



Sermon Series Notes

"Eternal Investments" (Phil.4:14-19)

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Intro: In the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, one out of every six verses deals with money. Jesus told twenty-nine parables, and sixteen have to do with money, specifically people and money.

II Cor.8: 7 But just as you excel in everything--in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us --see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

The Philippian church not only excelled in this grace, they became an example for other churches to follow.

1. THE PHILIPPIANS EXAMPLE IN GIVING (v.15)

- * They gave when no one else was giving (Phil.4:15); They set the standard...
- * They gave faithfully (v.16, "again & again").
- * Philippi was in Macedonia (see II Cor.8:1-3a).
- * They gave sacrificially.
- * They gave by faith.
- * Conclusion: If I am going to excel in the grace of giving, I must learn to give faithfully, sacrificially, and by faith.

2. WHAT GOD THOUGHT ABOUT THEIR FINANCIAL GIFTS (v.18)

- * These financial gifts were fragrant offerings to the Lord...I think about this pretty much every time I give...

3. THE PROMISE AS A RESULT OF THEIR GIVING (v.19)

- * God guarantees he will meet their needs in response to their giving. Let's slow down here for just a minute and look at a few other passages...

* See Lev.19:23-25; Prov.3:9; Prov.11:24-25; I Kings 17:13-16; Malachi 3:10; II Cor.9:10-11.

* Luke 6: 38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

* The teacher asks, "If you had one dollar and you asked your father for another, how many dollars would you have? One child raised his hand and answered, "one dollar." The teacher shook her head. "You don't know your math." The child then said, "You don't know my father."

* II Cor.9: 6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

* "You cannot out-give God."

* II Cor.9: 15 Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

4. THE PHILIPPIANS HEAVENLY BANK ACCOUNT (v.17)

* These financial gifts were actually credited to them in a heavenly bank account. Paul's desire is that their heavenly bank account be healthy. That is my concern for you...and that's why I want to focus our attention on this point for the remainder of our time...

* Matthew 6: 19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

* The investment is for YOU! Store up **for yourselves...**

* Eternal investments are NEVER risky.

- No moth and rust, no ups and downs like Wall Street.

* You can only invest in this life.

- Do your givin' while you're livin'... then you're knowin' where it's goin'.

* 6.9 billion people in the world; approx. 311 million live in the U.S. (less than 20%). The average American income is \$36,924.00, which is \$3,077 monthly. These people earn 97% of the world's wealth. The average college student working at Starbucks is among those who earn 86.7% of the world's wealth. Poverty level in America for a single person is approx. \$11,000.00 per year. But even those below the poverty level in America usually live indoors with electricity, running water, and HD TV! This group still earns more \$ than 85% of the world population.

* Based on these figures, if the average-income person in America works for 45 years (average lifespan is 77-79), they would earn \$1,661,580. If we add to that figure some net assets of the typical American family (house, furniture, cars, clothing, etc.), we would add about \$113,000 over a lifetime. Total average net worth of an American over a lifetime would equal \$1,774,580.

* Let's take the paycheck of the average American with an income of \$36,924. Forty-five years is 2,340 weeks. If you got paid every other week, that's 1170 paychecks (\$1,420 per check). [Point to the baskets of colored balls.] These baskets of colored balls represent forty-five years of earnings. Each ball represents one paycheck.

* Do you know what most Americans are trying to figure out? How can I get more balls in my basket. And what will most Americans do once they get more? [Put balls in holes.] The latest figures from the Dept. of Labor show that Americans spend the biggest chunk of their income on housing (about 35%, not including furnishings, utilities, etc.), the second on transportation (about 18%), and the third on food (about 13%). Americans give approx 3.7 % of their income to churches & charities. We spend almost twice as much on entertainment!

* The average person in the rest of the world makes \$675.00 per year. If they lived to be 77, worked for 45 years, they would earn \$30,375. [Bring out bucket with 21 colored balls.] These represent the lifetime earnings of the average person in the rest of the world. They also represent how many paychecks of the average American it would take to equal the lifetime earnings of the average person in the rest of the world (21 paychecks).

* Even if some of figures I've suggested are not exact, I don't think anyone would argue, when comparing America to the rest of the world, we are a materially blessed nation (despite the current economy).

* Luke 12:48... From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

5. THE VARIETY OF ETERNAL INVESTMENTS

* The church

- I believe the local church is the first and foremost place for the Christian to invest. A biblical local church is not just a group of Christians who meet together for Bible study/fellowship. A biblical church has ordained elders and leaders that are recognized. In the early church financial offerings were brought and laid at the feet of the apostles, and they had the responsibility of how the money was spent. In I Cor.9:4-14 Paul lays down the biblical principle of giving to support full time ministers of the gospel, including missionaries sent out by the church. A biblical church has guidelines and procedures regarding finances (I Timothy). In I Tim.5:9-10,16,17-18 we see the church financially supporting widows, paying salaries to church ministers who have the responsibility of preaching and teaching, as well as providing for staff members who had other responsibilities besides preaching & teaching.

* Alms for the poor & needy

- This can also be done directly through the local church. here we call this fund our "Special Needs" fund. But there are also worthy ministries that minister full time to the poor and needy, such as Haven of Rest Mission.

- Prov.19: 17 He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward him for what he has done.

* Good Samaritan giving (Luke 10)

- This is when God puts a needy person right on your path in life and you have the opportunity to reach out and help.

* Missions

- Locally and cross-culturally. Missionaries like Paul who have been called to go and spread the gospel in the world. It also includes ministries like Center of Hope, GFA, etc.

CONCLUSION

* What we are talking about today goes beyond money (see II Cor.8:5). What God wants is not our money but us...

* "Follow the trail of your time, energy, affections, and money, and there you find throne, and whatever or whoever is on that throne is the object of your worship."

* Those who have given themselves to the Lord naturally become givers.

* In the land of Israel there are two very interesting bodies of water, both fed by the same river, the river Jordan. Both are called Seas. Along the banks of one body of water there is life everywhere, but along the banks of the other there is deadness. What is it that makes them so different? Both fed by the same river, why is one dead and the other full of life? Answer: For every drop of water that flows into one of these seas, another drop flows out. What it receives, it gives. But the second hoards every drop that comes into it. The first is called the Sea of Galilee. The second, The Dead Sea.

* Luke 16: 11 So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?

- My spiritual life and riches are directly related to my material riches.

* First step in eternal investing is to open an account. To open an account in heaven you must first become a citizen of heaven...salvation prayer...

* In closing, could I give us as Christians some financial advice?

- Readjust your budget if needed, making God a priority

- Begin honoring the Lord with the firstfruits of all your income (Prov.3:9). I believe the local church is where we are to offer the firstfruits, & I personally believe the tithe is the basic standard.

- Learn to give by faith. This is when we continue to tithe, even though it does not make financial sense. It is also when the Lord leads us to give a free-will offering that is beyond our ability.

- As God gives us a surplus, be careful not to become self-indulgent, but rather, **diversify**. Give alms (special needs), help someone out that God has placed on your path (Good Samaritan giving). Support a missionary or a worthy missions ministry on a monthly basis.