



Money Matters-Part 4
Godliness, Greed & God's Word
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Well if you were to say the words "almond roca" at a gathering of my family, my extended family, my wife's side of the family you'd be sure to get a smile from everyone in the room and perhaps even a laugh. Being a part of my wife's family now associated with them for so many years 35 years now I have watched this embarrassing family joke unfold. It began when I was just starting to date her and to be invited to Christmas or maybe her father's birthday celebration or dinner. And her father would always be given by his many children a tin at least one usually many tins of this almond roca you know that hard toffee with the chocolate and the you know the almond ground's all over the top of it. That is what he always got. And with all kids he had he had a lot of a big bow on the top and it didn't take long dating her to know if I'm going to go to an event and it's in honor of her dad I better show up with a tin of almond roca.

So I was confident this man loves this stuff.

At least that's what we thought.

It couldn't have been more than two years ago. I think it was his birthday celebration. Of course we brought the obligatory tin of almond roca. Probably one of two or three at that party. Big bow on the top. Whether it came with a gift card or a set of tools or a tie for his neck. I mean he's always had that tin. Someone had to speak up and say something cute about how much he loves almond roca. His eyebrow curled. He smirked and he announced to his whole family.

I don't like almond roca.

They were aghast. Including me, I snapped my head around, what? He said I've never liked almond roca.

You assumed I liked almond roca. I don't like almond roca. I really don't like it at all.

And all I could picture was all those years of trying before we rushed out we had a little bit oh got to stop and get almond roca and I pictured him now throwing it all in the trash after we left.

Did not like almond roca. So that's the family joke on my wife's side of the family. Just mentioned almond roca and everybody smiles and laughs. Oh, yeah, don't bring almond rock to grandpa. You know it's funny joke for our family but how terrible it would be for us to bring a gift to our heavenly Father confident that he loves it and have him say I don't love it.

It wouldn't be funny or be tragic particularly if it wasn't just a gift that we brought two times a year to him but if it was our very lives. If we present ourselves as a living sacrifice and say here I am here to serve you your servant I'm here to worship you on the Sunday morning I'm here to learn your word I'm here to be your representative in the world. We present ourselves to him and we're confident.

Oh he loves me I'm his child. And to have his real response be I don't like it. I don't like it never liked it. That would be tragic. That is tragic. It's happened. It is happening now. My fear is that it may happen for some of us and it might be happening with some of us this morning.

I want to make sure that doesn't happen or at least do our best to make sure that there's no one that



leaves this auditorium and has that problem with God. And thankfully Jesus was good at pointing out these misunderstandings that we often bring to God and presenting ourselves to him and he does so in the passage that we've reached in our study of Luke Chapter 16. Now, this is a very important passage. You need to take your Bibles and find your way to Luke Chapter 16. We're going to study verses 14 through 17 this morning as Jesus makes a very clarifying statement. Now you remember the series I trust you do if not let me refresh your memory.

We've been talking about money, the series Money Matters here we've looked at very important principles drawn from that opening parable about money in our treatment of money and of course a lot of it has been about our generosity and how we should be even making friends by means of money making those evangelists bridges. But our whole concept of money has been shaped right up into this huge punchline in verse 13 glance at that verse before we get to our passage where he says this. No servant can serve two masters. He'll either hate the one and love the other or he'll be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. You can't serve them both.

And as we said last time we are together.

That hasn't stopped a lot of Christians from trying and they work at trying to say well I'm good with God but yet I still you know I'm kind of going after this set of priorities and plans and goals and you know I don't think I'm really intoxicated in my pursuit of these things. But I do want them and I'm thinking about them and this is what I'm trying to achieve in my life and we said listen it's an either or situation here.

You can't serve God and money.

Well after all this instruction about generosity after all this instruction about listen God is an all or nothing proposition here, he says.

I mean that's just where we're at.

And the Pharisees who were listening which by the way you might contrast it with verse 1 he's speaking specifically to his disciples but that didn't prevent the Pharisees from listening in on what he was saying and so they chime up here let's look at these four verses.

Let me read it for you reading from the ESV the English Standard Version four verses will cover today. Follow along as I read it for you. The Pharisees. Here's the divine inspired commentary in our lives, who were lovers of money. Heard all these things and they ridiculed him and he, Christ, said to them the Pharisees "you are those who justify yourselves before men but God knows your hearts for what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

The law and the prophets were until John. Since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached and everyone forces his way into it.

But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the law to become void." Now we got to put all this together and figure out why it goes together how it goes together what in the world is all about the beginning of it seems pretty clear. Pharisees love money. This whole passage has been about making sure that we don't love money because money is not the root of all evil but the love of money is it's the fountainhead of all kinds of compromise and sin.

And so you can't embrace Christ and then say well I still am kind of having this you know this attraction to money in the way that I used to there's got to be this break it's an either or proposition and



clearly the Pharisees weren't willing to break with that so when they heard all this teaching about generosity and this exclusive Lordship of Christ they were like, "No don't like it." And Jesus says well, God knows your heart. Important for us as Jesus kind of drills down past the surface of what everyone thought of the Pharisees and says you've got a problem in your heart and the problem is your love of money.

We call it greed and thus our subtitle today we are going to look at godliness and greed and the Word of God. They were presumed to be godly and yet they had this problem of greed. And then he's going to talk about the Word of God and we'll see how that all fits in here. But important for us to realize that before you read this like a Sunday school graduate and say all the Pharisees those are the bad guys. You know you hear that "da da duh." Black hats they walk in. They were the good guys.

At least that's what everybody thought. You only see them as the bad guys because you've studied enough of the Bible to know that Jesus consistently condemns them for all their hypocritical problems. But, really, you need to know they were perceived as the good guys, they were the Bible Answer Man. They were the seminary professors.

They were the teachers of the Bible they were people that everyone thought if anyone was in with God it's those people. Their lives seemed to be blessed. They knew their stuff. I mean they seemed to be the good guys and Jesus gets past all of that facade and he goes to the heart of it and he says you have a relationship with money that is wrong. God knows your heart. You may justify yourself in the sight of people but I know what's going on there. And how serious a diagnosis is it to have God see greed in your heart.

First Corinthians Chapter 6 verse 10 puts this in a list of other things that if these are the chronic consistent sinful problems of your life you are not a Christian. I don't care what you say with your mouth. The fruit of Christianity is going to rout this out. Let me just quote it for you. It says the greedy will not inherit the kingdom of God. So I know this. This is not something for me to say I should work on that some time I'll put that on my to do list I'll make sure I kind of give that some attention. If anything in this passage will diagnose for us a problem with greed in our heart. The Bible says it is an either or proposition. If there is greed you're not even a Christian. Wait a minute I'm a Christian I know I'm a Christian but I still battle with it so there may be residual echoes of this sinful problem.

Much like cutting off a limb you're talking about the phantom pain people have.

You may still have that temptation and even occasionally find yourself fixated on something that God is removing from your life but you better make sure that you're fighting it because this is a really significant indicator that there's a serious problem in your life. To put in some Old Testament terms that basically say the same thing Psalm Chapter 10 verses 3 and 4 the wicked boasts in the desire of their soul.

They're always boasting in the desire of their soul. That to them is the big deal the magnifying thing this is what I want. This is what they're trying to accomplish and in their heart their even their self-talk in their minds.

It's always about making much of the desires of their hearts as one greedy for gain curses and renounces the Lord. Now that may seem obvious but that's going on in the lives of people who think they're good with God but really they end up choosing between God and their greed in the pride of their face.

The wicked do not seek him. They may think they seek him they may seem like they seek him they



may have a reputation of seeking him but there's greed in their heart. So this is a serious problem we need a diagnose it.

Number one on your outline, let's just spend some time doing that. That's what Jesus is doing for the Pharisees.

You may not want to identify with the Pharisees but let's at least take a little time to biblically find out whether any of this is residual in our hearts and if it's there we need to take note of it and respond. Diagnose a greedy heart. Now I'm going to give you five things this morning one comes from this passage because there is one hint here for us that we should take seriously and then I want to go to four other places in the Bible just to start to build a quick little diagnostic test as to whether or not my heart is still hanging on to this greed for material wealth.

Number one, verse 14.

The Pharisees who were lovers of money heard all these things and they shook his hand at the door after he preached and said good sermon Pastor.

No. They ridiculed him. There the first indicator. Take this contextually. The sermons were about generosity. The sermons were about money won't last.

It will fail. The sermons about making friends by means of your money. The sermon is about being open handed and the response to any call to give here was negative, ridicule.

Now today it may not be as stark as that in your heart but maybe there's still that rationalization justification that pushing back with calls to give and it maybe even that when you hear a sermon I'm giving you do go right where the Pharisees went and you start to impugn the preacher must be about his Porsche fund right. He's just trying to get rich.

Did you hear the sermon in the church? It's about money again. And I even have to be defensive when I start this series saying, listen, this is not motivated by me looking at the church budget saying all we really need to work on giving in this church this is about me preaching thru the Gospel of Luke and just dealing with what Christ dealt with. Nevertheless why am I so defensive in this regard. Well it's because I have a lot of this happen whenever I talk about money.

Ridicule, criticism, critique, impugning motives. So number one if you're taking notes here let's just call it letter A. You want to look for greed in your own heart. Look for how you respond to Biblical calls to giving or generosity. I just put it down this way. Do you ridicule? Do you make excuses? Do you rationalize calls to generosity? And I got to tell you this there must be a lot of people that do that sit in the evangelical Bible teaching churches like ours because I quoted for you earlier in the series the stats when it comes to people giving. When it comes to giving I'm not just talking about church giving your church budgets I'm talking about giving under the category of charitable giving.

Just looking at missions organizations or Christian organizations or their own church which is to be primary in the scripture for every Christian. When you ask the question how many evangelical Bible believing born again Christians give, I gave you this stat.

Maybe you didn't memorize it but maybe we should. One out of five that's 20 percent give nothing ever to anything charitable they give nothing to their church. They give nothing to missions they give nothing to anything. One out of five that claim to be evangelical Bible believing Christians.



So look down your aisle. You've got 10 people in your aisle, there are two of them there...

While not a Compass Bible Church. Oh you're right.

But all the other churches could do this and two of them give nothing and I joke about that but I'll bet if I brought up our CFO brought up our treasurer here the head of our finances and said pull up the giving records. How's our church doing in terms of attendance of people to come call this their church. And how many people give nothing.

I don't know that the stats come out that much better. 20 percent give nothing ever.

And then I think well how must they respond when a pastor gets up and just biblically says you know what every Christian should be giving. I'll bet they don't respond very well to those sermons. I'll bet they make excuses. I bet they rationalize why they don't. I bet they even start to impugn the messenger every now and then.

Maybe not to his face but in the car on the way home.

Well most of the people in my row they give pretty good. I'll bet they're all giving 10 percent. Wake up you're dreaming. Doesn't happen. If everybody in your row gives ten percent. I guarantee you you've just been raptured and you're hanging out in heaven. Have I told you what the percentages is of Bible believing evangelical born again Christians are when it comes to giving 10 percent of their gross or net. I don't care either way 10 percent.

What's the percentage? 5 percent. 5 percent.

So I've got a section over here hundred people over here means five people statistically...

Well not a Compass Bible, but every other church. If I'm guest speaking somewhere at those churches five out of 100 are giving what I think most people would say if their grandchild asked "Well, how much should Christians give?" They probably would say 10 percent. Now again that's the symptom.

I really shouldn't say in this regard.

That's the action that produces the symptom and this symptom is when it comes to calls the generosity they have to respond in some way that's negative to that in their hearts and their minds they have to rationalize make excuses or even impugn the speaker that has to happen.

If it does happen it's probably indicative of the fact that in their heart they still have that clinging desire and craving to get as much out of this life as they can materially and financially. And that's why they're not generous. That's why they don't give, and just like the Pharisees who love money when they hear calls and generosity they don't respond well to that. He said to them you are those who justify yourself before men. Let's just focus in on these words now but God knows your heart. Middle of verse 15. God knows your heart. God knows my heart. My goal in a sermon like this is to figure out if I can know my heart. If you can know your heart. I said I give you five diagnostic questions. The first one is how do you respond to sermons about giving, calls to generosity? Here's the second one. Jot this reference down if you're taking notes we'll call this letter B. First Timothy Chapter 6 verses 6 through 8. First Timothy Chapter 6 verses 6 through 8. Put the heading down this way.

Contentment. Do I have it? Contentment. Is it real in my life?



Paul says godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world we can't take anything out of it either. But if we have food and clothing with these we will be content. Now that is a pretty high bar but that's what someone who does not idolize money who does not serve money who does not have a greedy heart. That's how that person really expresses that with contentment so I guess the question is, is there discontentedness in your heart. Do you look at what you have and can you say, doesn't really matter. As Paul said in Philippians Chapter Four, whether I have a lot or little whether my square footage is big or it's not whether I got a good view of the valley or the ocean or whether I'm sitting there in a room that just doesn't even have a good view of anything. I got the view of the back alley. Am I able to say you know what. With that I can be content. Let me read it for you. I've learned in whatever situation be content I know how to be brought low. I know how to abound in any and every circumstance. I've learned the secret of facing plenty and having hunger, having an abundance or having need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

And that is not a Christian football players verse you understand. It is not about sports, not about powerlifting. Let's not quote this out of context.

What does this verse about? It's about someone saying whether my bank account is big or whether it's not whether I have a lot of food this week or I have very little and I have to fast that I can barely make enough to keep myself healthy. Whether I have a big income or whether I get demoted or lose my job whether I'm in a rental you know or I have to live in the back of a station wagon or whether I'm in a nice big comfortable house doesn't really matter. What really matters is my relationship with Christ and if I'm right with God the living God and I'm in step with Christ. You know what I can make it through this. I can do anything. And the anything that I can do in this passage is not about touchdowns or goals or free throws. This is about whether or not I can have a lot or a little and be in my own heart at the same place.

Contentment. I mean that the first cousin of that is the word peace. Do I look at what I have and am I at peace. That is not very common in our day.

Typical symptoms of a greedy heart would be discontentedness, ridicule or excuses for calls to generosity. But it's not just about the discontentedness with what I have it's also about, here's number three are letters C, it's about the presence of coveting in my life, coveting. Coveting is an old word.

I understand that when I put Exodus 20 after that it's the tenth commandment you know and coveting is the word that says that when I look through the window at someone else's life especially someone else I don't think is working as hard as I am doesn't seem to be applying himself as much as I have. And they are having a better experience with the material things of this world.

I have a bad feeling in my own heart that makes me want what they have. I'm reaching out in my own heart craving the things I don't have. Just like I look at what I do have and say I don't like this. But let me flip through this magazine. This is what I'd really like to have. I looked through the lattice of my window and say I'd like that guy's car. I'd like to live in that neighborhood. I'd like to have that kind of income. I'd like to wear those kinds of clothes. I'd like to have that job description. I want all of these things that I don't have. And my heart craves them when I see them. I just can't feel good for them.

I can't rejoice in their success. Basically all I see when I look at someone doing better than myself is I feel bad that I don't have it.

That's coveting.

If you covet, it's a sign of a heart that's greedy and because it's an either or situation a greedy heart



serves money and serves really yourself. Money is a means to yourself and your comforts and conveniences of life. Or are you going to serve God? And God says listen we've got to identify the greedy heart when it's there and we've got to do something about it. Here's another one. Number four letter D. Jot this reference down James Chapter 4 verse 3, James Chapter 4 verse 3 as I said money is a means to an end.

No one loves money they love the things that money buys. That's shorthand for saying I love myself and all I want is the things that money can buy. So I can have a more luxurious life, a more comfortable life, a more convenient life, a better life. I want the means to get a better life and all these things in the tactile experience of this world I want that stuff. I'm not happy with what I have it doesn't make me happy enough or comfortable enough. I want the things that other people have or at least I think it makes them happy, it would make me happy. And so it's all about selfishness. Now, James Chapter 4 verse 3 will tune this in for those people that claim to be Christians who pray every day and I'm just going to ask you this question. Do you have a selfish prayer list? That's the question for our passage here. In other words the fourth symptom I would say is this that my prayer list is made up of things that are all about my convenience my comfort and my well-being in this temporal world.

Now look at your prayer lists and if you don't have one just start to take notice of the things you pray for throughout the week and then I'd recommend you get a prayer list, you build a prayer list that is strategically taking you in the direction of really valuing the things that God values because when it comes to our natural tendency to pray it may be that it's springing from a greedy heart and all I really want is a bunch of things on my prayer list that I can, to put it in the words of James 4:3, spend them on my passions or my pleasures.

He says you ask wrongly speaking of prayer here because you're asking for things that you might spend them on your pleasures, your passions. Take a look at your prayer list and see whether or not really the essence and direction of your prayer list is a lot of things that are all about your creature comforts and the things of this world that would make your life just a little more cozy. Symptoms of a greedy heart. Rationalization, excuses, ridicule when called to be generous. Discontentedness, coveting, a selfish prayer list here's the fifth one we get have fifty five things I suppose if we want to be exhausted but I gave you the top five on my study this week since I was in James 4 let's round it out with this one. James Chapter 4 verses 1 and 2. Let's call it selfish conflicts. This is so insightful that the word of God helps us understand that so many of our arguments disputes with people in this planet is really about them being an obstacle to my convenience my comfort my luxury my cozy experience and life.

In other words to put it in the words of scripture what is causing the quarrels and fights in my life? Is it not my passions that are at war within me? You desire and you don't have so you have a problem with someone else you murder, you covet, you can't obtain.

So you're fighting and you're quarreling. So coveting, greed is creating problems in my life with other people. Now that is a step removed from just looking at my heart and kind of feeling what I feel about my relationship with money. It's saying what's my relationship with other people. The conflicts I have with other people are those conflicts really based on them being some kind of obstacle to keeping more money, having more money, making more money.

Or maybe just end-arounding money altogether. Getting my way of that promotion so that I would have a more comfortable life because again that would give me more money. Is there something in my relationship that is causing the conflict now in this passage it says you can't have something, so you murder. Now, hopefully we don't have any felons here that are homicidal who have killed people this week because of their desires. But it can happen. Jot this one down, First Kings Chapter 21. If you



know your Bible you know this is a really sad period of Israel's history. First Kings 21. We have a man in the King's palace named Ahab who has got a terrible wife named Jezebel and he's looking out the window of his mansion and he sees a piece of real estate he really wants.

He wants the vineyard that Naboth owns he tries to buy the vineyard. He says no I can't, I can't sell it to you and he wants it so badly. You know how the story plays out.

Sunday school graduates he ends up killing him. He wants, he covets, he can't have, he kills a man because he's in the way of getting what he wants. Now, unless you're a monarch you know or you really are someone who's made the news lately you're not spilling blood over it. But you know we do really go after people and try to do what we can to battle them in our day. And it may be on a lesser way as Jesus said we may not be killing them with our weapons but we may be attacking and assassinating their character and talking behind their back or whatever it might be or maybe as practical and as serious as First Corinthians 6 when we're dragging each other to some kind of court maybe literally or figuratively to solve a problem so that I can get what I deserve I can not lose money on this.

And that was a problem in Corinth. Corinth as I often say was the Orange County of the ancient world. And these people were concerned about their bottom line. And if they had a problem with someone who was going to affect their bottom line they would drag them to small claims court and try and beat it out in court so that they wouldn't lose money and Paul says, wouldn't you just rather be wronged than you having this experience of dragging each other to court so you can get every penny that you deserve. Well this is so practical some of the right now may be involved in literal court cases because to you it's all about the money and it's your money and you earned it and you deserve it, and it's unjust that they get more of it than they deserve. I understand all that but you got to look at some of those conflicts and ask yourself the question what is the fuel that drives this conflict. Why am I willing to do this. Is it really about justice or is it about the fact that I'm going to have less spending money at the end of the month or in my company we're going to hurt financially if I don't win this.

And the Bible says let's look at what's driving you here. It's an appetite for stuff and you just need to look at some of those selfish conflicts in your life and say, now there may be good doctrinal conflicts and reasons you can't make peace with the non-Christian world but when it comes to my conflict sometimes it is driven by my greed for stuff.

Those are five things you Bible scholars can go out and create longer lists but for the sake of time how do you respond to calls to generosity? What's the level of contentedness in your heart? Do you flip through magazines or walk through model homes or do you have that experience of seeing other people that you don't think are as talented are gifted or hardworking as you and your coveting their stuff, their success? How about a selfish prayer list or how about conflicts that really are motivated by your wanting stuff and people are getting in the way of that?

You see some of those things you may have a greedy heart and if you have a greedy heart we've got to deal with that. How do we deal with that? Well, Jesus is going to deal with it head on in verse 15. Take a look at this by helping to reorganize some of the values and priorities of life, verse 15 Luke Chapter 16. We jumped into the middle of 15 because we wanted to really focus on the reality of God knowing the heart and diagnosing our hearts. But let's get the whole of verse 15 right now. It's sandwiched by these concepts, he says to them.

Jesus says to the Pharisees "you are those who justify yourselves." Now I should say this if you're new to Bible study or you're really getting into Bible study and go to new level you'll see good rich theological words like justified and you may think it's only always and ever about justification that



Paul talked about in the book of Romans. It's not the case. In this case we're not talking about soteriological justification. We're talking about the justification of my life in front of other people. I want you to believe something about me like the Pharisees did. That says I'm good, I'm alright, I'm successful, God likes me, everything's going well here. I'm trying to make sure you have that opinion of me.

As a matter of fact this is so self-deceptive I want to look in the mirror and think that I am OK with how I'm doing and so I've got all these things that I use to, as it says, justify myself before people, before men.

Now God knows your heart. We dealt with that.

Now get this verse for what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God. That bears repeating for what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God. Now you've got to get in the context of what the Pharisees were doing. They were propping their reputations up with all these worldly symbols of success so that people would think they were doing well in life and doing well with God. And now God comes along and says all those things that impress your friends, an abomination to me. It's not that the things themselves are abominable. Is that how you want to prop up your reputation with those things and even the belief the equation that these things are symbols of success. To me that's an abomination. So when it comes to us living in our culture and in our world here's what I would advise us to do. Number two on our outline, we need to ignore the world's symbols of success. That may be easy to write down.

It's very hard to do. Number two ignore the world's symbols of success.

Someone walks into your office this week, walks into your house walks, into your neighborhood has all the symbols of success. It is hard for you to ignore that, hard for you to look past that. It's one thing for us not to have our hearts drawn to it with this craving to have those things because it's comfortable it's nice it's luxurious it makes for a better experience in this temporal life. But what I'm saying is we need to just get that whole category in our minds and say doesn't matter, doesn't matter, it doesn't matter. If Paul can say I can be content with a little or a lot then what we need to say is with a lot of life that everyone wants and when they achieve it, it doesn't matter to me because they try to justify themselves before men. They try to prop up their reputation before people.

They like to feel good about themselves.

If these things are in place and I'm telling you that's the way it is in our world right now just like it was in the first century.

Do you really look at symbols and pictures and things that say in our culture this person is doing well, this person has arrived.

This person got a tucked away life. And do you really say I look through them I look around them I look over him but I don't really care about them. You can't get to that place. Well then you've missed God's values all the way around he's told us listen it's not about the symbols of success. He says because really they mean nothing about what's going on in the inside of your life. Do you know that?

You can introduce me to your rich friend maybe bring some rich friends he's got this big company, maybe he's known he's some kind of business celebrity and he walks in and if you want me to be impressed by those symbols of worldly success only on a bad day for me would I be.



I've got to work on my sanctification to where in my mind it doesn't matter. And I should learn that by now being in the people business for decades. I understand there is no correlation between what you have and the world thinks is successful. I don't care what awards you win I don't care how much money you have. I don't care how great your house is I don't care what your title says in your company. It doesn't really indicate how you are as a person. It tells me nothing about the state of your heart. It tells me nothing about how God thinks of you. It tells me nothing.

So I ignore them. It doesn't really matter, at least I try to ignore it, I should ignore it, if I'm godly I'm going to ignore it.

Now the Pharisees were this kind of person you should jot down Matthew 23. Matthew 23 gives some great illustrations about the fact that the problem with the Pharisees is they were always polishing the exterior of their life so everyone thought they were godly but on the inside they paid no attention to it let me read a verse for you from that passage. Verse 25. Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, you're hypocrites. That by the way is a word if you haven't heard me define it you need it defined because one of those compound words where we take a Greek preposition and we put a verb together and when that happens in the Greek language we often get a beautiful word picture, a helpful word picture, a memorable word picture. So that's why we try to explain all those not to you know show off our Greek but just to say there's something here that can be memorable and helpful when we get a compound word with a preposition and a noun or a verb. And in this case we have one - "hupokrino." "Hupo" is a preposition. The preposition "underneath" or "under." "Krino" is the word "to evaluate something, to make a decision, to make a determination." "Apokrino," for instance, you Greek people, means "to answer, to make to respond with an adjudication, a decision, here is what I think of that, a determination of something, a judgment on something." "Hupokrino" means if you were to get under the surface you'd make an evaluation and the assumption is that's different than what you would see on the surface.

"Hupokrino" you would judge differently if you could see underneath. That's why that's such a great picture for the Pharisees and the scribes. They were classic hypocrites and here's why. He gives the illustration of the cup. On the cup you clean the outside but on the inside. You guys are like a cup that's clean on the outside but you're full of, here's the first two things Jesus nails. You're full of greed and self-indulgence. And again you can't serve both God and money but what I see... (Jesus can see it because he's God)

what I see in your life that you can't see and others can't see is though you look really good on the outside inside you're greedy and you're all about self and you just want to live this life for your own comforts and conveniences and having things that make your life here nice and cozy.

And that cup illustration is great. We passed out those really cool thermoses at the marriage retreat last weekend. And listen if you call me over and you put them in front of me in your house or you say here take a drink. I don't care how clean it is on the outside. What I really care about is how clean it is on the inside.

And the problem would be if you handed some of these that are spotless on the outside.

And I open it up and it's filthy and gross on the inside. He says why don't you clean what's on the inside of the cup first and then you get the outside clean.

Woe to you scribes and pharisees you hypocrites. You like if that illustration was helpful.

You're like whitewashed tombs. You're like nicely polished crypts or mausoleums. You're like a coffin



that's all shined up on the outside but on the inside you're full of dead men's bones and all kinds of uncleanness for outwardly you appear righteous to others, this is verse 28. But within, you're just full of hypocrisy and lawlessness you are just a walking contradiction. Now people couldn't see that. At this point Jesus was saying these things it was outlandish. Why? Because these were the smart guys. These were the Bible guys these were the holy guys these guys prayed all day long. These were the guys you could ask him anything about the Old Testament they could tell you. You'll look to them for spiritual guidance and God says no inside, selfish. Now why do they look so good on the outside. Here's another passage to jot down Mark Chapter 12 verses 38 through 40. Mark Chapter 12 verses 38 through 40. Jesus says when people look at you they see all the trappings of worldly success. He says about the scribes, they like to walk around with their long flowing robes and they didn't get those you know at Walmart right. These are like really nice duds extravagant even in Matthew 23 he goes on to talk about all the accoutrements that they put on they extend their frills and their tassels and their phylacteries and all that looks so good.

They like to be greeted with these respectful greetings in the marketplace. Call me great things. They love the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at the feast they have the expensive places where they sit at these things and they got the skybox of a luxury box they got all the trappings of success.

And yet you are those, look at this verse 40, Mark 12:40, but you are those who devour widow's houses for a pretense of making long prayers.

Now think about that.

Here are these people that the people they should be caring for and being generous toward they're taking money from them and under a pretense they're saying I'll give you some spiritual service for that. This reminds me of the Ezekiel passage in Ezekiel 34 where he says the shepherds are feeding themselves.

They're taking the fat of the flock and they're taking all the wool and they want all of that for themselves. And then the people who should be serving they're taking from that they don't even try to serve them. They feed themselves. And here the Pharisees were that way and before you go too far down that path in your own minds and "yeah, those tele-evangelists, those preachers on TV, those prosperity preachers..." and I'm all for you know throwing a few rocks at them.

But this sermon is not about false teachers. It's about how we thinking we're right with God can really reflect the values of false teachers and the false teachers according to Second Peter have a heart that is trained in greed. That's how you can identify a false teacher and it is also how you can identify a false Christian. They sit and sing songs about the redemption they have in Christ but in their heart they can't wait to buy that next thing to get to the next level to get the next promotion. That's what they live for. That is their goal.

Those are their dreams.

They're all about the worldly symbols of success. They imagined to put it in the words of First Timothy Chapter 6, that godliness is a means to great gain. They want gain, material gain and they think somehow Jesus is going to help them get there.

Well that sounds like the prosperity preacher. You're right it does. But I wonder even in a good Bible teaching evangelical non-name-it-and-claim-it church if you don't sit there sometimes and think "God if I get these things right in my life I expect that we'll get that promotion. I think we might be able to



land that new house. I think we might be able to get that new car."

That is so irrelevant, there's no connection between the worldly symbols of success and what's going on in your heart you ignore those. The Didache, you Sunday-School graduates may have known all those verses but here's a couple. The Didache.

I didn't sneeze. That was the label given to a Church Manual of the second century one of the earliest extra-Biblical writings that weren't ever presented as Scripture but they were trying to consolidate the practical policies and practices of the early church based on the teaching of the Twelve. That's what did Didache means, the teaching of the Twelve. So they always talked about how to discern as Second Peter and Jude and other places in the scripture always tried to distinguish when false teachers and true teachers because again not everyone had the 27 books of the New Testament so that to be very careful about who was teaching them and in the traveling teachers that would come through representing the truth of the apostles they had to be very discerning about them. And in one of those passages Chapter Five verse two of the Didache. It's says you know the thing about false teachers. They're always advocates of the wealthy. Watch how they gravitate that direction. It's all about them giving as James says preferential treatment for the wealthy. Not only that they defend them. They want to move toward the direction of the people with all the worldly symbols of success.

And then my favorite line which I have quoted from the platform before Chapter 11 verse 6 of the Didache. That's because we take it into chapter so we can locate these things. It's says if a teacher comes and wants to teach you and he asks for a fee, he asks for money to do it, then he's a false teacher.

A few verses earlier it says. And if he does come and teach you and he may not ask for a fee but he stays after he teaches more than three days.

He's also a false teacher. Whoa, what are you saying?

Are you saying that those guys should not in any way give any hint that they're in it for the accommodations or the money. That should not be there if it is false teachers you can't serve God and money. You know and I hope you know this you should know it, a lot of times when I'm gone I try to bring some good speakers for you smile at me if you're happy with some of these guys I've brought in, and I don't care how famous they are like Dr. Mohler is coming in a couple of weeks. It doesn't matter. At our church I'll call someone up and I'll say can you speak for me here at our church. OK. None of them ever ask for a fee to speak here ever.

If they do I start saying our connection is breaking up can't hear you. Because we all understand it. I mean ever when I ask to come speak knows the Didache and they know Chapter 11 verse 6 and they understand that's a sign of a false teacher.

We don't ask for that. It's funny how Christian musicians don't seem to have that same policy. But Christian preachers do at least the ones that preach on this platform. They never ask for money. I will give him an honorarium of some kind they never ask. When I go preach at other places I never ask. We don't do that. We have to be a sign right there we're in it for the wrong reasons. This doesn't matter. And I'll tell you I preach at some places, I don't want to get personal on this, there is not a reference to money and not a dime of money. And we high five and great. Fine, great.

I mean I try to get free lunch maybe when I'm there but if I stay for more than three meals they may start quoting Didache Chapter 11.



You're in it for the meals. Ignore the world's symbols of success.

Now with that said you can look at a passage like Luke Chapter 16 verse 15 you can read that statement for what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God and you may miss the point. You may think what that saying is God is against wealth and you might become one of those monks. I doubt it but maybe you'll say I'm gonna take a vow of poverty. I'm going to go into the desert. I'm going to live off of nothing. I want to have nothing. And that must be what God thinks of money.

Let me just briefly correct that if I can. Wealth is not inherently evil, right? Money is not the root of all evil. The love of money is the root of all evil.

And if that's an excuse for you not being generous. That's wrong we already dealt with that. But when we talk about money itself, look in the Bible here's just one proof at all the people in the scripture that God commends and they're very wealthy and he never condemns him for it. And he doesn't do what he did in Matthew 19 by going to a rich man and saying give it all away sell it give it to the poor and follow me. That was to a guy who God knew your idol is money you're greedy you've got to deal with that. I need to show this too because he asked them to obey the rules of God? And he goes of course I do. From my youth I have. You've broken the first one you've got another god. The god is your money and so he deals with him that way. And obviously every rich person is called to be very generous that's what First Timothy 6 is all about. But when it comes to wealth itself.

No, lot of wealthy people in the scripture. And you may sit here today and be very wealthy. There's nothing sinful about being wealthy. There are some dangers and temptations that come with it but the real concern is wanting to be wealthy.

That's the problem.

Let me say this to get more specific on this please go to Ecclesiastes Chapter 5 verse 19. It says wealth and possessions and the power to enjoy them. These are the gift of God. So I know this.

If you have wealth and you have possessions and God is giving you the ability to enjoy those things. The Bible says that's a gift from God just like James 1:17. Good and perfect gifts come from God. God does want you to enjoy things in this life.

As a matter of fact, I love these verses when it comes to rich Christians in First Timothy Chapter 6 verse 17.

It says that God is providing richly providing them with all these things to be enjoyed.

Matter of fact I love to quote this verse. First Timothy Chapter 4 verse 3. I feel very special when I think of this verse. It says God is speaking to the ascetics I want to say you can't have that you can't do that you can enjoy that. It says God has provided these good things right.

It's all about enjoying them or denying yourself, for those who believe and know the truth. Oh man I love that. I love that because "Oh! it's me." I hope you can say that too.

So if you're sitting there somewhere and enjoying a nice meal and enjoying it you're looking across your non-Christian counterpart you can say, "hey that steak is not for you to enjoy. For me to enjoy. Because I believe and know the truth."



God certainly wants you to enjoy those things right.

This is not about that. It's about the love of money. I understand that a \$50 meal is going to be more enjoyable than a \$5 meal.

I understand that and you want to take me out tonight and you want to take me to Ruth's Chris or you want to take to... Let's go to... Where should we go together? Let's go to Mastro's.

You want to take me there? I bet I will enjoy that more than driving through at Taco Bell as much as I love that little restaurant. That's a more enjoyable experience. There's nothing wrong, the Bible says, with that. It's better for me in terms of my creature comfort to experience a \$200 a night hotel room than it is \$49.99 roadside inn. It's a much different experience. The sheets just feel... the pillows are much better in the \$200 night place. A \$80 shirt is certainly more comfortable than a \$6 shirt.

I understand that and you understand that. The danger is the love of money.

The refusal to be generous that in their hearts they propped up their reputation with these things and they felt godly because they had them.

There's the sin. Now if you respond poorly to calls to being generous.

If you close your heart as it says in First John chapter 3 verse 17. To those who have needs and you're not willing because you're too busy saving up to go to Mastro's.

Well then there's a problem a big problem. If you crave those things it's a problem. If you set those things as you desire it's a problem. When you seek them and that's what your life is that's a problem. It's not only a problem, it's a disqualifying problem. You cannot be greedy and enter the Kingdom of God. You can't have an inheritance there. You're not going to be a part of the kingdom. So what do we do about the worldly symbols of success. Some of you have those. Ignore them. Ignore them. By that I mean don't put any stock in them. I don't care about them. At least that's the godly day when I'm being godly. And you shouldn't care about them either. We should have the secret of contentment knowing how to deal with a lot or a little when God gives you a lot that's great. You better be generous and rich and good works but when it comes to you wanting to feel good about yourself because you have them the Bible says when you think that way that's an abomination to God. What is exalted among men and the process of exalting those things is an abomination to God. That's why verses 16 and 17 of Luke Chapter 16 make perfect sense. Some people commentators if they're not thinking straight they write their commentaries I don't know why they get published when they don't know what they're doing sometimes.

But I think that they have no idea why this is here. It makes perfect sense. Spend enough time in this passage and you know exactly why these two verses are here.

After all of that about money he says the law and the prophets were until John. Like people are going "I don't know maybe this is just pieced together patchwork. I don't know maybe it doesn't belong here." It totally belongs here. Since the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached since John came and everyone forces his way into it but it's easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the law to become void. Now we're talking about the Bible all of a sudden?

Yeah that's right because the context is what? You can serve God and you can serve money but you cannot serve them both. Money is going to fail. Money is temporary. Money is never going to be something you can take with you. But there is something that prepares for eternity that is eternal and



that's the word of God. Not one dot, one serif on one little Hebrew character to God is irrelevant when it comes to the Bible. That's God's truth and will always be important. What's the most important thing about it. Well it's about being in the kingdom. It's about you being in right relation with God it's about in other words Paul being able to say I can do all things through Christ. I'm rightly related to the king of the kingdom and all of that is what's important and you know you had all these promises in the Old Testament about the coming kingdom about the Messiah about the King of the kingdom and all of that was promised and then comes John and John says there's one coming after me. I'm not worthy to untie his sandals. He is the king. I decrease he increases it's about him. Put your trust in him. Repent get your heart ready.

Christ. The Bible promises that. The Bible explains all that. The Bible has to define for me to play off of our last worded point what success really is. I put it this way, number three, you need to biblically define your life goals. Biblically there's the key word. I typed it out for you but biblically define them. What is my life goal?

What do I want to see as a measure of success. It's not going to be found in your job, your title, your house, your inheritance that you stock up for your kids, what kind of schools your kids go to. None of that will be a symbol of success from God's perspective. And I love the fact here in verse 16 he puts the focus on John because let me talk to you about John for a second. We're not talking about John the Apostle we're talking about John the Baptist. How into the worldly symbols of success was he?

We studied this back in Chapter 7. Let me just read a little bit of it for you. Luke 7:24. What did you go out into the wilderness to see? Verse 25.

Did you go to see a man dressed in really cool clothes?

No. Men dressed and splendid clothing, they live in luxury. You'll find them in king's courts and king's palaces. Who did you go out to see? A prophet? Do you want what the worldly symbols suggest or do you want the word? Do you want the word you want a prophet?

Oh yes I tell you a prophet indeed more than a prophet. The prophet that Malakai 3 talked about the one who is the forerunner to the Messiah. He was the speaker of the word of God. You want the word you can listen to John. I tell you among those born of women none is greater than John.

But he didn't go to Men's Wearhouse before he stepped into the pulpit right? He wasn't at Mastro's. Did you notice that? He's chomping on you know grasshopper chips baked low calorie. I don't know what they were but it wasn't what you're going to find at a nice restaurant and his clothing was kind of a joke.

And Jesus says you want the values of God that He does highly value? It's the things that people like the Pharisees and the rich people turn their nose up when they saw John.

What does that mean every preacher has to be that way? No, he goes on to say that. He says you know what John came eating no bread, drinking no wine, dressed the way was, eating his funny stuff and you said he's crazy, he has a demon. The Son of Man came. I was completely different. I was eating. I was drinking. I was dining actually in places like Zacchaeus in his big mansion with a view. I was there and you said he's a glutton. He's a drunkard.

He's a friend of tax collectors and sinners. In other words it doesn't matter whether you have a lot or a little. The symbols of the worldly success don't matter. What matters is whether you're speaking the truth, living the truth, responding to the truth. It's about the Word of God the Word of God endures



forever. Isaiah said that. Everything else is going to go away.

What matters 100 years from now and what matters 100 minutes from now is the Word of God in your life. It's not about your feelings. It's not about what you've got parked in the driveway. It is about the Word of God in your life. How has your relationship been with the Bible this week? How diligently have you been pursuing the principles of God's word? Think this through. I mean what has your desire really been this week as you get up?

Is it to go to work to earn a paycheck or is it to go to work to exemplify the principles of Colossians Chapter 3. But I really want to be the kind of person that I should be on that job keeping my mind set on things above which doesn't make me a bad employee makes you a great employee because my boss is not my boss.

It's Christ and I'm going to serve way better when Christ is in the forefront of my mind. The word of God is what matters.

It says here when it comes to the kingdom and the good news of the kingdom everyone forces his way into it. If you put a question mark in the margin of that, what is that talking about? You have to keep this in context. Here with the Pharisees and the scribes standing in the back disapproving.

And yet guess what Jesus was doing? Preaching to huge and growing crowds. As a matter of fact we started those parables about the way the Pharisees turned up their nose at the crowds when at the end of Chapter 14 of Luke he says this: "He has ears let him hear." Beginning of Chapter 15, here were the people that came to him. The tax collectors and the sinners were coming to hear him. So he had crowds and they were lining up to get a front row seat to hear him preach. This is not a negative statement if you're an exegete this is not to be translated as a passive. They're not being forced into it. They are forcing their way into it which is translated well here I think. He's forcing his way, that's an active verb. And in that force it's like you seeing Best Buy doors open at 6:00 in the morning on Black Friday.

They force their way into it. They're clamoring to get in. Now it wasn't the people you would expect you'd expect to be the people who have all the worldly symbols of success the long robes the nice seats the box seats at the church. Not those guys. They were standing on the back disapproving, why because they loved money. But there were people that loved the truth and their hearts were being converted as they clamored to hear the prophet, The Prophet, which wasn't John. They heard John and they said OK this one better than John. This is the one John spoke of the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. Biblically to find your life goals. There's a passage in John 12 that talks about people that warm up to the truth of God but unfortunately they don't go all the way because they love the glory that comes from man rather than the glory that comes from God. They love the accolades and the applause and acceptance of the world and yet the Bible says this. You need to not be conformed to the world to be transformed by the renewing of your mind. How do you do that? This book that never is going to be void, this book that's never going to be void, these verses that will never be void. We need to get into the word of God and clamor and force our way in to the Scripture. When I was a young pastor I was pastor in this church and being so right.

You know I often have people come in from different groups and they were you know trying to get me on their side on various things and I had this little contingent, this little cadre of guys that came in at one time and they all seem to have that same philosophy of Christian life and they weren't "name it and claim it" weren't "prosperity" guys but they told me you know what you really need to think through your preaching because there's something about it that is just not right. You need to see that God wants us to have these things in life and you need to get on board with this. Now I had no kids at



that time and I was young and and so I not only said well let me know what you're talking about and they gave me material and they gave me a stack of tapes from all these lectures that were from their little brand of Christianity. And I was so ambitious I said I don't just want to listen to their tapes. I want to meet these people. I went to the grand ballrooms of these hotels and I listened these people parrot verses and talk about Christ but didn't really get down to it. Now we'll be a little transparent this will reveal a little bit of this maybe, maybe you've had this exposure. When I tell you what I continually heard among all the false teaching about godliness being a means to great gain.

They said this little thing about how we should function in our daily life. "Go through the magazines go through the newspaper go through whatever periodicals you have and I need you to cut out things that are part of your dream and put them on your fridge." Right.

"And I want you every time you go to the fridge whether it's a yacht or a boat in the harbor whether it's an RV whether it's a European vacation whether it's a nice house whatever it is a horse put all of that on your fridge and let it be a constant reminder to you of your dreams and that's what you're pursuing every day.

Your dreams. Go after your dream.

Well I got enough information from this series of lectures and listening to the tapes and reading the material and going to the airport seminars that I was ready to just destroy this little plan in my church. When, instead of just trying to be vindictive and destroy them and argue with them, I really want to win them. I didn't win very many but I did win a couple.

And I said listen I don't have a problem with you putting your dreams on your fridge. I just have a problem with what those dreams are. Right. Because what you're putting on the refrigerator as symbols of your life success. It's an abomination to God. Not that the things are an abomination to God it's that they are your dreams. This is not biblically defined life. Even when your life has an abundance of possessions it does not consist of what life really is, as First Timothy 6 says, real life has nothing to do with that. But I'd love to see on your refrigerator is maybe some faces of an Awana group that you're leading, maybe the goals for your personal life that sound like this love joy peace patience kindness gentleness faithfulness self-control. Those would be good. How about things that relate to your lost neighbors at work. How about you put a picture of them up you pray for their salvation. How about verses that remind you that the laborers are few. The harvest is plentiful. How about things that remind you of your love for Christ that you're love him with all your hearts, soul, strength and mind. Put all those things all over your fridge. I'm all about you putting your dreams on your fridge. See them every time you go to the fridge. It's your dreams I have a problem with. They're not biblical.

Happy to report that some of those people's lives were completely turned around. They took all of that, took me up on my challenge. Dismissed all that and said OK let's live for this and let's see if that really is what I was looking for all along is to pursue a relation with Christ. Matthew 6:32 people searching for all these things they wonder what they are going to eat, what they're going to put on, how they're going to live. Don't chase the things the pagans chase. You know verse 33? Matthew 6. Seek first the kingdom God's kingdom and His righteousness and all these things will be added to that may be this, may be that, may be a lot of square footage, may be a little. Doesn't matter. God will take care that you pursue the kingdom. What matters this morning is whether you're in the kingdom. We're going to have the ushers come down and pass out the elements for the Lord's Supper.

I hope you realize the thing that should be most celebrated in your heart is not whether or not you sit here today moving into a brand new beautiful house with a great view. The thing that should thrill



your heart more than anything else is that you sit here today knowing my name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. I am a member of the kingdom of God.

My sins have been appended to the cross. If you're a Christian and you know what that's about. You take those elements and hang on to them. You spend some time making sure your faith is planted squarely in Jesus Christ and not your own accomplishments.

And then you spend some time thinking about what your hope is where your dreams are and slide them from the world's definition of success and make sure this morning you can leave saying I know what God is looking for in life, that I love God and I'm willing to take my life and let it be a completely consecrated and sacrificial gift to say God whatever you want, whenever you want, wherever you want. Define your goals Biblically, spend some time thanking God for your qualification into the kingdom. I'll come back up in about three minutes and will take these elements at the same time together.

Psalms 52 says the same thing that we've been dealing with here that had some words that are so appropriate for the Lord's Supper. It speaks of whether or not, not what we're just going to love but what's going to be the refuge of our life. Do we take refuge in God or he says we can take refuge, verse 7 says, in the abundance of our riches. He says when we choose to put our confidence and our trust and our shelter in the things that we own he says we're just putting our refuge in our own destruction. But if we trust God and say my real hope is in God what matters is my relationship with God.

The refuge that I have for us from a New Testament perspective is my trust and confidence because of Christ's death. I'm right now with a living God. He says then I will be, here the next verse, like a green olive shoot in the house of the Lord. I will be rejoicing in the loving kindness of God. I'll be thanking God for what he has accomplished what he's done. Now again for the psalmist in the Old Testament in Psalm 52 that brought up a lot of images of God's deliverance and his redemption but couldn't possibly have the richness that we have from a New Testament perspective. Thinking back to the reality the fact that I have the ultimate finished work of Christ that is my ultimate refuge. I am right with the living God I could die today or I could live for the next 20 years with nothing or with everything it wouldn't really matter. What matters is that Christ has made me acceptable to the God of the universe my creator. I now have an inheritance in the kingdom because of what he has done. I can't do it with a greedy heart. I got to put that on the altar this morning and I got to let it go and I've got to say when it comes to money that's not it. I'll be trusting in the finished work of Christ. I thought of that line from Shakespeare this week. Henry the Sixth when King Henry is out in his kingdom without his crown he's out there dressed normally and of course someone comes to him and says you know how can you be a king, you know. "If thou be a king where's thy crown?"

You don't have a crown on your head. And King Henry said my crown is not on my head my crown is in my heart. He said it's not gold, it is not layered with gold, it is not bedecked with jewels. He said my crown is contentment. He says a crown the kings seldom enjoy. It's such a great line when I think about the reality of who I am and Christ I am in this world as a child of the King I have a crown in essence I am a prince of the King. And yet my crown is not with the worldly symbols of success. I know today that I have everything going for me and it has nothing to do with the prosperity teachers say it's with the fact that I am right with the living God. I'm a member of the kingdom. I'm willing to live my life in accordance with the Constitution of the kingdom, the word of God and I'm never going to hear from my creator depart from me I never knew you. I have everything going for me. And that means when it comes to things that are the external symbols of my life that are according to what the world thinks, it doesn't matter. My crown is contentment. A crown kings seldom enjoy. And I do think when it comes to my non-Christian counterparts even when they're trying to get more gold on their life



so to speak. They're never content. May we lead today content which means we're not going to be greedy. We're not going to be in love with money. We're not going to measure our lives the way every other non-Christian measures their life.

It's about something far more profound than that. It's about the finished work of Christ. It is about us taking refuge in the living God. If that's your perspective then let's with great thanksgiving eat this bread and drink this cup.

Would you stand with me while I dismiss us with a word a prayer? God, as we have that tactile experience of eating this bread and drinking this cup, I know we are to remember that last supper.

That reminds us that these elements are a symbol of the covenant that you make with us in your blood. But really if we were to expand upon that is our willingness to come to you by the grace that you provided in Christ to repent of our sins and trust in what God has done on that cross through Jesus, his willingness to be a sacrifice for us. And that covenant is that I have nothing to worry about. I have really in essence all of my ultimate problems solved. And God in that won't matter then how I get there whether with a lot or a little, abundance or a need doesn't really matter what matters is I can do all things from here until I meet you through Christ who strengthens me. So God help us not to be strengthened by our budgets or by our income or by our square footage let us be strengthened by the fact that we have a relationship with you which would only be possible because of the death of Christ on a cross. So God I pray that you would empower our hearts to live that way with that perspective this week. Thank you so much for these lessons we're learning from Luke 16. I prayed imprint them upon our lives and we live accordingly.

In Jesus name. Amen.