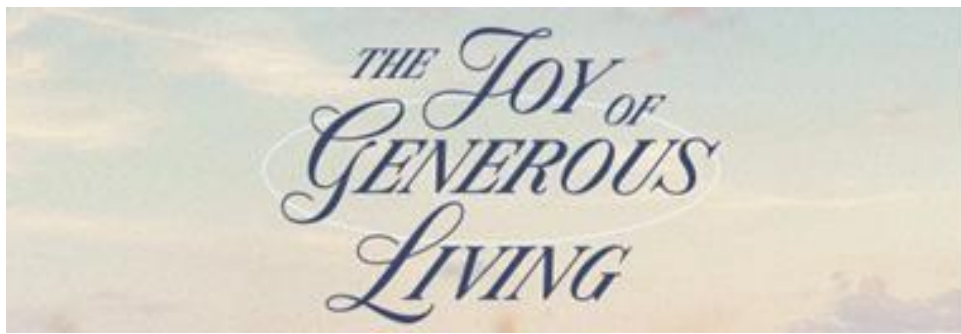




Joy in Generosity: Luke 19:1-10

November 17, 2024

By Pastor Tom VanAntwerp

Group Leader Notes

Last week, Pastor Joshua launched a 3-week teaching series, *The Joy of Generous Living*. Towards the end of the message, he said: *This isn't a sermon series on money; it's about how joy, generosity, and gratitude lead us into a deeper life of faith.* And while it isn't a series on money, at some point, for a series on generosity to become practical, you have to talk about money because money is, after all, one of the primary currencies of life.

Questions: Is your relationship with money coming between you and the kingdom life God has for you to live? When you think of the role of money, does it bring you joy, anxiety, or something else?

Bottom Line: Money lures us all, subtly and not so subtly, to a life curved in on itself. The antidote to ourselves curved in on ourselves is joyful, open, abundant generosity.

Take Home Message:

Our greatest good comes from letting our lives be shaped by the person of Jesus and the purposes of God. And that has to do with our financial life as much as it has to do with the life of our body, our mind, and our spirit. There are ways to manage our money that can help us lean into the contours of the purpose of Jesus.

Main Scripture Reading: Luke 19:1-10

19 He entered Jericho and was passing through. **2** And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. **3** And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature. **4** So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. **5** And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." **6** So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. **7** And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." **8** And 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." **9** And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. **10** For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Teaching Points:

- One's relationship with money is a key indicator of a person's inner life.
- Jesus talked about money so much because it can potentially hinder our relationship with God.
- The relentless and anxious pursuit of finances can lead to spiritual failure. At the same time, the anxiety of having enough resources can create a level of fear that God is not trusted to provide – which is another spiritual failure.
- There are several pitfalls when our lives become too focused on money:
 - *Greed*: We can find ourselves craving for more, focusing on the things we want rather than on the one who provides everything we need.
 - *Jealousy*: We get caught in the comparison trap, causing frustration, disappointment, ingratitude.
 - *False security*: We view our successes or failures through the lens of our bank account or retirement account – as if that is what will save us.
- Generosity is surrendering what is “mine” (or what has been entrusted to me). Acknowledging that it is God's. And allowing Him to access it for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.

Group Discussion

Begin in prayer before reading and discussing the text.

1. People can react emotionally to money as it stirs various feelings. These might include anxiety, control, regret, envy, anger, fear, or inadequacy, to name a few. Ask your group to volunteer how they feel when they are:

- Shopping online
- Venmoing a friend for dinner
- Opening bills
- Getting a paycheck
- When you find out what a friend or colleague makes (do you feel differently if they are making more or less than you).

If you want to explore your relationship with money deeper, spend a few minutes this week and write down your response next to each of these scenarios. What have you learned about yourself?

2. Martin Luther spoke about the relationship of sin and how “*humanity curved in upon itself*.” What do you think Luther means by that? Why is our relationship with money important in orienting us to spiritual health and a growing relationship with God?
3. Jesus mentions money many times throughout the gospels. Ask your small group to pick two Scripture passages below and discuss their meaning.
 - Mark 10:17-22
 - Luke 12:16-21
 - Matthew 6:19-21
 - Mark 12:41-44

4. Although we do not know exactly what happened between Jesus and Zaccheus, Jesus held up a mirror so that Zaccheus could see who he was, maybe also a window for him to see who God created him to become. After hearing the message, can you see who you are? Is Jesus providing a mirror for you to see who God created you to become?
5. Read Matthew 19:24: ²⁴*Again, I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.* What does this metaphor mean to you?

Pastor Tom concluded the sermon with an invitation to make a financial commitment to support the ministries of Grace Chapel for 2025. Take time this week to pray, reflect, discern, and even wrestle with the commitment God is inviting you to make. Look at the commitment card and spend time with God, with family and pray about it each day.

Let's Pray 2Corinthians 9:6-8

⁶Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.