

Putting Money in Its Place

This Cultural Moment, Pt. 4
Matthew 6:24 & Philippians 4:10-20

Allan McCullough

Grace Hill Church
November 18, 2018



I. PRAYER

- i. God, I pray that you would help us to grasp the vastness of your generosity towards us in Christ. And that in turn would cause us to be a radically generous people.

II. INTRODUCTION

a. Well, we got the big news this week!

- i. Amazon's HQ2 is coming to Northern Virginia bringing with it up to 38,000 jobs!
 - Home values are projected to go up.
 - More infrastructure projects are probably coming.
 - Who knows that they are going to do about metro.
- ii. **And even without Amazon, we live in the wealthiest region in all of America as calculated by median household income.**
 - 6 of the top ten richest counties in America are here in the DC area.
 1. Loudoun is #1 and Fairfax is in the top 5!
 - So, think about this. We live in the richest area of the richest country in all of the history of the world.
 1. And with Amazon promising to pay an average of \$150,000 per year, that's only going to increase!
 2. The kind of wealth and affluence that influences the culture all around us is unprecedented and historic.



b. And throughout the year, we've been in a sermon series called: This Cultural Moment.

- i. If there is a topic that is influencing our culture around us and the Word of God addresses it, we've been talking about it.
 - And no doubt, the topic of money is massive in our culture.
 - And it is also massive in the Bible.
 1. The Bible references our money or possessions over 2000 times.
 - So, this means we are going to talk about money today.
- ii. **And I realize that money is a bit of an awkward topic in church.**
 - If this is your first time at Grace Hill, I wouldn't blame you if your rolling your eyes thinking: Great, my first time here and they're talking about money. Typical!
 1. Rest assured, this is our first time since we planted, which it's been over a year, that we've preached on this.
- iii. **But why is it that money is an awkward topic to address?**
 - I think the reason is because the Bible tells us that money touches the heart unlike most things.
 1. Matthew 6:21 says: *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*
 2. If you want to know the conditions of one's heart or to discover what they truly care about or what they truly believe, look at how they handle their money.



- And whenever someone talks to us about money, we are immediately skeptical of their motive.
 1. Because everyone is trying to make an extra buck.
 2. Money is so powerful and so intoxicating that it seems like it can corrupt anyone.

c. And the Bible talks about this power that money can have over us.

- i. Jesus said in Matthew 6:24 - *“No one can serve two masters, since either he will hate one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”*
- ii. Here’s what Jesus is saying: You can only have one god in your life.
 - So, if money is your god.
 1. If money is what you’re willing to make sacrifices for.
 2. If money is what your heart truly longs for and dreams about.
 - Then everything else in your life exists to serve that god of money.
 1. Your career will only be about making money.
 2. You’ll get bitter at relationships that impede your financial desires.
 3. You’ll get frustrated when people ask you for money.
 4. Your faith will become subservient to your financial desires.
 - But the flip side is true. If God is your true God.



1. The one who you want to serve with your whole life.
 2. The one whom you want to center everything on.
- Then everything in your life will come underneath that life purpose of living for God.
 1. Your money would be a way to serve God.
 2. And your true God will influence how you spend, save, manage, and give your money.
- iii. **So, you can only have one god.**
- If your god is money.
 1. Your faith will take a backseat to what you're truly all about.
 - If your God is God.
 1. Then your money will exist to serve God.

d. And the Bible warns us about what will happen if we make money our god.

- i. 1 Timothy 6:9-10 – *“But those who want to be rich fall into temptation, a trap, and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and by craving it, some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”*
- And we could talk for a long time about the truth of this passage and how the love of money will bring ruin and destruction to your life.
 - But that's not what my sermon is about today.



- ii. Rather, my sermon today is about the joy that is available to us when we put money in its proper place.
 - Notice the passage from 1 Timothy did not say that MONEY was the root of evil.
 1. Rather, it said the LOVE of money is the root of evil.
 - And the Bible tells us that when we love God more than we love money, there is abundant joy to be had.
 1. And to give you a picture of this, I want to study Philippians 4:10-20 together.

III. PHILIPPIANS 4:10-20

a. Philippians is a letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Philippi.

- i. And in the section that we are going to read, Paul is thanking the Philippians for their generous, financial support of his ministry.
- ii. **Read Philippians 4:10-20.**

b. So, in this passage we get two examples of people who have put money in the right place in their life.

- i. The first example is obviously Paul.
 - We read in v.11-13 that Paul has learned to be content whether he has a lot of money or if he has no money at all.
 1. If he has a lot of money, he can use that for his ministry and for God's purposes.
 2. If he has no money, he can still continue in the ministry that God has given him.
 3. He has put money in its place.



4. It's not that Paul is against having money...even a lot of money.
5. He just sees money as a tool that God entrusts to him for the purpose of investing into ministry.

ii. **And the Philippians are the other example of putting money in its place.**

- Because the Philippians went out of their way to financially support Paul.
 1. Even when Paul was not with them, they put forth effort to not only collect money but to deliver that money to Paul through Epaphroditus.
- To the Philippians, money was a tool that God had entrusted them with in order to supply Paul's ministry.
 1. And because the Philippians did not love money, they were able to generously and completely supply Paul and his needs.

c. **And Paul tells the Philippians about two results that will come from their generosity and faithful stewardship of their money.**

- i. First, look in **v.17**. [Profit - Literal translation is fruit]
 - Paul is using financial terminology here and talking as if the Philippians are taking their money and investing it into God's Kingdom and as a result, profit or fruit is going to be produced that will be credited to their account.
 - The question is, what is the fruit and what does it mean that it will be credited to the Philippians?



1. Well, Galatians 5:22 tells us that the fruit of spirit is love, joy, peace patience, kindness, goodness, self-control.
- So, one result of the Philippians putting their money in its rightful place...a result of their generosity...is the production of fruit in their own life...that fruit primarily being joy!
- ii. **The second result that comes from the Philippians generosity is God's promise to them that he will supply their every need.**
 - Read **v.19**.
 - Both Paul and the Philippians demonstrate that they can be radically generous with their money and view money not as a security but as a tool to be used for God's purposes because they trust that God will provide for their needs.
- d. So, the Bible presents radically different lifestyles and outcomes in regard to the kind of power and control money has over our lives.**
 - i. And I really believe that one of the biggest hindrances to our joy is that in our affluent culture that is all around us, we've allowed money to be one of those topics that we just don't address, it has become off limits, and we don't put it in its place.
 - ii. We try to serve both God and money.
 - And you can't do that.
- e. So, how do we put money in its place in our lives?**
 - Two ways...



IV. #1 -UNDERSTAND THAT GOD DOESN'T WANT GENEROSITY FROM YOU, GOD WANTS GENEROSITY FOR YOU.

a. This is a mindset shift that must take the place in our lives.

- i. God does not need our money to carry out his purposes or fulfill his promises.
 - God has promised that he is going to build the church and that the gates of hell will not prevail against it and that is going to happen whether you or I drop a check in the give box or not.
 - The Gospel of Jesus Christ will be preached to every single people group and nation in this world, and that will happen whether or not you or I give our money to that cause.
 - And we know this is going to happen because God said it was going to happen and he is not in need of our resources to make it happen!
- ii. In Psalm 50, God rebukes his people because they were beginning to get an attitude.
 - Here was their attitude: they began to think of their animal sacrifices as a way of bribing God or getting God on their side.
 1. They believed that God needed their sacrifices.
 2. And if God needs something from us. we have leverage in the relationship and can use the thing that God needs to get him to answer prayers and be on our side.
 3. Have you ever tried to bribe God?



4. God, I'll give a little more to the church, wake up earlier to read the Bible, give the poor guy on the street a few bucks, clean up my language...in an honest effort to try and get God to answer a prayer or help you out.

- Well, this was God's response in Psalm 50.

1. **Read Psalm 50:9-12**

- God is saying: I don't need your bulls or goats. I don't need your sacrifices. You don't have any leverage on me.

1. I own everything on this planet!

2. I have cattle on a thousand hills!

3. I don't need your resources or your possessions.

4. I don't need your self-focused religious works.

- God doesn't need your stuff or your spiritual disciplines...God wants you.

1. He wants your worship.

2. He wants your heart.

3. He wants to be your God.

4. Not money.

iii. **And God is going to accomplish his purposes and fulfill his promises with or without our generosity...**

- He owns everything. Every dime on this planet belongs to God.

1. He has unlimited resources and is not in need of our money!

- God doesn't need generosity from you...He wants generosity for you!

1. Because money is a terrible god that will destroy your life.



2. And when you begin to generously see your money as a tool to be used for God's purposes, you strip money of its god-status in your life.
3. You put money in its place.
4. And you begin to make deposits that will produce profits and fruits of joy in your life.

b. And listen, we have a generous God who is inviting us into a life of generosity.

- i. Jesus Christ Himself demonstrates that it is generosity that leads to joy and not stinginess.
 - In 2 Corinthians 8 when Paul is talking about how we have been called to generosity with our money, he points to Jesus.
 1. Preach Gospel [using debt and wealth] with 2 Corinthians 8:9 - *"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: Though he was rich, for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich."*
 - That is the very definition of generosity.
 1. I have something that you don't.
 2. I am going to freely sacrifice it out of love so that you can have it.
 3. And that is what Christ has done for us.
 - But Jesus knew built into his generosity was joy.
 1. Hebrews 12:2b - *"For the joy that lay before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."*



- ii. We serve a generous God and He lovingly is leading us towards a life of joyful generosity.

V. #2 – EXCEL IN SACRIFICIAL GIVING

a. This is a command straight out of 2 Corinthians 8 where Paul is talking about the spiritual discipline of giving financially to your local church.

i. This is what Paul says:

- 2 Corinthians 8:7 - *“Now as you excel in everything—in faith, speech, knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love for us—excel also in this act of grace.”*

ii. But what does it mean to excel in giving?

- If you grew up in the church, you were probably taught that God commands you to give 10% of your income to the church.
 1. This idea of 10% first appears in the Bible in Genesis 14 when Abraham tithes (or gives a tenth) of his money and possessions to Melchizedek.
- But, we don't see this command of giving 10% carry over in the New Testament church.
 1. God still commands us to give to the church.
 2. But look at 2 Corinthians 9:7. Speaking of giving to your local church, Paul says: *“Each person should do as he has decided in his heart—not reluctantly or out of compulsion, since God loves a cheerful giver.”*



- See, if God gives us a wrought percentage of what he is commanding us to give to the church, how would you excel in this act of grace?
 1. It would be black or white.
 2. You either give 10% or you don't.
- But Paul says here that each person should decide in their heart what they ought to give.

b. So, our question becomes, how do we decide the amount we should give to the church and how do we excel at this?

- i. And the answer is that we are not called to give a certain percentage, we are called to give sacrificially.
 - Jesus gives us an example of this.
 1. **Read Mark 12:41-44**
 - This widow didn't give 10%, no it would seem she gave 100%!
 - And there were others putting in much larger sums of money in the treasury, but that money came out of an abundant surplus...it was extra.
 1. That money came after they met all their needs, funded whatever leisure they wanted, and took care of all of their worldly business and pleasures.
 - But the widow's gift...the widow's gift showed what her heart truly treasured.
- ii. **See, to God, the quantity of the gift does not matter, he doesn't need it...it's the quality of the gift.**
 - What does the gift say about your heart?
- iii. **This is what Paul says of the Philippians' gift to him.**



- **Read Philippians 4:18.**
 1. This language of their gift being a fragrant aroma to God comes out of the Old Testament where God would say that the sacrifices and worship of his people were a pleasing aroma to him.
- What God cares about in our offerings to Him are what our offerings say about our heart.
- Is our giving out of duty and obligation or is our giving out of worship.
 1. See, the widow's gift and the Philippians' gift showed that they trusted God to supply their needs above anything in this world.
 2. And the widow's gift and the Philippians' gift showed that they treasured God above anything in this world that money could buy.
- iv. So, here is how you can find out if you are exceling in sacrificial giving.
 - Ask yourself:
 1. Does my giving make me trust God?
 2. Does my giving show I treasure God?

c. By saying that the Philippians' giving is a fragrant aroma to God, Paul relates financial giving to the church to the animal sacrifices in the Old Testament.

- i. And in the Old Testament, God required that people sacrifice to him the best of their animals.
 - God wanted the animals that were unblemished, without any defect, without any illness. The healthiest and best looking.
 1. And God wanted the first-born.



- Now put yourself in the shoes of these people who farmed these animals for their well-being.
 - If there was an animal you were going to sacrifice, you would naturally pick the weakest, most sickly animal with the most defects...the one you would not breed.
 1. You would want to keep and breed the strongest healthiest ones so your herd would continually improve genetically.
 2. That would be the smart thing to do to preserve the health of your herd and the future of your well-being.
 - And God said to them...I want the best one. The healthiest. The strongest. And the first one.
 1. And when one of God's people brought the best of his herd and the first of his herd and cheerfully offered it to God treasuring God in his heart and trusting God to provide...that is a pleasing aroma of worship to God.
 2. This person does not worship the false god of money or security...they worship the one true God!
- ii. **Does God get the best and first of what you have or does He get the leftovers?**
- Is God the one who is cut out of the budget and sacrificed when things get tight or you've overspent...or is it something else?
 - Is God the first check you write every month or the last if the funds are still there?



- iii. God calls us to give to our local church sacrificially.
 - Does my giving make me trust God?
 - Does my giving show I treasure God?
- iv. And as you decide on what to give in your heart, these are the questions you need to pray through in making that decision.
 - And then ask...am I exceling in this?

VI. CONCLUSION

a. These are the two ways that we put money in the right place in our lives.

- We need to know that God wants generosity for us, not from us.
 - 1. Because, generosity leads to joy.
- We need to excel in sacrificial giving.
 - 1. What are we sacrificing so that we can give generously to God?
- i. You do these things, and money will be put in its place in your life.

b. And I believe that God calls us to be faithful to generously give to our local church.

- i. So, if you consider Grace Hill your home church, that means primarily and generously giving here.
- ii. And I don't feel awkward saying that...for a few reasons.
 - First, many of you have been very generous to Grace Hill and have helped fast-track us towards 100% financial self-sufficiency as a new church plant.
 - 1. And I thank you for your investment.



- Second, I believe that we have faithfully put in place systems and structures of accountability and transparency here to ensure that money given to Grace Hill is invested in a godly way.
 1. We are a congregational church...meaning that I and our elders do not have authority to make ultimate decisions on how our money is spent.
 2. That lies with the congregation.
- I personally have no access to our money, I don't see the bank statements, and I have no access to the giving records.
 1. The only giving that I have personally knowledge of in this church is my own.
- My salary does not increase if our giving increases. That's not how it works here.
 1. But there are some budget line items that do increase in direct proportion to our giving.
 2. If giving increases here...
 3. Our local outreach budget increases.
 4. Our global mission budget increases.
 5. Our benevolence fund increases.
 6. Our church planting fund increases.
- We are a product of people generously giving to their local church and that local church investing in a church plant in Herndon, VA.
 1. We got our start through the generosity of other churches and we want to do the same work in helping to start other churches around the world.
 2. Right now, Grace Hill money is helping to fund a seminary in the Dominican Republic.



3. It is being invested in helping to plant a church in Iceland.
 4. It is being invested in mission work in Bulgaria.
- iii. And on top of all of that, I pray that God would entrust Grace Hill to the kind of resources that would allow us to build an effective ministry here in Herndon for the next 100 years.

c. Yes, we live in a very affluent and expensive area.

- i. And for some of you, I know money is tight.
 - But remember, God is not concerned with the quantity of your gift, but rather the quality.
 1. That widow put more in the treasury than anyone else according to Jesus.
- ii. For others of you, God has entrusted you with abundance.
 - That is not a bad thing. There is nothing wrong with making or having a lot of money.
 1. But 2 Corinthians 9:11 (ESV) - **“You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way...”**
 - God has entrusted you with these resources for you to joyfully invest in his purposes.



- iii. We have a generous God who is calling all of us toward a life of generosity...of putting money in its place.
- The world says money will buy you the good life.
 1. But it's a lie...a trap
 - What would it look like, what could we accomplish for God's Kingdom, if all of God's people across the world didn't give in to the trap?
 1. And discovered the good life through radical generosity?

VII. PRAY

