

How to be rich and free

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[0:00] You came to save, that we might know You face to face. So I will give my every breath, my every moment.

I will live for You all. Oh, what can be more beautiful than a life laid down for me?

And to this love I give my all. Jesus, take my everything.

Oh, what could be more beautiful than a life laid down for me? Oh, what could be more beautiful than a life laid down for me?

And to this love I give my all. Jesus, take my everything. Good morning.

[1:17] Good morning. What a beautiful crowd. Look around. Look at the people beside you. And I have a really quick baby escaping.

It's so wonderful to see you. And it is a privilege and with great joy that I welcome you to our services at Union Baptist Church in High Wycombe.

Now whether you're here in the flesh, or only in the flesh but not in the mind, or whether you are watching via the live streaming, welcome.

I pray you will make yourself comfortable. And I pray that the peace of the Lord that surpasses all human understanding will rest and abide with you today.

We are in the second week of our sermon series on listening to Jesus. And there's a catch in listening.

[2:30] You can't listen if someone is not speaking. But God is speaking all the time. So we come this morning to listen. Last week, Malcolm opened up Jesus' teachings from Luke 11, verses 37 to 54.

And he showed that the Pharisees, Jesus described them as religious frauds. Not in so many words. But we got it.

I also recall that he cautioned us. Because many of us sometimes become like the Pharisees. So don't point.

Because when you do that, there is a this pointing back at you. Today we continue the series. And I pause here for a moment to think of our associate pastor, Andrew, who had an accident this week. fell off his back and broke his elbow. And he's had surgery. Now God is amazing. Andrew is here this morning. And he has asked me to thank you all very much for your prayers and words of encouragement.

[3:46] And for Miriam for not slapping him on the broken arm after he did it. Yeah, let's just give God some thanks.

Thanks. Father, I ask for your healing power and peace for Andrew and his family at this time.

I also lift Mike Birmingham to you. As he stepped in to deliver the sermon, your message, Lord, this morning. Strengthen and bless him, Lord.

As he's doing double duty today. He's also leading the communion service later this evening. Amen. So Mike is going to be talking about how to be rich and free.

How to know the blessings and riches of this life. And yet remain free from greed and worry. Let's get into it.

[4:46] So, come. Worship our Lord God for his good. Let us sing to the Lord. And shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation.

I invite you to stand with me, if you are able to. And join me in the congregational call to worship from Psalm 95, where our music group assembles.

Can you stand, please? Come. Let us sing for joy to the Lord.

Let us shout aloud to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving. And extol him with music and song.

Come. For the Lord is the great God. The great King above all gods. In his hand are the depths of the earth.

[5:51] And the mountain peaks belong to him. The sea is his, for he made it. And his hands formed the dry land.

Come. Let us bow down in worship. Let us kneel before the Lord, our maker. For he is our God. And we are the people of his pasture. The flock under his care. Today, if only you would hear his voice.

Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah. As you did that day at Massa in the wilderness. Where your ancestors tested me. They tried me. Though they had seen what I did. For forty years, I was angry with the generation.

[6:53] I said, They are people whose hearts go astray. And they have not known my ways. So I declared an oath in my anger.

They shall never enter my rest. And you know what's wonderful? Because of Jesus and what he did, We can enter God's rest.

We can listen to what Jesus said. We can see what he did. And we can find rest in every circumstance of our life.

So let's come. Let's be thankful people. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

■■■■yee. We've traveled in the many ways To praise the one true Lord All of us have hearts today We praise the one true Lord So we sing All of our spirits are You are God One true Lord We praise you near as one To our Lord All true Lord Ring your laughter, raise your voice We praise the one true Lord We will make a joyful voice To praise the one true Lord

[9:09] All in sadness, all in pain To praise the one true Lord He will suffer with us all day To praise the one true Lord So we sing Father, Spirit, Son You are God One true Lord We praise you near as one You are God You are God One true Lord To praise the one true Lord To praise the one true Lord To praise the one true Lord Many shapes and sizes come To praise the one true Lord We join together all and young To praise the one true Lord

So bring your gifts and every time To praise the one true Lord To praise the one true Lord Through our differences will shine To praise the one true Lord To praise the one true Lord So we sing Father, Spirit, Son Son You are God Now true Lord Hear His power Thank you Let's praise the one true Lord I love that end note.

Thank you. Please be seated. Our young people did an amazing thing. They've been here since Friday, and they're actually awake right now, and they'd like to share with you the experiences of the last 48 hours.

Thank you.

We've been here for fun, haven't we? Yes. Okay. They're still waking up. I am as well. Anyway, can we have the pictures, please?

[12:00] Thanks. That was yesterday. We went to Burnham Beaches. We had a lot of fun. Next slide. We played Hunt the Leader, which is where you have to find a leader dressed up in a very silly costume.

I'm not sure. Yeah, who's that weird guy in the donkey costume? I have no idea who he is. Yeah. Next one. Okay. And one of the things we did is that we had to go building some dens, didn't we? We had to build a den for one of the leaders. Okay. So I want you to guess, who is this den built for?

Okay. Which person in the chair, one of the leaders who helps out with young people? What's this? Yeah. Whose den is it for? Jackie. You think that's Jackie's den? Okay.

Whose is it, Serena? It was Carrie-Anne's. Why was it Carrie-Anne's then? We put some flowers and some leaves because that's what she was wearing and a mini bar as well.

[13:11] Nice. So we had flowers and a mini bar for Carrie-Anne. That's very nice. Yeah. If we show the next slide, you'll see what I mean. There we go. Very pretty flowers. Next one.

Okay. So this is our next den. So which leader is this den for? Who do we think? Anyone want to shout it out?

Ollie. We think this is Ollie's den. Eleanor, was this Ollie's den? No, it was Karen's den. It was Karen's. It was Karen's den. And why was it Karen's den? We put a lot of leaves because she likes plants and gardening. Nice. Okay. Yeah. I mean, I'm sure Karen would have been happy to live in that.

Lots of green, lots of greenery, lots of plants. Okay. Next one. Right. I can't even see. Yeah. I can't even see. Yeah. Whose den do we think this is for?

[14:10] Is that the same one? Okay. Next one. Next slide. Right. Whose den is this? I don't want to shout it out.

Helen. We think this is Helen Francis' den. Is it Helen Francis' den? No, it was Ollie's den. And why was it Ollie's den? We made a little drum kit for him and some paper for him to do his school work on.

Great. Okay. Next slide and you'll see the drum kit. There we go. That's Ollie playing the drums. So, yeah, we had a lot of fun making that. But, the other thing, we've been learning lots of stories.

We've had a kind of theme for the weekend. So, last, what to do on Friday night, we did some stretcher races, didn't we? To help us learn about a story in the Bible.

So, what story in the Bible was that? We were learning about the paralyzed man and his friends carried him to Jesus so he could heal them.

[15:15] So, they opened the tiles through the roof and lowered him through that. Great. Okay. Yeah. Thanks, Serena. So, we were learning about that story. And why were we learning about that story, Sam?

To show what true friends are like and how Jesus is our true friend. Great. Okay. So, we've learned about lots of stuff this weekend and we've been learning about friendships. And about how Jesus is our true friend, as you said, Sam.

So, yeah. That's what we've been up to. And there's more to come today, isn't there? Swimming at the rye and stuff. So, yeah. Thanks, everyone. Thank you.

Thank you for still being awake. That's remarkable. In my joy at seeing you, I forgot to tell you who I am. I think many of you do, but I'm going to tell you anyway.

I'm Judith. I attend Union Baptist Church and I absolutely love it here. If you want to know anything else, you've got to come talk to me.

[16:26] So, let's stand and sing as we gather. Because whatever we do, this is a reminder, whatever we do, and we do it according to the honor and glory of the Lord, it's worship.

So, when we're out building dens, it's worship. When we're sitting here, it's worship. So, let's sing as we gather.

Please stand. Let's sing as we gather in your presence now.

Lord, we will worship. As we sing our hand-fold songs aloud. Lord, we will worship. As we gather in your presence now.

Lord, we will worship. As we sing our hand-fold songs aloud. Lord, we will worship.

[17:33] When we go out in the name of Christ. Lord, we will worship. As your Word and Spirit shape our lives.

Lord, we will worship. And whatever we do, you've heard our deed. We do on our love, you serve our faith.

When we're on our feet and on our knees. Lord, we will worship. Lord, we will worship.

When we love our friends and families. Lord, we will worship. When we give ourselves to those in need.

Lord, we will worship. When we take instruction cheerfully. Lord, we will worship.

[18:38] When we leave with Christ to live in thee. Lord, we will worship. And whatever we do, you've heard our deed.

Whatever our love deserves our fame. When we love our deeds and all our deeds. Lord, we will worship.

Lord, we will worship. In the course of every working day. Lord, we will worship.

When our business takes us far away. Lord, we will worship. When we care for children in the home.

Lord, we will worship. When our audience is you alone. Lord, we will worship. Lord, we will worship.

[19:45] And whatever we turn to the priorities, we turn on our mind to set our strength. We'll turn on our knees, we'll come on our knees.

Lord, we will worship. Lord, we will worship. Lord, we will worship.

Lord, we will worship. Please sit down and continue your worship.

So the young people are going to go out to their groups, and I'll just say a prayer to send them off. Young people and our children.

Father, we thank you for your children and your young people who bring such energy and an inquisitive spirit to learning about you.

[20:49] Thank you for the impact of the youth weekend and the wonderful feedback that they provided. Thank you, Lord, for trusting them to our care.

And especially to the care of their group leaders who open your words in prayerful, fun, and creative ways so that they may grow in your way.

Bless them all with your peace and joy as they go off to their groups. In Jesus' name. Amen. And let's have the stampede.

There we go. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. And over the next couple of weeks, we're going to be talking more about them.

[22:30] Tell you more about them by sharing this video. Yes. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Over the last few years, we've been discerning God's heart for this church.

And this has led to our vision to see High Wycombe transformed by God through his loving, serving and worshipping church. In order to do this, we need to fulfil our mission, which is to be a community of Christians who love God, follow Jesus and share the hope we have with him.

Encouraging each other to grow as disciples of Christ will enable us to go out into our community, full of the Holy Spirit, supported by our brothers and sisters, to do our part in what God is doing here to transform High Wycombe.

Paul writes so richly about discipleship to many of the early Christian churches. In his letter to the Ephesians, he states that the goal is that we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Paul continues saying, We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes their body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

[24:09] Paul continues saying, We are to renew and re-energize our small groups by creating new groups called Life Groups.

In Life Groups, we will encourage each other to live in faith every day as we do life together. In other words, the purpose of Life Groups is to intentionally walk together as disciples and to encourage each other to grow in maturity through trusting and obeying Jesus Christ.

We will do this by helping each other to understand and apply God's word to our lives. It is only by growing as disciples that we can go out on our front lines and make disciples in the hope of transforming High Wycombe.

We now like to share the short animation which captures the benefits of joining a Life Group. Three hours. One more time Thank you.

Thank you.

[26:56] Thank you.

Thank you.

And this has always been Christ's call to those who follow him. Jesus said,

I will be around. Thank you. Hey.

Lots to think about. Doing life together. That's why it's called a life group.

[31:53] And I flippantly said once, yeah, because you're in it for life. But that's not what it means. It means that we're walking together through the good times and the bad times.

And we're supporting each other. So as Kathy says, please pray. Pray and seek to listen to what the Lord is telling you about life groups.

So let me move on right ahead. The Bible tells us that faith comes through hearing, hearing the message.

And the message is heard through the word about Christ. Let us pray. Father, we ask you now. Father, we ask you now to open our spiritual ears as well as our physical ears. By your spirit, help us to listen attentively and to help us to do what your word says.

[33:04] So today, Father, as we come to be fed by your word, we ask you to speak, O Lord.

And would you stand while the group is coming up as we ask the Lord to speak. And when you ask someone to speak, it's with the understanding that you are listening.

Lord, we ask you to speak, O Lord, as we come to you to receive the food of your holy word.

Take your truth, blot it deep in us. Shape and fashion us in your likeness.

That the light of Christ might be seen today. In our acts of love and our deeds of faith.

[34:36] Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us all your purposes for your glory.

Teach us, Lord, to obedience, holy reverence through humility.

Test our thoughts and our attitudes. Ignore the earths of your purity.

Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see. Your majestic law and authority.

Words of love and can never fail. Let the truth prevail. All the rhyme will lead.

[35:37] Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds.

The Holy Sync, you may boldly. The■■ and reclaim. Labour, be said. your plans for us. Do such change from the dawn of time that will echo down to eternity.

And my grace will stand on your promises, and my faith will walk as you walk with us.

Sing, O Lord, till your church is built, and the earth is filled with your glory.

Thank you. Please be seated. Lord, as we come into your presence this week, we thank you for your gift of grace to us.

[36:55] We thank you for your outrageous act of love in sending your Son to die for us, that we might be freed from sin and death. Thank you. For freedom that Christ has set us free.

We are sorry, Lord, for when we allow ourselves to be chained by wrongdoing, shame, and doubt, in ourselves and in you, Lord. Remind us that in your death and resurrection, these chains were broken.

Never again can we be tied by the enemy. You have set us free, and it is in freedom that we live.

Today, we thank you especially for the Youth Weekend at home.

May you bless those leaders that gave up their time, and we thank you that we have the facilities to host such an event. Thank you for the gift of friendship, Lord, for the importance of friends in the faith who can encourage, embolden, and challenge us as we walk with you.

We pray that your Spirit has deepened the friendships of the young people, and may the fun and joy of the weekend overflow throughout the week. Give them the courage to share with their non-Christian friends this week.

[38:00] Open the door to conversations, and plant seeds of faith across our schools and colleges. We ask for your comfort and intercession with those in our church, or connected to our church family, who are going through sickness or who are mourning at this time.

We ask for your rest and healing over Andrew, Lynn, Karen, and Ron Lord. Bless them with patience and trust in you, as they heal from broken bones, or undergo treatment in hospital, or who are suffering from ongoing pain.

We ask that you would comfort them in their pain and frustration. We pray for your healing Spirit to be at work in them. May they all find new spiritual reserves, and may you meet with them in new and surprising ways as they rest and heal.

We thank you for the life and work of those who have recently left us to join you in heaven. We ask that you would be with Kevin, Mark, and Anne as they prepare for the funeral of their father, David. We lift up Pauline and her family as they mourn Peter, and Bill as he says farewell to his wife, Joan. Comfort those left behind, Lord, as they rebuild their lives with a missing piece.

[39:18] Surround them with your love and peace. May they find themselves held close by your Spirit and their family in Christ. We thank you for

the blessings of home groups in our church, Lord.

That we might gather in your name in the week, share our walk, and pray with each other is a joy that many Christians across the world do not have. As the new life groups are launched, we pray that they strengthen our church community, creating new friendships and bonds across the ages and enriching existing friendships.

May we share our struggles and our joys in fellowship with each other. We ask that your Spirit would be with all those who have stepped up to lead these groups, protect and equip them to lead well.

We pray for spiritual protection over these groups. May they be bright lights of faith across our town, Lord, as we live and pray together, helping each other to walk in your ways and trust in you.

We thank you for the blessing of marriage, Lord, and we rejoice with those who are called to undertake it. We lift up Johnny and Lizzie to you now as they make final preparations for Saturday. We pray that everything would fall into place and that they would be able to just relax and enjoy their wedding day.

[40:27] We lift up any last-minute snags and pray that you would smooth the way to Saturday. May their day be full of your love and joy, Lord, as they commit themselves to each other and to you.

Let us pray now for Shirley as she brings your word to us and to Mike as he unveils your message for us today. Open our hearts and our minds to hear your words afresh. Break any hardness, any prejudice or hurt that might block our ears to your love today.

Renew and refresh our hearts and minds, Father. Help us to take your teachings into our week and may we be your God-breathed creation, your hands and feet in your world, wherever we are in this week.

We ask all this in your name. Amen. Amen. Sorry, I have to take the long route these days.

It's a long time since I stood up here and read God's word. In fact, it shocked me to realise it was the very last Sunday before we were all in lockdown.

[41:58] What a lot has happened since then. Personally, as individuals and as a fellowship as a whole. But our God is a great God.

He doesn't change. And his mercies are ever faithful and ever sure. Will you turn with me now as we read God's word?

You will find it on page 1046 in the Pew Bible. It's Luke chapter 12 and I shall be reading from verses 13.

But I looked back at the beginning of the chapter and there we find that a crowd of many thousands had gathered so that they were trampling on one another.

Then Jesus began first to speak to his disciples. So he must have found a quiet place in all that multitude to speak to them. And then, as we read from verse 13, Jesus replied, He said, He said, He said, He said, He said, Then he said to them, Watch out.

[43:22] Be on your guard against all kinds of greed. A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. And he told them this parable.

The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, He said, What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.

Then he said, This is what I will do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones. And there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, You have plenty of good things laid up for many years.

Take life easy. Eat, drink, and be merry. But God said to him, You fool. This very night your life will be demanded from you.

Then, who will get what you have prepared for yourself? This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself, but is not rich towards God.

[44:31] Then Jesus said to his disciples, Therefore I tell you, Do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or your body, what you will wear.

Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens. They do not sow or reap. They have no storeroom or barn, yet God feeds them.

And how much more valuable you are than birds. Who of you, by worrying, can add a single hour to his life?

Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow. They do not labour or spin.

Yet I tell you, Do not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith?

[45:40] And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink. Do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your father knows that you need them.

But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. Do not be afraid, little flock, for your father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.

Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide passes for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Amen. Thank you.

And thank you, Andrew, for giving me the opportunity. A bit dramatic the way you did it, but thank you. Just one thing I'd like to correct.

[46:57] If anybody's read the prayer sheet for this month, it says on the 22nd, I think, of July, that I will be 80.

That is not correct. The name should be Colin Hutt. It is on that day. Sorry about that, but I'm very pleased that somebody recognised that and said he couldn't be that old, so that's great.

That was me. How to be rich and free. How to be rich and free. How to be rich and free. I've got three points I just wanted to look at, and the first one is warning to watch out.

Don't be greedy. It's amazing, really, that Jesus has spoken so much and shown so many things before this particular chapter, but this large crowd that was there listening to him, there's one person that comes forward and asks him something that seems to be right out of the blue.

Ask, what's he say? Someone in the crowd said to him, Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me. I don't know whether you've ever had a situation where somebody in your family has died and then the family meet together and instead of being sort of delighted in some way, there seems to be a squabble about, oh, I'm having that.

[48:34] That's mine. You should split this. Inheritance is not a good thing. The best thing I can advise you to do as a financial advisor previously is to spend your inheritance before you go.

There will be no arguments then once you've gone. They might not love you as much as they thought they did, but there won't be the problems. But Jesus says, what made me a judge or an arbiter between you?

The chap must have recognised something in Jesus to actually come to him and say that. Jesus was speaking with authority and he thought that Jesus could do something.

Have you often said to somebody, oh, you tell them about that because they'll listen to you. They won't listen to me, but you tell it and they'll listen to you.

It almost seems like this is what the man is saying. Jesus, you tell my brother to do it because he'll listen to you, but he doesn't listen to me. And in a way, Jesus ought to say, you're right to recognise me as a judge and an arbiter, but it's not over that that I will be judging and it's not over that that I will be arbitring.

[49:55] Arbitring? Yeah, something like that. I do hate it when I write things down and then I can't read them. How do we come to Jesus?

Do we really recognise him as judge and arbiter? Are we looking for justice for ourselves? Give me what I deserve, God.

Do we do that? What do our requests to God show about ourselves and our relationship with God? Where is my heart's desire?

That's the question I think Jesus is asking us. Where is the desire of your heart? And Jesus gives a warning.

Watch out. Don't be greedy. He warns the crowd to be on their guard about all kinds of greed and tells a parable. The ground of a certain man yielded an abundant harvest.

[51:03] Listen to him. The ground of a rich man yielded abundant harvest. He thought to himself, what shall I do?

I have no place to store my crops. Then he said, this is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones.

And there I will store my surplus again. And I'll say to myself, you have plenty of grain laid up for many years.

Take it easy. Eat, drink and be merry. But God said to him, you fool. This very night, your life will be demanded from you.

Then who will get what you've prepared for yourself? This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich towards God.

[52:00] How do we know when God is going to come to us? I'm not sure whether I read it or whether I actually met with Roy Castle at Gold Hill once and he spoke there.

And I remember him saying that a reporter came up to him and said, what's it like to know that you've only got three months to live? What a lovely question to ask somebody.

But he said, well, that's fortunate, isn't it? You don't even know whether you're going to live till tomorrow. We don't know, do we? But look at this man, his thoughts.

He's a rich man already before this great, bountiful crop that he had this year. He was already very prosperous. And this had been a good year.

His land had produced so much more this year. A bigger harvest than he expected. What should he do with it? Abundance that he has. He can give it away or he can keep the excess for himself.

[53:09] But he just talks to himself. This is what I'll do. What shall I do? This is what I'll do. I'll say to myself, take life easy.

Eat, drink and be merry. He has a choice of what to do with his riches. I heard from an evangelist in South America who said that he went to this place and said, I can't remember, I think it might have been Louis, Louis, Louis, Louis, no, I'm not sure.

He said that the gospel was brought to this town and many people turned to Jesus and they started to read the Bible and they read this passage, sell everything and give it to the poor.

And he said what they did, they sold, they were selling a lot of their stuff and taking it to the church and giving it to the church. And the pastor there said, no, no, no, no, don't give it to me.

This is God's. You look after it, but remember it's not yours. Your car is not yours. Your house is not yours. Your family is not yours.

[54:16] They're given to you in trust as stewards. You look after them.

If we have a missionary that comes and stays at the church, we might say, oh, by the way, he's going to stay at your house.

It's not your house, it's God's house and you're going to put him up. I wonder if we have that freedom with what God has given to us. Watch out, don't be greedy.

I wondered what greed really was. What is greed? I think greed is coveting more than we need.

And I fall short. Covet more than you actually need. But what do we do with what God has already given to us? What do we, how tightly do we hold it?

This is mine. This is mine. Where does God come in this man's life? His big emphasis and his focus is on I will do and what I've done.

[55:23] He's just talking to himself, making his own plans. The hymn at his funeral, do you know what it'll be? Yep, I did it my way. I did it my way.

Isn't that sad? Should have done it God's way. Should have gotten spec savers. He should have been looking around. He should have been talking to God.

But what do we do? Do we do that? I think I'll go and buy that. I think I'll have that. I need that. Do we really? Do we really? What the rich man didn't realise is that God is the judge and the mediator. Not only that God owns everything, it's God's land. It's God's harvest. The rich man is only the steward of the farm that it produces.

in Job we read, in Job 41, 11, who has given to me that I should repay them, God says.

[56:27] Whatever is under the whole of heaven is mine. You remember the story that Jesus told about the vineyard and the rich man was going away and he left the tenants in charge of his farm.

And he went away for a distance and while he was away they must have been thinking, hey, this is alright, this farm, we can sell this stuff, we can get a nice little profit for ourselves. And then the king sent back some people to see how things were going and to collect his share.

And instead they beat them up and sent them away. And then the king sent his son, or the rich man sent his son to the farm. And instead they thought, here's our chance, if we get rid of him it'll all be ours.

So they got rid of him. So what's the king going to do or the rich man going to do when he comes back to gain his farm? A lovely parable but a bit frightening.

When Jesus comes back again we are going to have to give an account for what we've done with what he's given to us. That's not an account. Salvation is a free gift.

[57:43] We don't earn that by what we do. But there are gifts in heaven that God is going to be giving out. And he is the judge that one day is going to come to us and say, okay Michael, what did you do with all that I gave you to look after?

And how am I going to answer some of those things? I have so much when so many others have so little. Am I just building a bigger barn?

Andrew had a lovely, oh, Andrew did send me his sermon but I felt I shouldn't use that. He might use it another time but I did pinch this story from him.

Once there was a successful businessman, a leading figure in his town, lace trade, an owner of a large drapery and grocery store. As his business grew he said to himself, this is what I'll do.

I'll tear down my store and build, no, won't build a bigger one, I'll gift the site of the building of a Baptist church. The man was Daniel Hearn and the church was UBC, Union Baptist Church.

[58:55] How has his investment in God's kingdom impacted on your and my life? Life is not defined by what we have or have not but this is often how the world looks at us.

What do you do? is usually the first question when you meet somebody new, isn't it? What do you do? This is what you are, what you do or what do you have? I remember when I was selling life insurance when I first started is all I had was an old beaten up Ford Anglia which had been resprayed bright yellow and I felt a bit embarrassed calling on clients asking them to invest money in me when I had a 20 year old Anglia parked but I used to park it around the corner and it's amazing how many of them when I said goodbye came to the door and looked around to see what sort of cars he got a Jag as he got a Rolls Royce they couldn't see it it was around the corner I was embarrassed with my Ford Anglia but people do they look at you what you've got what you are and we tried to say with the job club for people who have been out of work for a long time how do you answer that question when people say oh what do you do oh I do nothing

I'm just a mother a father a housewife I don't do anything but the talents that you've got there that are being used and can be used for God's glory or for our own is still there Jesus warns about the least little bit of greed in any form and it might be our time are we greedy with our time no that's my time I'm having it are we greedy with our possessions are we greedy with our compliments we just have them for ourselves greed is coveting more than we need so how different am I Jesus warns us to protect ourselves against the least bit of greed ultimately we are actually defined by how God sees us not how we see ourselves not how other people see us if you want to see how God sees you look at the cross justified forgiven loved beyond all things adopted into his family heirs with Christ can you imagine being called an heir with Christ a place in eternity that's been prepared for you and me and rewards for faithful service how do you protect yourself against greed

I think appreciate what we have appreciate our health we realise when we haven't got it how we miss it appreciate the time that we've got appreciate your families appreciate relationships and possessions be thankful to God that he cares for us and provides for us know that he wants the best for us not just for today but he wants the best for us for eternity and the second thing Jesus says is don't worry and don't be afraid and I read this little passage in the message and I thought it was nicely put so if you don't mind I'd like to read it to you the message from verse 22 says this Jesus continued with this subject with his disciples don't fuss about what's on the table at mealtimes or if your clothes are in the closet are in fashion there's far more your inner life than the food you put in your stomach more than the outer appearance and your clothes you hang on your body look at the ravens free and unfettered not tied down to a job description carefree in the care of God and you count far more has anyone by fussing before the mirror ever got taller by so much as an inch if

fussing can't do that why fuss at all walk into the fields and look at the wildflowers don't fuss with their appearance but have you ever seen colour and design like it the ten best dressed men and women in the country look shabby alongside them if God gives such attention to wildflowers most of them never even seen don't you think he'll attend to you take pride in you do his best for you what I'm saying to do here is get you to relax not to be preoccupied with getting so you can respond to God's giving but you know both God and how he works steep yourself in God reality God initiative God provisions you'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met don't be afraid missing out you're my dearest friends the father wants to give you the very kingdom itself we go pitying about what we've got in our bank the little bit we've got in our bank and God says I've already swapped that I've already filled your account with much more than you could ever put in your bank this is a promise from God he does not ask us to do anything that he doesn't equip us for do you believe that he doesn't ask us to do anything that he doesn't equip us for it as he promises to be with us in the good and the difficult times so we're told don't worry don't be afraid have you ever said that to somebody who's going through a difficult time don't worry don't worry isn't it so easy to say but as [65:34] Jesus says but what can you do about it what does worry actually do to make it better doesn't do anything so instead of worrying we say God this is your problem I'm going to have to stand back on this one and I'm giving it to you and I trust you to sort it out so don't worry don't be afraid he tells us and the and the and the third point I just want to ask and ask myself where is my treasure where is your treasure be generous Jesus says give to the poor get yourselves a bank that can't go bankrupt a bank in heaven far from bank robbers safe from embezzlers a bank you can bank on it's obvious isn't it the place where your treasure is is a place where you will most want to be and end up being where is our heart's desire is it in the things of this world and so often it is for me I'll admit but really my heart's desire is to be where Jesus is and to grab those promises that he gives us and the snag is that the rich man had not considered his life in the world to come his earthly wealth will be of no use to him when he dies they've no value in heaven they are the wrong currency all he has will be left for his family to fight over what have we got that we will leave with our family that will take them into eternity God has given us the gospel the best news that we could ever have who are we sharing it with in our work in our family are we talking about Jesus to anybody else the rich man didn't consider that there is a story about a man who owed somebody an awful lot of money he owed something like 12,000 pounds awful lot of money and he was about to pay it when the man died so what he did instead he wrote out a cheque for 12,000 pounds and put it in the coffin what a good idea what a good idea what are we doing with the riches that God's given to us are we using them or are we saving them up so when he calls us home we can say look what I've got in the bank God look what I've got in my house look what I've done with the life that you've given me or will we be bowing before him and acknowledge him as the judge and the mediator Lord Jesus you're mediating between me and the father you're presenting my works before the father in a way that brings glory and honour to you to be rightly aware of the values of this and the next life will enable us to put things in the proper place our main concern however should not be laying up our treasure on earth which was the mistake of the rich man in the parable but to lay up treasure in heaven and what is this treasure that we lay up in heaven this treasure is gained by giving rather than getting I think I think the treasure that God wants us is our giving investing in what we've already been given and working out our salvation giving freedom for God to work out his purposes in us planting seeds of faith or being yeast in a world that needs to rise from the dead being good stewards knowing God as our heavenly father and his love for us challenges us to invest in his new world not reluctantly but passionately out of love for what God loves Jesus is the judge between the greedy and those who find their security in their heavenly father we will all have to give an account of what we've done with the resources that God has entrusted us with this is when the rewards are distributed it's not where salvation is earned this has already been sorted it is the gift from God that we can receive it's only by faith so what is Jesus saying to us about the rich man's presentation for many years ahead without considering the life which is to come what does it mean for us to be rich towards God are you or I filling our barns with self or with God looking for man's praise or God's commendation oh good and faithful servant

how to be rich and free our freedom is in Christ alone and in how we use the gifts that he's given to us so let's look at giving rather than getting father god we've heard your word and you've probably spoken to us in totally different ways and with what

[71:49] I've gabbled this morning I pray that from it your Holy Spirit will speak to each one of us in the way that you know we need we trust you in this world and we trust you for the future all that we have and all that we are is yours because you purchased us at Calvary so we as we share it with others for your glory in Jesus name amen thank you Mike I want to invite you to just sit quietly for a few seconds and think about a lot of what Mike said what is God impressing on your heart right now a strong message running through what

Mike said relating to stewardship of what God has already given to us and generosity as a response to what God has given to us I believe generosity is the cure to greed You can't hoard what you've given away.

So let's just for a moment think about what are we pouring into God's work and how we are pouring it in. By our time and by our finances, by our attitudes.

We sang earlier that as your word and spirit shape our lives, Lord, we will worship.

And when we give ourselves to those in need, Lord, we will worship. I suggest to you this morning that giving is worship.

[74:26] Think about that. It is worship. And there are many ways to give directly or through the banking system. We have leaflets at the front of the church here and at the side entrance about giving.

I'd invite you to take a leaflet. Read it. Pray. Pray, pray, and pray. Pray. So let's pray now.

Thank you, Father God, that there is no lack in your economy. But Father, we see in the broken world that there is great need.

Thank you for providing for all our need so that we can give to others in greater need than ourselves. In recognition of your great love and with a spirit of thankfulness, we give ourselves and our resources for the furthering of Jesus' redemptive work here on earth.

Father, help us, if we are not giving regularly, to think about doing so. If we are giving regularly, Lord, help us to think about tithing.

[75:50] Giving that first fruit, a tenth, back to you, Lord. Father, help us to see where we may be able to give above what we give regularly or tithe.

We live in difficult economic times, Lord, so we come prayerfully. We want to see your kingdom glorified here at Union.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Hannah quoted from Galatians 5, verse 1 in her prayer. And it was the underpinning verse for the woman's prayer day that we had.

And I have included it in this service as our catchphrase. So there, we've gotten it three times.

Would you stand and join me in echoing Galatians 5, verse 1?

Paul reminds us, It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

[77:09] Amen. Amen. We're now going to sing two songs to come to the end of the service. So what gift of grace is Jesus my Redeemer?

So when we seek to, like the rich man, pat ourselves on our backs for the great things we've done and to build more barns and silos, think that the good we do is not us.

It is through Christ in us that we can do this. Let's sing. For a great throne that we have three sons of Christ. I would like to have ■■■s her for over the speed of the prepare being the same as we can lead it to Jesus.

We will like to have his hand to cover the Oh the way to filleth up ours and the same as we shall appear Easter. We will always feel free for Him that it is who we will suffer, the big time of diets.

And in the spiritual healing makes available, we will be if you'll see that And that's why we need to hear. All praise is Jesus my Redeemer, The gift of praise is Jesus, my Redeemer.

[78:26] There is no more for heaven and love to give. He is my joy, my righteousness and freedom, my steadfast love, my deep and countless peace.

To this I owe, my only, only Jesus, for my life is only now to me.
Oh, how strange and divine I can sing, for I sign in the light of the Christ to me.
The night is dark, but I am not forsaken, for by my side the Savior he will stay.
I labor on in weakness and rejoicing, for in my need his power is his way.

[79:39] To this I owe, my shepherd, the believer has been, through my
deepest loving evil ear.

For the night has been loved, and I shall overcome, yet the light of Christ in me.
I am forgiven. The future's sure, the price
has been paid. For Jesus' blood and started for my Father, and he was raised to overthrow the
grave.

To this I owe, my sin has been defeated. Jesus now and ever is my King. All the shame, all the
shame, all the shame, all the shame, all the shame, I can sing.
I am free to get the life of Christ to me. I am forgiven. With every prayer I long to follow among the
healed, With every breath I long to follow Jesus, for he has said that he will bring me home.

[81:21] And day by day I know he will renew me, until I stand with joy
before the throne.

To this I know, my Lord, his only Jesus, all the glory evermore to be.
When the grace is complete, still I live, shall I be, yet I will new rise with me.
When the grace is complete, still I live, shall I be, yet I will new rise with me.
Yet I will new rise with me. Our final song echoes God's voice that we should listen to.
[82:24] It also speaks of the abundance of his grace towards us. It also
shows the response we should make when we listen to his voice.

Here we are, Lord, ready to be sent out and to do your bidding. Thank you.
Our people cry, all in world and darkness still, I am the same.
I who made the stars alight, I who made their darkness bright, I will sing my heart to them, who shall
I say?

If I am Lord, is it our Lord? I have loved you, I give the Lord.
[84:04] I have loved you, I have loved you, I have loved you, we will
live our God.

I will love the snow and rain, I have loved my feet, I have led the love of earth, they turn away.
I will break my heart so strong Give them thoughts for love alone I will seek my love to death You
shall stay Here I am, peace is my hope I will hold a new life in the night I will hold you, if you need
me I will hold you, if you need me I will hold you, if you need me
I will hold you, if you need me I will settle, peace for hell My heart will save I will spread my hope to
ride Till their love so satisfied I will live my life to death Who shall I say I will hold you, if I love you Is
it I, Lord?

I will hold you, my dear God I will hold you, if you need me I will hold you, I will hold you I will hold
you, I will hold you Please be seated I would like you to give a thanks, applause to our band We
have a band this morning Thank you Thank you I'm just going to indulge Ask your indulgence for a
little bit longer I'm going to show you a video on Life Explored Which is going to start on July 12th
[87:28] And it's going to be from 10.30 to 12th And then I have a few
other very short announcements So let's have the video Thanks, Andy Thank
you Thank you

Thank you So that's the Christianity Explored video The course July 12th, 10.30 to 12th It's Mike Do
we register online on the church website for the course?

Just let admin know or let me know if you'd like to do the course Great I don't know if it's online or
not You don't know? Okay And this is a reminder This evening we have our communion service
here at 6.30 Mike will be leading So be gentle with Mike He's had a long day And George will be
teaching Be gentle with George He's a gentle soul We're also launching the Cap Job Club On
Wednesday the 5th of July And it's open to all Who are interested And now for a blessing And if you
want to reach out and grab it Be my guest May God's grace and love Be with us each day Bless us,
O Lord With your unfailing love And cause the work of your hands

To prosper Uphold us in the palm of your hand And see us through each stage of our lives Bless us
Bless us When we go out And when we come in In Jesus' name We believe and pray Amen There's
tea and coffee And I think there are ice lollies Yeah So brave the coo-wiff And have some tea and

coffee If you have children Collect your children first, please And have a blessed week Thank you I stand amazed in the presence

Of Jesus the Nazarene And wonder how he could love me A sick and repent of thee How marvelous, how wonderful And my song shall ever be How marvelous, how wonderful Is my Saviour's love for me For me For me He was in the garden He prayed on my will but high He had those tears for his own

[92:37] And I pray For me And proceed to the garden And we bring the camel in How wonderful At my■■ Kapi Queen's 111 How marvelous, how wonderful is my Savior's love for me.

How marvelous, how wonderful is my Savior's love for me.

How marvelous, how wonderful is my Savior's love for me.

He took my sins and my sorrows, He made them His very own. He wore the burden of cowering, and started and died alone.

How marvelous, how wonderful is my Savior's love for me.

[94:44] How marvelous, how wonderful is my Savior's love for me. And something glory, His place my God shall see.

To be my joy through the ages, to sing of His love for me. How marvelous, how wonderful is my Savior's love for me.

How marvelous, how wonderful is my Savior's love for me.

How marvelous, how wonderful is my Savior's love for me.

How marvelous, how beautiful is my Savior's love for me. How marvelous, how beautiful is my Savior's love for me. Thank you.

[96:25] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[98:55] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.