

Intro: Why a series on money?

- Participants: 84% are in a CG and 66% are members.
- 39% say they don't have a written budget.
- 42% say they don't consistently stay within their budget.
- 40% say they currently have debt.
- 50% say they don't save at least 10% of their earnings.
- 53% say they don't have an adequately funded emergency fund.
- 44% say their giving is not sacrificial or generous.
- 42% say they are not content with what they have and earn.
- 35% say they do not have a great understanding of biblical principles related to managing God's money.

Over the next four weeks, we're going to be addressing many of these issues (giving, saving and spending). But, beyond many of the practical questions concerning money, I agree with Craig Blomberg that "Materialism is the single biggest competitor with authentic Christianity for the hearts and souls of millions in the world today."

Read Mark 10:17-31

The Point: God is able to save the rich when Jesus becomes to them an eternal treasure.

1. Renounce Everything and Follow Jesus to Gain Eternal Treasure (10:17-22).

- Context: Jesus was on setting on a journey with his disciples when a rich man (v. 22) asks Jesus a question, which sets the stage for a dialogue between Jesus and this man and then the disciples.
- **The Rich Man's Question: "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"**
 - What a great question! There might even be some here today asking this as well.
 - Observation #1: he views Jesus as a "good" teacher, not necessarily as the Son of God.
 - Observation #2: he is concerned with what he "must do" to gain eternal life.
 - As the conversation proceeds, we will see that his question is really about how he can "earn" eternal life. In other words, is there something that he can do to assure his salvation?
 - Thus, his question reveals just how far he is from the humble faith that must characterize all who *receive* the kingdom, which Jesus just explained in Mark 10:15: "Whoever does not *receive* [as opposed to earning] the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it" (e.g. Childlike faith).
- **Jesus' Response Part 1: "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone."**
 - Notice what Jesus doesn't say (pray this prayer, walk this aisle, etc.).
 - Jesus challenges his inadequate understanding of goodness. So let's work backwards:
 - Only God is good. Only God has the goodness required to gain eternal life.
 - Thus, why do you call me good? Unless you are prepared to see me as God.
 - Jesus is saying, you shouldn't be so flippant in how you throw around the word "good."
 - In other words, if only God is good, then there's nothing you can do to inherit eternal life. Human deeds cannot earn eternal life.
- **Jesus' Initial Response Part 2: "You know the commandments..."**
 - Jesus lists the 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 5th commandments. He also adds "do not defraud."
 - What is Jesus doing? He's holding up the law as a mirror.
 - "For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin" (Rom 3:20).
 - What do you see when you look in the mirror? God requires perfect obedience!

- **The Rich Man’s Justifying Answer: “Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.”**
 - If anybody deserves to get into heaven, it’s this guy.
- **Jesus’ Heart-Piercing Call: Go, sell, give, come and follow.**
 - The basic thrust of Jesus’ entire response is found in the words: “Come, follow me.”
 - “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Mark 8:34).
 - No one can inherit eternal life apart from undivided loyalty and self-surrender to King Jesus. As Bonhoeffer says, “When Jesus calls a man, he bids him come and die.” The cost of discipleship is great. It will cost you everything.
 - Why does Jesus tell him to sell everything and give to the poor?
 - Jesus knew that money was his treasure and his god. His identity, power and sense of meaning was all tied up in his wealth. He had broken the 1st commandments: you shall have no other gods. Money was his idolatrous god and as Jesus says in Matthew 6:24, “You cannot serve both God and money.”
 - In the kingdom of God, there will be no rivals. King Jesus demands absolute and total surrender. True repentance for this guy meant selling everything.
 - Jesus’ radical call of discipleship comes with a great promise: treasure in heaven.
 - Discipleship costs you everything but you gain everything.
 - “Jesus is something—someone—worth losing everything for. And if we walk away from the Jesus of the gospel, we walk away from eternal riches” (Platt, *Radical*).
 - The Apostle Paul got this: “If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ...” (Phil 3:4-8).
 - Don’t miss these beautiful words: “And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said...”
 - Jesus wasn’t telling this man to give everything away because he hated him or wanted to make his life miserable. Jesus loved him enough to tell him the truth.
 - Why was it loving for Jesus to tell him to do this? We take good things and make them into god things that rule our lives. Only when they are in the hands of Jesus will we not worship them.
 - Additionally, you will find in Jesus a caring Father, a Shepherd, and a King eager and ready to give you an inheritance in the kingdom. Do not fear!!!
- **The Man’s Sorrowful Response**
 - Let’s be clear: his wealth is not what kept him from eternal life. He went away sorrowful because he refused to exchange the god of wealth and his earthly bling for the eternal treasure found in following Jesus as the one true God.
 - The way you use money is an indicator of your eternal destination. When Jesus gets a hold of your heart, he also gets a hold of your money. The way you use money is one of the clear proofs that Jesus is your treasure. Look at the early church:
 - “And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need” (Acts 2:45).
 - “There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need” (Acts 4:34-35).

2. Beware of the Dangerous Deceitfulness of Riches (10:23-25)

- The scene changes from the rich man to Jesus having a conversation with his disciples.
- First, the “kingdom of God” is synonymous with “eternal life” (17) or “salvation” (26).
- Why is it so difficult for the rich to enter the kingdom of God? Because they deceive you.
- The parable of the sower: “As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful” (Matt 13:22).
- Money encourages self-sufficiency and independence from God. It provides a sense of security.
 - If I have money, why do I need God? I can buy everything I need.
- There are problems with placing your hope in riches
 - Riches lead to arrogance and pride
 - “As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy” (1 Tim 6:17).
 - “This is mine. I earned.”
 - Riches can lead my heart astray:
 - “For where your treasure is there your heart will be also” (Matt 6:21).
 - Riches can be easily lost:
 - “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal” (Matt 6:19).
 - Riches cannot ultimately prevent death
 - Riches cannot save your soul
 - “For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?” (Mark 8:36).
 - Riches are limited in their perspective
 - As Alcorn says, “Do not live for the dot but for the line.”
 - You can have riches for this lifetime of 100 years or you can have riches for all eternity.

3. Know that God is Able to save even the Richest of Sinners (10:26-27).

- The Disciples’ response: then who can be saved?
 - Most Jews would have expected the rich to inherit eternal life because their wealth testified to the blessing of God on their lives.
 - Jesus affirms the complete opposite.
 - If a rich person, who is blessed by God, cannot be saved, then who can be?
- Jesus agrees with his disciples and says that, “With man it [this salvation of anyone] is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.”
- Salvation for everyone, including the rich, is a work of God. Apart from the grace of God, no one will be saved.
 - No man or woman can save themselves by their own efforts.
- **The Example of Zacchaeus: there will be rich in heaven.**
 - Zacchaeus is the perfect example. In fact, Luke has strategically placed the Zacchaeus narrative right after the Rich Man to prove this point.
 - Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector and was rich (Luke 19:2). As Jesus walked by, he called Zacchaeus out of the tree and went to his house. Yet, the people grumbled, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner” (19:7).

- But it says, “Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, ‘Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house’” (Luke 19:8-9).
- When God saves and the Spirit works, you always see its effects. There is always true repentance.

4. Believe that the Cost of Discipleship far outweighs that of Non-Discipleship (10:28-31)

- Peter reminds Jesus that they have left everything and followed him and Jesus promises them that the benefits of the gospel will far outweigh and surpass any sacrifice that they might make to follow Christ.
 - Jesus is not encouraging his disciples to abandon familial responsibilities. But sometimes family members turn against believers or there may be separation due to missions or serving in ministry.
- You will receive a hundredfold (houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, children and lands)
 - The hundredfold return is to be understood in the context of the new community
 - If you have left a father, you will find within the messianic community a hundred who will be as a father to you.
 - If you leave a home, you will be welcomed in the houses and lands of other believers.
 - There will be a multiplication of relationships and these will often be more meaningful than blood ties.
- You will face persecution
 - The blessings of this life will be mixed with persecutions.
- You will receive eternal life.
- You will be first.
 - You can enjoy prominence now on this earth, or forever in the one to come.
- “He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose” (Jim Elliot).

Conclusion:

- Is Jesus worth it?
- If you are following Christ, does your current use of money convey that Jesus is your greatest treasure.
- In the coming weeks, we are going to specifically look at how our giving, saving and spending reflect that Jesus is our treasure. Will you commit to putting everything on the table for the sake of the gospel?