**Transcript**

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Tithing – 09/08/2024
The Joy of Spending Someone Else’s Money

Introduction:
I love my church

Comments

Prayer

Me:

Teens & money
• Working – but that’s “my” money – parents buy my clothes and fulfill all my needs
• My money is for me!
• It’s fun to spend parent’s money – not so much to spend mine

We:

It’s always fun to spend someone else’s money
• Expense account
The joy of spending someone else’s money

Talking about money today
• Reminds me of a country song
o “I ain’t rich but I damn sure want to be
o Working like a dog all day ain’t working for me
o I wish I had a rich uncle that’d kick the bucket
o And I was sittin’ on a pile like Warren Buffet
o I know everybody says money can’t buy happiness
♣ But it can buy me a boat
♣ It could buy me a truck to pull it
♣ It could buy me a Yeti 110 iced down with plenty of lemonade”
• Or something like that

I don’t talk about money often, not nearly as often as Jesus did
• 500 verses on prayer
• <500 verses on faith
• >2,000 on money & possessions

God:

Luke 16:1-9 The Message

Hard to understand parable
• Left those who loved money ridiculing Jesus (Mt 6:14)
• Break it down

Important: The first sentence
• “There was a certain rich man who had a manager”
o Who are we?
♣ Owner?
♣ Manager?
o Scripture clears that up for us
♣ Deuteronomy 8:17-18 – “You may say to yourself, ‘My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.’ But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth.”
o We aren’t the rich man – the owner
♣ We only know the owner
o We are the manager

If we buy into this – that we are the manager and God is the owner – we must live differently when it comes to finances, money, generosity
• It means something different to us as disciples
o It means that generosity is our new normal
• If we think we are the owners of all we have, though, we will constantly struggle with generosity
o And how in the world can that be joyful

So, the owner brought these charges against the manager
• “Wasting my possessions”
• Calls him in to account
o Guilty as charged
♣ Puts up no defense
• What does he do?
o What all sane, normal people do
• Starts talking to himself

We all do it!
• But do we think about what we say to ourselves?
o Self-talk is important
♣ To live differently we must think differently
• To think differently we must monitor our thoughts – what you say to yourself
o Romans 12:2 – transformed by renewing or minds
o The man’s upcoming actions – a direct result of his thinking/self-talk

The manager calls in the rich man’s debtors and quickly reduces their debt
• Not small amounts
o Large ‘commercial’ accounts
• In that day – the contract was written in the debtors handwriting and kept by the manager
o Who was now acting with an eye toward his future
♣ Needs
♣ Food & shelter

Odd twist
• The dishonest manager is commended
o Weird
• But, not for initial mismanagement/dishonesty
o For acting shrewdly when his days were numbered
• Considered shrewd instead of simply cheating
o His actions – cast a good light – a generous light onto the owner while also providing for his own future by negotiating with the rich man’s debtors
♣ He has done this favor for them
♣ And provides security for his future
• About to lose money and shelter
• Owner is not praising him for dishonesty but for the shrewdness to see what he will need after he is dismissed and using the current situation to make the most of the future

Financial planner
• “Start with the end in mind”
o We think – retirement
• This parable extends that timeline to eternity
o Jesus often taught his disciples to invest in the kingdom of heaven
♣ This parable
♣ Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16:19-31)
♣ Rich fool (Luke 12:16-21)
• It’s evident that we can’t waffle – we can’t serve two masters – God and money
o We either submit the money we have to God – or it becomes our god
Money makes a great tool but a terrible master

Jesus is saying we are the manager now – but won’t be forever
• Time is short
o Action now – with something we cannot keep / take with us – will in some way make a difference in our future/eternity
• This manager saw this
o Do we?
♣ Jim Elliot – “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose”

You:

How shrewd are we really?
• NH – lowest giving to charity (including local church) – 1.7%
o Maine & VT were next lowest
• What could happen if everyone at Joy Church took decisive action (like the manager in this story)
o Outreach – no problem
o Camp – no fundraisers necessary
o Needs within the body
o Building
• If we were to become shrewd managers – acting decisively now based on our future that we know is coming – our present world would be decisively different
• And according to Jesus in this story so would our future ones:
o “I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings”
♣ Theologians debate what Jesus means here
• Whatever we speculate on the meaning & how it integrates with Jesus’ other teachings
o It is clear that what we do now with the wealth we are assigned to manage matters in eternity
• Jesus didn’t warn us to ‘not have’ resources; he warned us to ‘not serve’ those resources & wealth
• One of our greatest joys on earth is having resources we have been given by God to manage for His glory, our good, and the benefit of others
o The idea isn’t that we go hungry while others are full
♣ 1 Timothy 16:17-19:
• Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life.

How do we become a shrewd, faithful, generous manager?
• A discerning manager has an urgency to act now, not later
o This one did – an urgency of not wanting to do physical labor and not wanting to beg
• Maybe we need to listen better to our inner talk
• But we often erect barriers to obedience – What barriers to obedience do we erect?
o Telling ourselves we’ll be more generous later
♣ Once the car is paid off, the school loan, the kid’s braces
• We can always find a reason to delay generosity
♣ Saving generosity for when we have plenty and ‘can afford’ it
• We won’t be different when we have more; we’ll be different when we decide to obey God and let Him transform us
• Maybe we should remind ourselves – while we are renewing our minds – that we are like the manager in this story
o A short time here
♣ Make the most of our resources
♣ Obedience in all things
• Not: I’ll tithe when I can afford it but, I can’t afford not to tithe – too much is on the line
• Jesus spoke these words immediately after this parable
o Luke 16:10-12:
♣ “If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won’t be honest with greater responsibilities. 11 And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven? 12 And if you are not faithful with other people’s things, why should you be trusted with things of your own?”
• Generosity is not about how much money we have; it’s about how much of our hearts God has
• God is looking for wise and faithful managers

This manager was generous to others in the story (besides being shrewd)
• You might say, “Well, how can you consider him generous he was using the owner’s money? That’s easy!
o Exactly!
♣ That’s us!
• It’s the owner’s money – we just get to use it to be generous
o There is nothing like the joy of spending someone else’s money
o God provides all we need through His riches
♣ The cattle on a thousand hills are His
♣ Phil 4:19 – My God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory
• If we need it, He supplies it
• If He doesn’t supply it, I don’t need it

It’s easy for us to see that Jesus intends for us to see ourselves as the manager here
• It’s harder to act that way in our own stories though
o Tithing
♣ Meaning: “tenth”
o Bible repeatedly tells us we are to give a tithe to the Lord (Mal 3:8-12, Matthew 23:23)
o Tithing is our starting place for generosity (Luke 19:8, Acts 4:32)

Tithing illustration

There is joy when we spend someone else’s money
• There is joy when we spend God’s money
o Fulfilling the vision He has for us and for all He’s provided us
• Why does He do it this way?
o Not sure – but I know there must be a lesson in obedience and trust in it
♣ How many of us trust God with our eternal souls/salvation?
♣ How many trust God with our health – believing He can heal every disease and infirmity?
♣ How many of us believe God can provide for us from the 90% of His (the owner’s) money He lets us keep and steward?
o Trust

The joy of spending someone else’s money

God asks for a tithe – 10%
• Think about that – it’s ingenious in that the tithe is the great equalizer
• Your 10% may be different from mine but they are still equal – 10%

There are many reasons to tithe and be generous
• I’ve heard it said that we need to cast compelling vision – people give to vision
o And that’s probably true
♣ And we have a vision to impact our communities with the Father’s love at Joy Church
• I’ve heard it said that people give where they feel it’s safe – where the money is used properly
o We have a great church council and denomination with checks and balances to ensure integrity in our finances
♣ One of Joy Church’s core values – integrity
♣ Our books are open for your review
• Vision and integrity are very, very important
o But the number one reason we tithe is because of our desire to be obedient to God

I don’t speak on giving often
• I don’t speak on giving/tithing so I can have more money personally
o I’ve mentioned before that I have an MBA degree – I can go make money
• I’m not speaking on giving today because the church is desperate for money
o Sure, we could do more for the kingdom with more money but – like I said earlier – God provides our needs
• I’m not speaking on giving to shame you – there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus
• I speak on giving because it’s something God asks us to do
• And He promises to open the floodgates of heaven on us as we give (Mal 3)
• God’s very best plan for you is to give
o Be generous
• Know that the times are short and be wise and generous with His money the money He invests in us

There are no endowments for Joy Church
• Our denomination doesn’t give us money for rent and expenses
• Our entire budget comes from your giving – your generosity
o When considering that – how would the church be doing if everyone gave the same percentage that you were giving?
♣ What would our outreach budget look like?
♣ Would we be able to have a JKidz and Integrity youth ministry?
♣ Would Community Breakfast be happening, Joy in the Park?

Let’s search our hearts
• What is our self-talk saying?
o The days are short
• Are we telling ourselves we can trust God with His promises?
• Are we saying we believe what He tells us?
• Are we being generous with His blessings?

Pray

We server a generous God who gives the most generous gift of all
• For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life

We

Here’s one thing that is for sure
• I will not love you more if you give more
• I won’t love you less if you give less
o I don’t know who gives what – honest
• I’ve promised you from day one that I love you and there’s nothing you can do about it
• And that means that