

# Treasure

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Preacher: Pastor Shane Eccles

[0:00] Hey man, who brought their Bibles today? Raise your hand. Awesome. It's good to have the Word of God at your fingertips. So for those cheaters that have their phones, if we could turn to Matthew chapter 6, verse 19.

And the Bible says, Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal.

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. And for the next little bit, I just want to talk to you today about treasure, our treasure. Amen. You may be seated. Oh boy.

We're going to talk about money extensively. Because the Bible talks about money extensively. It really does. It's not just an Old Testament thing.

[1:11] Jesus talked about money. Sixteen out of the 38 parables that Jesus taught was, guess what?

About money. Jesus talked about money quite a bit, actually. About money and possessions, things that we have.

In the Gospels, one out of ten verses deals directly with the subject of money. And it's a touchy subject. There's a few touchy subjects when it comes to church folk.

When it comes to church folk, there's a few touchy subjects. One, my money. And two, my kids. Don't get on to my kids. If they're running around in church, if they're being noisy, don't even look evil at them.

Nothing will get a Pentecostal fired up more than messing with our kids. I don't know what it is about our kids and our money. But I'm here to talk about money.

[2:13] It's important as a priest. Remember, royal priesthood. Say, I'm a priest. You're a priest. You're a priest of God. It's important as a priest that we have a good understanding about our treasures.

Because as I read, the Bible says your heart is where your treasure is. And it's true. You can bring your bank statements next week to church.

And we're going to put them up on the projector. And we're going to see where your heart is. Who would participate in that? Not me. Well, I don't have anything to hide except for my food budget. Lord, help us. But you can take a look at someone's bank statements for just a few minutes and see where their heart is. And so I'm just going to tell us point blank today that you can't buy your way into heaven.

I'm here to talk about money. I'm here to talk about what we should do as it pertains to money in the kingdom of God. But I'm going to tell you, you can't buy your way into heaven.

[3:21] That's not if you walk away from here thinking that, you've missed the whole point. We're not going to be able to buy our way into heaven. But you can buy your way into hell because, guess what? 78% of American prison population today is there because of money.

The divorce rate that we have is credited to adultery. It's not a credit to just adultery. It's also a credit to money. And more so it's money, actually, than even adultery.

The things people argue and fight about all the time, it's over money. It's over money, money, money. It seems like it's, well, the love of money is the root of all evil, the Bible says.

But the one thing that we need to understand as disciples of Jesus Christ is that everything belongs to God. Everything belongs to God. The Bible teaches us in Colossians that by him all things are created that are in heaven and that are in the earth, visible and invisible.

And that all things were created by him and for him. God created every particle in the universe as we know it, even the particles that make up your greenbacks, that are in your wallet.

[4:29] It all belongs to God. God created everything. And God told Job that everything under the whole heaven is his. Everything under the whole heaven is mine, God said.

In Psalms 24 and 1, the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein. Everything is, God created everything and God owns everything.

It all belongs to God. We belong to God. Everything that we think is ours actually belongs to God. God owns it all. He's the creator. Everything we have is his. And what you came in here today thinking was yours is actually God's.

And we're just stewards of God's stuff. We're just stewards of his stuff. Even your kids. Taylor, Trevin, they weren't ours.

Deanna and I are just stewards of them. They belong to God. And we dedicated them to God.

We're going to dedicate Miles in a couple weeks, a week and a half to God.

[5:37] Taylor, Miles is not yours. He belongs to God. And God's entrusted you to raise him and raise him right. And we're going to hear a lot about that in a week and a half. But I'm talking about money today.

So I'll get off of that and back on this. Good biblical stewardship includes the understanding that God calls us to manage what he created on his behalf. See, like I said, everything is his and it's all created by him and for him.

And so for us to have a good biblical understanding of stewardship, we have to understand God calls us to manage what he created on his behalf.

We're here to be a steward, a good steward of his stuff, of everything that belongs to him, which is everything. The Bible is full of examples of God delegating responsibility to people.

Paul said it this way. We are laborers together with God. You are God's husbandry. You are God's building. So Paul continues later with a convicting statement saying, We then as workers together with him beseech you also that you receive not the grace of God in vain.

[6:46] So God created everything. He owns everything. And everything we have is his. Okay. And we're just stewards of it. We are his stewards of the things that he's created and what he owns.

Okay. And so Brother Webster says, Stewardship is the conducting, supervising, or managing of something, especially a careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care.

Okay. So the stuff we have is entrusted to our care. When we think we own it, guess what? If you think you have ownership of it, then whose will becomes the priority?

God's will or your will? You think you own it? Your will becomes the priority. But when we realize God owns it and we are stewards of it for him on his behalf, then God's will becomes the priority. And that's the right attitude to have. We're all stewards, like it or not. Okay. Whether you agree with what I'm talking about or not, it doesn't matter. You're still a steward of God's stuff.

[7:58] Like it or not, you're still a steward of God's stuff. And you may be a good steward or you may be a bad steward. But guess what? You're still a steward of God's stuff. Okay. And so we might as well try to be good stewards of it.

We're stewards of his currency. Why am I calling it currency instead of just calling it money?

Because it's about flow. Did you know I was preaching this?

Did you get in my notes? Because we were singing about flow tonight. It's about flow. Current.

Currency. In the world that we live in, money is currency because everything flows with money.

It really does. You do an investigation into something, follow the money. What's Doge doing right now? Following the money. It's all about money.

It's the currency. It's the currency of the world that we live in. Currency is how things happen in this world. If we like it or not, it's just what it is. We can't change it.

[9:00] We can't do anything about it. And we need currency to do God's work. That's the plain, simple truth. We need money. Things begin to flow when there's money. We can send out flyers when there's money.

We can do certain things when there's money. Right? And there's certain things we need to do that we're going to need money to do it. And don't think that we're short on money or having a problem with money.

We're not. We're good. God's, you guys are faithful in these things. And I was, like, questioning God if this was something I really needed to even discuss or talk about when I felt prompted to talk about

it.

And God reminded me of a bunch of different scriptures that show me that it's good to be reminded of things and to make sure that we don't drift away from things.

So we don't want to drift. Okay? And so I don't know if God can see something in the future. Or I know he can see things in the future. But I don't know if there's something on the horizon or what. But God has placed it in my heart to talk about money today.

[10:04] Even though it's not a problem for us right now. Okay? But we don't want it to become a problem. Amen. We want to be good stewards of it. But Jesus talked about money more than anything.

Money is not bad in and of itself. It's what we would say is amoral, meaning that it's neither good or bad. It's a tool. Okay?

It's how it's used that matters. Just like any other tool. It's how it's used that matters. And you could say, well, Brother Eccles, the Bible says that money is the root of all evil.

Actually, Paul said the love of money is the root of all evil. And he goes on to say that which while some coveted after they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Okay? So I'd say that money is one of the most common reasons why people do not fulfill their calling in the Lord. It's one of the most common reasons. One of the most common reasons why people do not fulfill their calling in God's kingdom.

[11:07] Because they covet after something else. And really it comes down to money. Whether it's a house, a car, a vacation to Disneyland.

Whatever it is that's getting in our way of actually putting our efforts into the kingdom of God. It really comes down to the money. So their focus and efforts are on obtaining it.

And that energy and resource is spent pursuing it. And they err from the faith and end up piercing themselves with many sorrows. Statistically, it doesn't pay big bucks to be a Christian.

Sorry, not a motivational speaker. Mostly because Christians are devoting at least some of their efforts towards the kingdom of God and not trying to get rich.

See, everybody out there in the world, they don't have a kingdom of God to devote themselves to. They're devoting themselves to any and everything else. Whatever they want. Right?

[12:09] Whatever they are chasing. So they're devoting all their energy and resources to that thing. And they're building. They can build wealth in the world. You can be a rank center and be successful in the world.

And have money and these things. That doesn't mean they're blessed. Doesn't mean God's blessing them. Okay? So they're just devoting all their energy and resources is spent on pursuing those things.

Okay? So Christians, disciples of Jesus Christ, we're devoting at least some of our efforts, hopefully, towards the kingdom of God. And not just putting 100% efforts into obtaining something in the world.

So let's think about some biblical principles of good stewardship. From the beginning, God put Adam in the garden and told him to work and to keep the garden. We skipped over that verse, huh? We didn't like to read that verse in the Genesis, in the beginning. This was before sin had entered the story. Before sin had entered the story, we were, God created us to keep the garden, work.

[13:21] We had a job to do. We had to keep the garden. It wasn't a punishment. It was God's plan to work. And we think of work as a curse. And it's because of sin.

But before sin had entered in the perfect creation that God created, God had a good purpose for work in mind. Work was a part of a perfect life in the Garden of Eden.

Before sin included work. I know you don't believe me, but go read the Bible. It's there, I promise. And I believe God wants us working. And if we're able-bodied people and you can have a job and you should want a job.

If you're able-bodied and you want a job, you can get one. You can get a job. If you want a job, there's no excuses not to have a job. And God wants us working and being productive.

Well, I don't have enough money. Have you ever heard that before? Or have you ever uttered those words yourself? I don't have enough money. What you're saying in a roundabout way is God's not providing.

[14:33] God isn't keeping me. But the truth of the matter is God is a provider. And he's a great provider. He's an awesome provider. He's the best provider there is. And when you say you don't have enough money, what you're really saying is, I'm a bad steward of the money God's put into my hands.

You're not a good steward of what he's provided you. If you have a job and you don't have money and resources for his glory, then you aren't being a good steward of his favor and benefits upon your life.

You've misused his favor. Okay? And so here's one of my other talking points when I talk about money, is debt is a form of slavery.

Get rid of it. Get rid of debt. When we shackle ourselves up with the golden handcuffs of debt, we're giving away part of our freedom to a debtor.

You may need plastic surgery, as Brother Dave Ramsey says. He's not really a brother. I'm just teasing. He's a professing Christian, but I don't know.

[15:42] I'm not here to judge. Okay? Just look at the fruits, though. But you may need plastic surgery. That means getting out those credit cards and cutting them up. Get rid of those credit cards.

Proverbs 22 and 7 says, And Jesus said, No man can serve two masters.

Okay? So if the borrower is servant to the lender, the lender, the debtor, the debtor is slave to the lender. Servant to the lender.

And Jesus said, And Jesus said, You can't serve two masters. So it's not that God isn't providing. It's that we're not being good stewards of it. We're making bad decisions with our money.

And so God has provided you enough money. The fact of the matter is, God has provided you enough currency to do what he has called you to do with that current.

[16:38] Okay? With that flow. But what did you do with that flow of currency? It probably didn't flow in the direction God intended it. And this, we can zoom out and talk about a church, too.

Not just an individual person's finances. That's what I'm focused on today. But we could look at it as a church, too. When you have a church that has plenty of people attending and can't seem to find the flow or the currency to put towards things that are a necessity for the church, then we're not being good stewards of it as the body of Christ.

So we can zoom out and look at it that way, too. Okay? But God's a provider. And he's given us. The fact is that he's given us everything we need. He's provided us enough to do what he's called us to do.

He's not going to call us to do something and then not provide us the means to be able to do it. We may seem insufficient in ourselves. And we may have to depend on him. And we might have to have faith in all these things.

But he will provide us what we need. And if we say we can't or we don't have it or we're not putting our faith in God or we're not being good stewards of the things he's provided us.

[17:52] Because he is a provider. And he will provide us what we need. And so it wasn't enough to satisfy your desires for the other things of the world.

And so you went out and got into debt and borrowed more money to spend chasing your will and not God's will. That's what debt is. And God has provided us enough wealth to match his will and purpose for our lives.

So but your lack is not God's lack of provision. That's what I'm trying to say. OK. It might be that we're not good stewards of what God's provided us. And so whatever we're lacking, it's due to poor stewardship.

OK. It's not too late, though. God can fix it. If we repent and start taking steps to be good stewards of our currency, God has blessed us with. Man, we can.

It's not too late. There's still time. Just repent. Start taking steps to be good stewards of what God has provided us. Amen. I want to talk about tithes for a little bit.

[18:55] First of all, what is a tithe? To a lot of us, it may seem like a ridiculous question because we've been around a long time. But really, it is a unique word, especially if you're new.

So it's not really a ridiculous question. OK. So a tithe is simply 10% of your gross income, one tenth of your gross income, which is an opportunity for you to worship God by setting aside as holy unto the Lord.

OK. 100% of your currency. This is what we really need to understand. 100% of your currency is God's. Right. But he gives you permission to keep 90%.

Isn't God wonderful? It all belongs to God, but he's given you permission to keep 90% of it. God is good. In the Bible days, tithes went far beyond just the money because they were dealing with crops and livestock and things like that.

And if you had 10 cows born unto you, the first one belonged to the Lord. It was set aside holy unto the Lord. It was one tenth of whatever it was.

[20:04] Whatever you took in through your crops, the first one tenth belonged to God. It was set aside as holy unto the Lord. What does that mean? What does the term holy unto the Lord mean?

Holy unto the Lord is talking about exclusivity. OK. Exclusivity means if it's holy unto the Lord, that means that it's consecrated.

It's set aside for the Lord. It's exclusively for God's use. OK. Exclusivity. It's a tongue twister for me for some reason.

But it means it's set aside specifically for the Lord's use. It's exclusively for God's use. That's why when we get married, we call it holy matrimony. It points to the consecration of the marriage.

It means that I'm set aside to this person and they are set aside to me. And together as one, we are set aside for the Lord. And that is what makes matrimony holy.

[21:05] It's the holy part of it. Holy matrimony. It's about the exclusivity of it. Exclusively for the other and together exclusively for God.

That's how marriage should be. And in the Bible, whenever something was holy unto the Lord or consecrated to the Lord, it meant that it belonged to God. And God takes that very seriously.

All through your Bible, when you read about something that's holy unto the Lord, it's very serious to God. It's a very serious thing. It's something that's to be holy unto the Lord.

Exclusively set aside for God. Okay? And the tithe is supposed to be holy unto the Lord. It's not because God needs the money. God created everything.

He owns everything. God's not in want or need. Okay? He's got everything he needs. He's God. We know that. God doesn't need money.

[22:03] So then it must be to teach us something else. Other than specifically about money. Right? It's to teach us about something.

And that something is that the tithe is his. In fact, when in the Bible they stopped tithing God, God said that they robbed him. Tithing has nothing to do with the pastor.

And I don't take money from the church. I don't get a paycheck. Not even a penny. Right? So you think, well, I can get up here and teach and preach about this without any conviction at all.

Because I'm not taking none of the money. And a lot of pastors, that's how it works. And it's all biblical. And it's totally biblical to do that. Here, that's not how it's working.

Okay? But tithing has nothing to do with the pastor. Even if I was taking pay for my efforts here as the pastor, which would be completely biblical. It would have nothing to do with me.

[23:05] It has nothing to do with the pastor. Okay? It has nothing to do with the church. It only has to do with an act of worship between you and God.

Okay? It's between you and God. And you can get mad and say, you know what? I don't think the church is doing the right thing with the money. And trust me, through, since I was 15 years old and got baptized in Jesus' name and received the gift of the Holy Ghost and has been in this thing, there's been times when I didn't feel like the church was making the right decisions with the money. And we're talking 30 years of living for God. There's been times that I disagreed with something. But that doesn't mean I just stopped paying my tithes or quit paying the offering because it has nothing to do with the church either.

It has nothing to do with the pastor. It has nothing to do with the church. It has everything to do with my worship to God and me being faithful to what God's spelled out in his word.

Okay? We tithe as it is holy unto the Lord. And we shouldn't think that we are helping God out when we pay our tithes. It's not about helping God out. Although it's part of God's plan and it's how things are taken care of in the church and things like that.

[24:21] It's not about God. God can read the Bible. They got money to pay taxes from out of a fish's mouth. God can make a way when there's no way.

I'm not worried about that. We're going to pay the church bills. We got a check in the mail unexpectedly just the other day from somebody that I've never even met.

God's going to take care of us. It has nothing to do with God wanting the money or the church needing the money. Okay? We shouldn't think that we're helping God in some way when we pay tithes and offerings.

Remember, everything we have was given to us by God because God created it and God owns it. So it belongs to God. Having the mindset that we are helping God financially by paying tithes is a sign we have forgotten who our source is that is supplying the resource.

Okay? It's a resource. But it comes from a source. And the source is God. Amen. And so you're not benefiting the source with the resource that you got from the source by giving some of the resource back to the source.

[25 : 31] That doesn't benefit the source if you can follow that. Maybe rewind and listen a few times. If I give you \$20 and tell you two of that is mine, don't think you've increased me or blessed me.

You're the one that gained the \$18 since I had the \$20 in the first place. Okay? So since God gives you the \$20, he obviously doesn't need the two. That's what's happening.

What's happening is God is teaching a principle and aligning us into a place that we put him first in all that we do. Okay? It's not where it really comes down to it.

It's not just about money or the currency. It's also about even something that could be looked at as even more valuable, our time. We put a lot of time into some silly things in life, guys.

How many hours have we spent watching stuff on TV that benefits us nothing? How many movies have we watched? How many plays have we went to?

[26 : 35] How many hours of video games have we played? How many played Candy Crush for hours when that was a thing? Candy Crush.

I don't know. Is that still a thing? Or Fruit Ninja. Come on. That takes. We're using our time. And our time is our most valuable resource. We can't add time to our lives. We don't even know how much we have.

You can go out and make more money. You can go get a second job and earn more money. You can find a way to get more money. But so I'm not. I'm talking about money. But it could be our time. It could be the talents God's given us.

It could be all. Fill in the blank with whatever it is. But whatever it is, it belongs to God. And it should be holy unto the Lord. That God should get a portion of that back in return. And it should be set aside holy unto the Lord.

How much time are we spending with God? How much energy and resources are we putting in the kingdom of God? So really, it's about attitude. It's about attitude. The widow gave a mite, the Bible says, and impressed Jesus more than all the rich people.

[27 : 37] Giving much more than that one mite or a penny or whatever it was. Because God is impressed with the amount of the money. God's impressed with the percentage.

And when that widow put that mite in that offering plate, that mite was all she had. That was 100%. She wasn't going to be outdone no matter how much anybody else gave.

That was way more than what she gave. She wasn't going to be outdone by that because she gave 100%. And so that alone should tell us it's not about the money. It's about the condition of our heart.

The condition of our heart. God knows what he's blessed you with. He knows what he's given you. So giving back a certain amount could be a sacrifice or it could be an insult.

Because God knows what he's given you. And what you're willing to release back to him could be sacrificial or it could be insulting.

[28 : 39] So why 10%? What is it about the one-tenth? The tithe represents the whole. It's symbolic of the whole. And if you think about our numerical system, it's all dependent on the concept of 10.

If you can count to 10, you can count to anything. It's just groups of 10. And so when we give 10%, what we're saying is all of our money belongs to him. All of our money is represented with the tithe. The tithe is symbolic of the whole. This principle of the tithing, it's so powerful. We were saved by this principle. Jesus died for our sins.

He rose on our behalf. He represents the whole body of Christ. You can study this later if you want to. Look it up in Romans 6 and Ephesians 1. So when we bring the tithe to God, when we make it holy unto the Lord, what we're doing is putting all of our money under the sovereign rule and protection of God.

Okay? When we bring our tithe, when we honor that, when we are faithful to that, it protects all of it. All of it becomes blessed.

[29:48] And so what I've grown to understand in the word and in my own personal experience is that God is not broke. He said the silver and gold is his.

He owns everything. What God really gets out of our generosity and giving is the obedience out of it. The affection towards him, really. The focus on him.

The focus of our energy and resources on him instead of the things of the world. That's what God gets out of it. What blesses God is the obedience and the spirit that we do it in. He loves a cheerful giver. God doesn't want our tithe.

He wants us. He wants our hearts. And the sacrifice is an expression of worship and love. It's a worship to pay tithes with the right attitude.

The word worship is from the root Latin word of worth. Worth-ship. How much is he worth to us?

The woman broke that alabaster box and began to worship at his feet.

[30:49] The alabaster box represented a considerable amount of money. Most commentaries say a life savings. And this woman spends that on worshiping at Jesus' feet.

And Judas was upset. Judas got upset about that. Why? Because Judas was jealous. He wanted the money. And he was greedy. Judas ended up selling Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.

And Judas never did get delivered of his attitude about money. He never got delivered about his attitude about money. And, you know, some of us sit around the table with Jesus like Judas did.

We come to church. We have the presence of God. We hang out with the body of Christ. We call ourselves Christians. And so we're sitting at that table with Jesus like Judas did.

And we have communion with Jesus like Judas did. He was there at the Last Supper. He broke bread. He drank the wine. And guess what?

[31:51] Even though we are here like Judas, we're not here financially. And we have a Judas spirit about us. And when it comes to generosity in the area of money, you can tell right away who has a Judas spirit because they get an attitude about money.

And you can teach anything else. You can preach anything. I've seen it in church over the years. You can teach anything else. You can preach anything else. But when it comes to teaching about tithes, you get a nerve struck.

And you hear it from people all the time. I don't go to church because they're always talking about money. They just want my money. I hear it all the time when I talk to people. When I'm witnessing sometimes to a very close friend that I go to lunch with quite often.

That's his biggest thing about not going to church because all they want is your money. And if that is the case, you have to check to make sure you don't have a Judas spirit.

And if you do, you just need to be delivered from it. That's all. You've got to repent. That's all it is. You can be delivered. It's going to be okay. You've got to get rid of that Judas spirit because ultimately you'll end up selling out something more valuable.

[33:04] Your relationship with Jesus for something temporal. 30 pieces of silver. And you'll end up hanging yourself spiritually. Don't be the steward of God's favor that spoils it on corruptible things that don't last.

Let's all stand. But put it towards your purpose in the kingdom of God, which is something that is forever. When we leave here, we're going to...

At some point, the Bible says that everything we see in this world is going to dissolve. The elements. The elements. The molecules.

The atoms. The atoms. Whatever is even smaller than that. It's going to dissolve into nothing. And so how can we... How can we put that before what's going to last forever, which is the kingdom of God?

Amen. And so I hope we understand today that as priests of God... Say, I'm a priest. Give and give and don't take.

[34:08] Priests give and they give and they give. That's what priests do. They serve. They give. They don't take. And that with the Holy Ghost, we have the spirit of generosity.

Let's pray for that. And that will lead to revival. It will lead to greater things in the kingdom of God. Because we have the right attitude and spirit and heart towards the things of God.

And we're holy unto the Lord. Amen. And we're good stewards of what God's provided us. Lord Jesus, I thank you for this word today. I hope it found good ground, God. I pray, Lord, that you

strengthen us in this area, God.  
And that we're...