's grace grows generosity to others.

You know in this text if you read 1 and 2 again look at it again verses 1 and 2 we want you to know brothers and sisters about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia.

How does he know that God's grace has been powerful there? He says verse 2 for in a severe test of affliction affliction means basically they're suffering terrible persecution.

Their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty in other words they're not only experiencing persecution but they're experiencing persecution that's made them poor have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.

Look at that. How can poverty overflow in a wealth of generosity? But God's grace creates that. God's grace coming into our lives.

[16 : 14] The Holy Spirit as we're going to see in a moment part of God's grace as the Holy Spirit works it creates a generosity. generosity. Now some of you might say but George you asked a challenging question of me but George this sounds like God is doing something here that's actually making these people weaker he's furthering their oppression by giving them less financial resources.

Well let's go on and read verses 3 to 5. Here's what Paul says what the Bible says for they gave verse 3 they gave according to their means of their own accord begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints and here saints just means in the Bible in the New Testament if you've given your life to Jesus you're a saint that's how it describes people who've given their lives to Jesus it doesn't mean you live well it means you're God's and some of us anyway God needs a lot of work in a lot of our lives right I'll say that again verse 4 begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints and this not as we expected but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us okay so that's what the Bible says so here's the context in this area that Paul's talking about Philippi Thessalonica Berea that area they people have become Christians and in that particular pagan culture context they've experienced ostracism loss of status loss of business contacts that have greatly reduced their income some of the people we know from Lydia and the

Philippian jailer had financial means and for whatever reason now the implication is that many or all of them have lost their financial means and they're now suffering poverty in the context of persecution and Paul is collecting money as he goes around what we now call as Turkey and what we now know of as Greece and he's collecting money from these pagans who've become Christians because the Jewish believers in Jerusalem have also suffered great ostracism and persecution and are in dire financial need and so Paul is going along collecting money in what we now refer to as Turkey and Greece for the Jewish believers in fact it's actually a very very powerful thing because you know when I said about how one of the things that overcomes the tendency of money is love this is an aspect of love because these men and women are crossing language lines social lines cultural lines ethnic lines geographic lines to really love the other and that's what God's grace has done as God's grace has come into their lives rather than them becoming more ethnocentric or you know more just cultural centric or national centric it's breaking down these barriers because they have a compassion for people who are of a different ethnicity different culture just everything and as

God's grace comes into their lives they have this desire to give sacrificially for the other so here's the point first number four Andrew the Bible does not romanticize poverty nowhere in the Bible there's no Walden Pond there's no noble savage there's nothing like Jean-Jacques Rousseau there's nothing like that the Bible does not romanticize poverty or being poor but the Bible tells us of how God's grace frees dignifies and empowers the poor and the powerless the Bible tells us of how God's grace frees dignifies and empowers the poor and the powerless you see God's grace we receive it it's a passive thing that I can't do anything to earn God's grace it's not something that I can do that if I do enough good action somehow another God's grace will I'll earn it like a prize it's not like you know saving up points or air mile points or aeroplane points you get enough points you get a flight there's nothing

I can do it's something we receive passively but at the same time it's something that when God's grace comes into our lives it creates activity God's grace comes into our lives and as God's grace as Jesus comes and lives within us as the Holy Spirit comes within us the Holy Spirit starts to irrigate things within our life in our mind in our heart in our will in our imagination and at the same time that it starts to do this irrigating work within us it creates this desire for the grace to continue to go out in different ways and that's as we'll see in a moment the gifts the charisms that come out from us and that's and that's and that's what's happening here you see what's one of the things that we know about the poor well first of all people don't think about the poor I mean one of the things that's going on in our culture right now is that there's very little talk of the poor it's about middle class tax cuts and in fact you know on one hand the fact that we have a concern at all for the poor in our culture is something as I think that comes out of our

[21 : 49] Christian past but you know at the same time even what goes on in our culture isn't us sacrificially giving but us wanting to have the government spend other people's money to help the poor do you know that the percentage of people in Canada that actually give enough money to charity that they can claim an income tax receipt has been going down as a percentage of the population ever since Revenue Canada started to I think it's about 24 consecutive years of decline in our country and often what we want is other people to give their money but the poor are irrelevant they're invisible we see them as victims and they often by our culture they're understood to be irrelevant invisible victims and powerless but here we see that when God comes into their lives it means they're not irrelevant they're not invisible they're not to see themselves as complete and utter passive victims that have no power but God uses their limited resources and their great real restrictions in such a way that they are a true and noteworthy blessing that's why

I say that the Bible doesn't romanticize poverty but it tells us of how God's grace frees dignifies and empowers the poor and the powerless and in fact look again at this text look again at verse four verse three again for they gave according to their means as I can testify and beyond their means of their own accord begging us earnestly for the favor or the privilege of taking part in the relief of the saints let's be honest how does our culture understand favor or privilege in our culture in a world where money is the primary narrative favor means avoiding pain privilege means avoiding pain sorry there is two tier health system in our country because rich athletes and rich people don't have long waiting lists and part of the way that money and power works in our culture is we don't even ask why is it that that rich person why is it that my my grandmother has to wait six months for surgery and the rich athlete has surgery the next day why is it my neighbor has to wait eight months for surgery and that rich person or that powerful person they had surgery right away like we don't ask that question because in fact the idols of our culture make us blind to the fact and the normal way that we understand favor is getting out of obligations and keeping our money in our own pocket and so here in the text we see a profound inversion of how our culture and how human beings normally by their own flesh understand power these people as the graces come into their lives they beg

Paul for the favor for the privilege of being used by God to bless these others it's a very very very powerful text now some of you might remember I mean hopefully all of you remember that I said if you've come here this morning and you haven't given your life to Jesus even if you've been coming here for many many months maybe even for years and you would not really describe yourself as having given your life to Jesus that he is your savior and your lord and I've said it would be really be good if you give us no money and I get that from verse five did you notice it verse five look at again what it says in verse five and this not as we expected in other words they've given themselves and their money and this not as we expected but they gave themselves first to the lord and then by the will of God to us and in the original language first to the lord has a double sense it means the very first thing they do is give themselves to the lord or rededicate themselves to the lord and it also means first in importance and in priority you know if you've read

Stephen Covey and looked at how he does some of his time management and you know you get the boulders of your day or your week or your month or your year you do the boulders first or the huge rocks first because they're the first the big things the things that are of the utmost priority and that's what he's saying here what God desires as the first thing that we do God desires as the thing that we recognize is most important is to give ourselves to him and the money issues they're going to come down the pike and so if you could put it up Andrew God does not have any needs he does not need your money God loves you as a person and longs to have you return to him God loves you as a person and longs to have you return to him remember what grace is grace is a justice without compromise and love to the uttermost which has the real power to enter into human lives and change us for our true good and God desires to enter in he desires to have us enter into him he desires to have

Jesus enter into us he desires with the son and the Holy Spirit to make his home within us he desires to pour as we give ourselves to Jesus and now Jesus comes and lives within us the Holy Spirit comes and lives within us and as this happens God gives gifts God gives gifts look at how it continues in verses 6 and 7 accordingly we urge Titus that as he has started that is making a collection for money so he should complete among you this act of grace but as you excel in everything in faith in speech and here in speech it means speaking in tongues it means speaking being able to preach it means being able to teach the Bible in knowledge it can mean having words of knowledge it also can mean just knowing the faith and having the wisdom that all those Old Testament texts about wisdom and that practical knowledge that come as a result of gifts of grace in earnestness that's a type of ability to have some type of willpower that keeps in the same direction and in our love for you and actually in the original language it's a picture of the love of the you know of the Holy

[28 : 49] Spirit is the love between the Trinity the Father and the Son and it's the love within the congregation of true believers and this love which does characterize the Trinity and is to characterize Christians that this love is now present in them as well see that you excel in this act of grace also in this act of grace also we receive grace passively but it makes us active in risking in going in praying and speaking in giving but some of you might say okay George wow you've taken us a long way from this question and I do agree that the Bible has surprised me here about how it talks about money and the Bible has asked me some cultural questions which in fact I'm not entirely sure where to go with it it might very well be the case that money by itself actually doesn't create generosity but maybe it does create something like selfishness but George isn't the

Bible still telling us to give money like isn't isn't God still being bossy no for two reasons the first is it makes it very clear he's not God is not ordering us around look at verse at verse eight I say this not as a command and in the original language the word command has an implication of a command from God in the original language I say this not as a command but to prove or to test by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine and what it means here if you could put it up Andrew is the next point the Bible encourages us to let love grow and run its course by taking next steps the Bible doesn't command here it specifically rejects it what the Bible is doing here is encouraging and you might say that's a distinction without a difference no in this particular case it's a distinction with a difference it's a very very different thing

I just discovered recently that an acquaintance of mine who's becoming a friend that just 11 months ago he was robbed by gunpoint in a taxi he was in a third world country he was taking a taxi to the airport and the guy pulled over in a dark spot turned around stuck a gun in his face and said give me everything you have and it ended up I mean he told me about this now so obviously he didn't die in the whole thing and it ended up you know it was it ended up he ended up getting out of the hole I mean he did lose everything by the way he had to give everything his suitcase his credit cards everything but his passport which was sort of tucked away in another part of his body and the guy didn't notice it if God wanted to he could show you up and he could say give me all you got God's way more powerful than a guy with a gun just like that he could just do it like that and he could command us in a way that would just mean we've got to do all this but this isn't a text about commanding it's a text of he's telling you what it is that grace is and that if you understand what grace is and what God's grace is and if that grips you all I'm wanting to do

I'm just telling you about this I want to encourage you I want to encourage you that as the love of God comes into your life and as the love of God moves you to be connected to other brothers and sisters like don't let the idols of your life freeze you up but let love run its course let grace run its course let the Holy Spirit run its course God Holy Spirit is not going to hurt you and the image of prove is it would be as if in a month or two when the ice is getting harder and you go to a rural area and maybe you want to do some ice fishing with your kid or your friend or something like that and you're a bit nervous because you're like me a city slicker and you're going out to a rural area and you're a bit cautious on the ice but you're testing the ice to prove that it will hold you up and that's what the Bible is saying just let your idols are making you afraid your flesh is making you afraid let love run its course let the

Bible speak into your life let God's grace go and as it starts to go take these little steps to prove that in fact God is dependable that's what the Bible is saying and that's the first reason the second is connected to a question well George that's very interesting that you say that grace is God's grace is justice without compromise and a love to the uttermost which has the real power to enter into human lives and changes for a true good but you're just saying that it's what the Bible says Andrew could you put a point seven and I'd like you to read this with me this is one of the greatest verses in the Bible and if all you today is start to want to memorize that Bible verse then I think I've done a good job could you say it out loud with me for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich yet for your sake he became poor so that you by his poverty might become rich let's say it together again for you know the grace of our Lord

[34 : 41] Jesus Christ that though he was rich yet for your sake he became poor so that you by his poverty might become rich rich the Bible here points to a real person in real history as a sign that God's grace is real and the only reason that Paul is writing this if you know anything at all about the person who wrote this part of what we now call the Bible is that this guy was a religious fundamentalist who hated people who were different hated the other and what changed him was meeting Jesus after he'd risen from the dead Paul knows that Jesus really I mean there's no debate amongst other than a few kooky Marxists that are still left nobody debates that Jesus lived and there's not really any debate about the fact that the tomb was empty and that they never found the body and there's no real debate about whether or not he was crucified the debate comes and there's not actually even much of a debate that almost from immediately from the get-go the message was that the grave was empty because Jesus had risen from the dead what the world won't accept is that the the most reasonable solution to the facts is that in fact we don't live in a closed universe we don't live in a universe in a world where there's only cause and effect and there's only human power and natural power but in fact there is a

God who is outside of our created order that has broken in that speaks to us in fact that's what this text is saying can you say it all out loud with me again for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich yet for your sake he became poor so that you by his poverty might become rich this is even more powerful in the original language though he was rich we know that on a human level Jesus was never rich this is referring to the fact that it wasn't that human beings were all clamoring for God to come and reconcile us to himself it wasn't that human beings had had a petition that said God we know we are powerless to reconcile ourselves to you and we're calling out to you to do something we can't do that wasn't going on human beings were at enmity with God they were ignoring God they were in rebellion against

God and Jesus now not yet having taken on our flesh God the son of God in heaven this text is talking about the pre-existence of God the son of God and God the son of God in the glory of heaven and the splendor of heaven he was rich what does he do he comes into our human life through his his how rich is a fetus fetuses aren't rich in fact there's probably nothing more powerless and more frail than a fetus especially in the early days of conception and God the son of God takes upon himself our human nature and is born as an act of miracle an act of creation from the stuff of Mary God works a miracle so that

God the son of God without stopping being God maintaining his nature as God but sending aside the environment of heaven his prerogatives his privilege power all of these things he becomes poor and he's born and he lives amongst us and then he dies upon the cross bearing our curse and bearing our shame and as we all know you cannot be poorer than dead even a dead person the only person weaker and more poor than a fetus is someone who's died five minutes after giving his last breath his personal possession of money is the same as the poorest person on the planet who's also died poor so say this text with me again for you know the grace of our

Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich yet for your sake he became poor so that you by his poverty might become rich and so this describes how God breaks into our world and he doesn't break in with a gun to stick us up to have power over us that it's grace it's going to be the uttermost justice without compromise love to the uttermost and so Jesus described as God the Son of God taking into himself our human nature becoming what we now refer to as Jesus fully God yet fully human but one person who lives a human life and his human life all culminates not just in the incarnation not just in being human but culminates in death where he becomes the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world where all of our sin all of our curse all of our shame all of all of the accusations against us they rest upon him and he dies in our stead in our place in our place condemned he stood and he tastes all there is to taste of death and then on the third day he rises triumphant having conquered that which causes death and death itself and all hostile spiritual powers in his resurrection and the

[40 : 49] Bible says that he does all of this not for himself but for you and me isn't that what it says say it out loud with me again for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich yet for your sake he became poor so that you by his poverty might become rich it says might become rich because we have to respond to this in faith we have to say God I cannot fix myself I cannot save myself in fact even today this text has made me realize that I live out of idle narratives and narratives about money and narratives about power and narratives about fear from you and I can't fix that by myself father and I need to receive what Jesus has done for me knowing that you have done you have done everything that has to be done and all I can do is receive it and I call out to you have mercy upon me take me as your own and what is grace grace is justice without compromise and love to the uttermost which has the real power to enter into human lives and change us for our true good so just wrapping it up this is a text about financial generosity so to

Christians who are here I'm not going to tell you to do anything I'm going to say this this text shows that it's a choice to be generous and if we're waiting to have more money to be generous we will wait forever we will wait to the grave and I know that some of us here are actually probably have crippling debt and what happens is when we have crippling debt and I have had a time in my life where I had crippling debt I don't have it right this second but I I'm not talking out of just reading it in a novel I I've had I've had collection agencies harassing me at home at a time in my life Miss Orchard I dreaded a phone call from Miss Orchard and so we think to ourselves well this is a very powerful message and

I want to be gripped by the gospel but what I need to do now George as result of this is I'm going to get a hold of my finances and deal with my finances and make some money and get out of this debt so I can be generous but one moment what one of the things about going to financial planners and all that what they'll tell you is that most people have an over spending problem and if all of a sudden you give them \$10,000 of extra income in no time at all they have a spending problem because we have spending problems and I'm just going to suggest to you that if your life is in financial disarray and in chaos what you really need is God's grace that's what you really need and you really need to take some small steps of allowing this pressure and this desire to be generous and you need to take some small steps and you know

I don't think the Bible teaches in the New Testament that Christians have to tithe but I think that the Bible gives at least as a bit of a rule of thumb when the Bible here is talking about being generous I think the rule of thumb is that we move towards and we pray towards trusting that God who's provided us every single penny asks for 10% of it back and for some of us God will the grace of God will give us extra gifts of being able to be financially generous and so Andrew if you could put up this prayer this is a prayer for many of us today Lord I recommit myself to you please make me a disciple of Jesus and I'm not sure if my wording here is going to be the same as the screen the screen is better but please make me a disciple of Jesus gripped by the gospel who is not ruled by money and that's the prayer we need to take away with this it'll be on the web page if you're curious about using that as an aid to your prayer it'll be on the web page tomorrow and for non non

Christians if you're here you've heard what God has done to save you and I just want to encourage you that your first prayer is to say Lord I want to be make me a disciple of Jesus and Father when I give my hands to Jesus and I'm gripped by who he is and what he's done for me I know that he reaches across and grips my hand and he not only takes me into himself but comes to live within me and gives me his Holy Spirit and the grace which is justice without compromise and love to the uttermost that will come into my life for my good and for God's glory that that will begin to take place because God is real friends could you please stand Andrew could you put the

[46 : 47] Lord I recommit myself prayer up to you please I'm just going to invite you to pray this prayer out loud with me and if I stop saying it it is because I might have the different wording here than on the screen so I'll just start it and then you guys if God has put it on your heart to pray it if you would continue on that would be great we'll pray this prayer together and then I'll just pray in closing let's pray Lord I recommit myself to you please make me a disciple of Jesus grew life for the good of others the going Father pour out your Holy Spirit upon us deliver us Father from an unhealthy fear of you and grant us Father a godly fear of you a deeper deeper knowledge of who you are and your great grace and love towards us in our great need for you pour out your

Holy Spirit and we ask this in the name of Jesus your son and our Savior Amen