

**What Does the Bible Say About ... Money?**  
**Rev. Brian R. Louis, Faith Presbyterian Church**  
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Ecclesiastes 5:8-15

**Matthew 6:19-24**

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust<sup>[a]</sup> consume and where thieves break in and steal,<sup>20</sup> but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust<sup>[b]</sup> consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal.<sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

<sup>22</sup> “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light,<sup>23</sup> but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If, then, the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

<sup>24</sup> “No one can serve two masters, for a slave will either hate the one and love the other or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.<sup>[c]</sup>

Holy Wisdom, Holy Word.

Intro on second week of this occasional series this week, it's money.

What is money? It doesn't have feelings. It just is. It is neither good nor bad. It is neutral.

It is a tool. It's a device to pay for goods, services, and gifts. It does not have traits.

It does not have a personality. We as human beings are the ones who do good or evil with it. We are the ones who attach a feeling and then an action to money.

So, what does the Bible say about money? Well, it says a lot. As I researched this sermon, several places highlighted that there are 2,000 verses in the bible that mention money, giving, tithing, etc. anything to do with money. Now, I suspect that is more than most topics in the Bible. Even in ancient times the writers of scripture through the inspiration of God knew the dangers surrounding money and possessions and how we interact with it. Since there are so many passages that mention money, giving, and possessions, I'll just highlight a few.

One of my favorite stories in Scripture is the one about Jesus watching the woman who was poor and who only had a couple of coins to put in the treasury at the temple. Hear the word of God from Mark 12:41-44:

<sup>41</sup> "He sat down opposite the treasury and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. <sup>42</sup> A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. <sup>43</sup> Then he called his disciples and said to them,

“Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. <sup>44</sup> For all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

In contrast to the spirit of the widow, there is the story of the rich young man. In Matthew 19, the pious and faithful rich young man comes to Jesus and asks him what it would take to gain eternal life. After answering Jesus’ questions about how well he obeyed various commandments, Jesus said, “If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money<sup>[d]</sup> to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” <sup>22</sup> When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions.” I get where the guy is coming from. Giving up everything would be hard. I can’t judge the young man. Could I have done it? Could you have done that?

These two stories show a couple of different things. One shows great generosity, and great sacrifice – the widow who gives the last of her money to the temple gives everything she has. And then the young man, who shows the power that money can have over us. His wealth holds so much sway over him, even the prospect of eternal life from the great teacher and miracle worker Jesus can’t get him to give up his wealth.

What I want to instill in us today is an awareness of what our relationship with money is like, and striving toward having a healthy relationship with money. Doing that starts with taking stock of your current relationship with money. Am I a little – or a lot – on the greedy side? Or am I too much on the free-spending side? Do I hoard my money and deprive my family of things they may need? Am I a miser? Do I keep so much money for myself that I don't give any of my treasure away? Does fear of losing my money – it doesn't matter how much you have – make me reluctant to be generous with what I have?

We can get off balance in our attitudes about money. Over the years I've heard people misquote the famous verse from scripture that money is the root of all evil. Well, money itself isn't evil. It doesn't have a brain, or a soul. It cannot do mean things on its own. 1 Timothy 6:10 says, "For the **love of money** is a root **of** all kinds **of** evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains." The love of money. That is where the problem is. Not money itself.

That theme is reiterated in our Old Testament lesson from earlier, Ecclesiastes 5:10,

<sup>10</sup> The lover of money will not be satisfied with money, nor the lover of wealth with gain."

If we love money so much, it will never be enough.

If we look for money for security and safety in life and not God, no amount of money will be enough, because in our minds, through our fear, we will conjure up scenarios where we lose all that money. And then we'll just want more. Jesus wants us to turn to him for that safety and comfort, for he can provide real comfort and caring. What he can give us is more valuable than all the piles of money in the world.

If we have some wealth we can use our treasure as an act of worship to God. Part of discipleship is being a good steward of our money and giving to the church, the Body of Christ. I like the idea of giving being an act of worship to God, for everything flows from God. All we have flows from God.

Giving to the church is an act of praise and caring. Through your offerings in the church, you give to local organizations that are involved in the community, relieving pain, and suffering, such as Peaches Pantry, Warrior Healing Center, and the backpack program. Your giving to this church makes a difference in the community. It will make a difference in Douglas, where your giving to First Presbyterian there was tremendous and made me very proud of our congregation. You are a generous congregation.

We show what we value with what we spend our money on. What are your values? One way to find that out is to ask yourself what do you spend your money on? That can be an indication of what you value.

I know not all of us can give as much as we would like monetarily. But the good news is, discipleship is giving of our time too. And many of you do that very well.

I'm not here to say I'm against money or that like the rich young man, we all need to give all our money and savings away to the church. That would be irresponsible. And I'm human. I like to have extra money to take trips and visit people. To travel, and do the things I like to do. We all want financial security. We all want to retire comfortably and leave some money behind for the church and our children someday. Money should be our servant, not our ruler.

What I want us all to have is a healthy relationship and attitude toward money. How do we get a proper relationship with money? We pray to God to have a right relationship with it. We pray for the willingness to be honest about our relationship with money so we don't delude ourselves about it. We talk about it with our pastor or a trusted friend. We consult someone to give us an accurate appraisal of what we are doing with our money.

But I would say the most important thing is to pray to God for right thoughts and action about money. Lord, am I using my treasure in a way that glorifies you? Am I using it to lift up my family? Am I using it to lift up the people around me? Am I using my money as an act of worship to you, the giver of all I have in this life?

Money is a tool, and it can be a tool for doing good in the world.

Let us pray to be a little more like the poor widow who gives of her last two coins. Let us have that spirit in our giving. Indeed, as our New Testament lesson says, we cannot serve both God and money. Is money our God? Or is the Triune God our God? What is our answer?

Ultimately our greatest treasure is to meet the Lord, to be in the presence of God someday after we die. But until then, let us examine how we are using our treasure on earth, and if we can put it to work for the Lord, here and now. Amen.