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Lent 2 B – Treasure Principle Series – Feb. 25, 2024

“Everything Must Go”

Read: Matthew 6: 19 - 24; Memorize: Mt. 6: 19 – 21 NLT

If you think this series is about me asking you to give more money, I have good news for you. It's not. If you're only giving out of obligation, you're going to miss the joy of giving. Actually, Jesus rarely talks about giving, but about 15% of what He says is about money. That's more than He talks about heaven and hell combined. Money is one of the most intimate subjects in our lives.

This series is based on the treasure principle: “You can't take it with you – but you can send it on ahead.” The Pharaoh's of Egypt had their wealth buried with them because they thought they could take it with them. Instead, we get to see it in museums.

What does Randy mean by “you can't take it with you, but you can send it ahead”? The Bible says God has put you in charge of managing the resources He has entrusted to you. His plan is that you use them to help people get into heaven.

Along with the principle, Randy gives us six keys. The first key is: God owns everything. I'm His money manager. When you lease a car, you get to use it, but in the end you have to return it to the leasing company or buy it from them.

We are the managers of the assets God has entrusted, not given to us. He entrusts them to us to use according to the lease that we will use them in ways that build up His Kingdom.

Here's a reality you know but may not be comfortable with it. You can take everything that you think is yours and one of these things is going to happen to it: you're either going to use it up, lose it while you're alive or leave it once you're dead. Nothing we think we own is really ours. It's just been entrusted to us to manage.

Jesus says a lot about money because you cannot divorce your faith from your finances. They go hand in hand. Your faith leads you to choose to serve God; your finances enable you to do that. Money is neither good or bad. The big issue is not how much you have or give, as how you manage it.

Here's how Jesus expresses it in Matthew 6: 19 – 21: “Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and

steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.” This is the second key: “My heart always goes where I put God’s money.”

Some people think Jesus is saying we should be like the monks and live in poverty. In fact, God blesses us so we can bless others. If Jesus were against us having wealth and treasures, He wouldn’t talk to us about where we store them.

What is vital is that we understand what we are to do with that wealth. If you understand the treasure principle and apply it in your life, you will experience real financial freedom and a joy in your life like you’ve never had before.

Jesus wants us to be strategic in where we put our wealth. Perhaps we first need to understand what a treasure is? It is anything tangible that has a price tag. If you can see it, touch it or measure it, buy it or enjoy it, it is a potential treasure.

If you have been blessed with a lot of treasure it’s because God trusts you to use it properly. So, if it was wrong to have money, cars, houses or clothes we would really have to blame God because God is the one who entrusts it to us.

The key question is where do you keep these treasures. Jesus is not dealing with having, He’s dealing with storing. He explains simply why you shouldn’t store up treasure on earth. It won’t last. In the time of Jesus treasure meant either, clothing, food or money. Rich people wore the finest clothes, but they could be eaten by moths. They had food, mainly grain and meat, but rats and worms could eat it.

There were no banks, so people kept their wealth in their homes. But the houses were made of clay or mud so a thief could easily break through the walls and steal it. What Jesus was saying to them is be careful that you don’t put your treasures in what can be ruined, rotted or robbed. We may have advanced in our security, but in the end, we will still use it up, lose it or have someone else inherit it.

There was a millionaire who was stingy and selfish and money was everything to him. He called a family conference and said, “I have sold off a lot of my assets and I’ve taken the money and put it in a box. It’s up in the attic. When I die I intend to grab it on my way up.” The man’s wife said, “I think you’re wasting your time.” The man said, “You just make sure nobody touches it until after I am gone.” The family respected his wishes.

After he died the millionaire’s family ran up to the attic and sure enough the box of money was still there. She looked at her children and said, “I told your father he was wasting his time. He should have put it in the basement!”

Jesus tells us why He's concerned about where we put our treasure: "For where your treasure is, there your heart will also be." There are certain laws and principles you can't break. You can't break the law of gravity. You can demonstrate gravity, but you can't break it. Here's another principle you can't break, where my treasure goes, my heart will flow. Your heart will always follow your treasure.

Do you know where my heart is? Do you know where your heart is? Want to find out? Look at my check book, my credit card statement, my bank account that will tell you where my heart is. It will tell you where your heart is also.

Before there was GPS people used a compass. A compass is 100% reliable for it always points north. Your heart is a compass. Money is the north pole. As surely as the compass points north, your heart will follow your treasure, so be strategic in where you put your money.

Jesus talks about the eye being the lamp of the body. What He is telling us is that the light that comes into your soul and into your heart will depend strictly on the spiritual condition of your eye. The spiritual condition of your eye depends on how your eye sees money.

Jesus really goes deeper with money than we could ever imagine. He is not concerned with what you have. He is concerned with how you see what you have, because how you see what you have will determine, not only what you do with it, but what it does to you.

Here is the way it works. If you see wealth God's way, nothing has to be said to you about giving to God's work. You will gladly, gratefully and generously invest in God's work, sending it ahead because you realize you have been blessed to be a blessing.

You will gratefully give to God's work, because you realize everything you have came from God and you want to generously give back to God's work. When you do that, you are laying up treasure in heaven.

Jesus is more interested in your heart than your checkbook or bank balances. What concerns Jesus is the attitude you have towards giving. If your eye is healthy and you see wealth correctly, then everything else will fall into place. So be wise in how you perceive your wealth.

Finally, be careful in how you position your wealth. Jesus warns us in Matthew 6: 24, "No one can serve two masters, for he will hate the one and love the other or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

The point is simple: either you are a master of your money, or you are mastered by your money. There are certain things in life nobody can do. You can't walk in two directions at the same time. You can't serve two masters at the same time.

Jesus did not say, "You must not serve both God and money." It is a matter of impossibility. You cannot serve both God and money. Why does Jesus specifically mention money? Because the number one competition for your heart is your possessions.

I'd like to help you apply the treasure principle in your life. Here's what you could do to see more clearly. Keep a running tab for the next two weeks, every time you spend money, put down where it goes. It can only go in one of two places. It will either go to earthly treasure or it will go to eternal treasure. I'm not talking about the necessities of life. Don't keep tabs on food, clothes, rent or education. I'm talking about stuff and things like eating out.

Again, there is nothing wrong with having stuff, eating out or anything else, but as a Christian, you want to know where it goes. At the end of the two weeks be honest and ask yourself this question, "Am I a master of my money or am I mastered by my money?" And I want you to keep this thought in mind, "If money is your master, you are headed for disaster."

In 2004 a young man named Matt Emmons was one shot away from claiming victory in the 2004 Olympics. He was competing in the 50-meter 3 position rifle event. All he had to do with his last shot was just hit the target and he would win the gold. Do you know what medal Emmons ended up with? None. Do you know why? He made the greatest mistake you can make in a shooting competition.

He fired at the wrong target. He hit the bullseye, but his score was zero. Instead of a medal, he ended up in eighth place. When it comes to your wealth you want to remember the treasure principle. You want to make sure you are firing at the right target, because you cannot manage your money until you master your money. You will never master your money until Jesus is the master of your life.

Count me in: Will you track your spending for two weeks to see where your priority is?