

Sermon 10/1/17 The Interests of Others Philippians 2:4

Dear Servants of the Living Lord:

There are special times in life if we “seize the moment” that we will be doing...

- The right thing at the right time
- For our welfare and the welfare of others

There is a time for everything

King Solomon said in the Old Testament: “There is a time for everthing”

“Life is like a coin. You can spend it any way you want to, but you can spend it only once.”

There is a time for the...

- Right investment to be made
- Right action to be accomplished
- Right word to be spoken

Time...like money...is significant because it can only be used once.

When Jesus was on earth he taught his disciples about the proper use of their resources which the Lord had blessed them with...

- One of those resources is money - God’s money
- Jesus taught a parable which showed how his disciples could use their money...the money God gave them...at just the right time for the eternal benefit of all involved.
- Jesus taught how we may be concerned about not only our own interests but also about the interests of others who are in need.

The Apostle Paul gave us the same message about being mindful of the interests of others in Philippians 2:4

In Luke 16 Jesus spoke to his disciples on how they could use their resources that God gave them for the welfare of others to reap an eternal dividend.

The Jewish religious leaders of Jesus' day, the Pharisees, taught that money was a sign of God's favor.

- If you were blessed with material possessions, that was a sure sign of God's favor upon you so said the Pharisees
- "Whom the Lord loves he makes rich" was their motto
- Pharisees sought material possessions to prove that God had accepted them

What does the Bible say?

- God does bless us with material possessions but just because a person is doing well does not mean necessarily that God's favor is with them.
- Remember the story of the rich man and poor Lazarus?
- Just because a person is poor doesn't mean that God's favor has been withdrawn from that person
- The Pharisees taught that if you were poor that was a sign of God's judgment upon you.
- This was a perversion of God's Word

Jesus taught the people of his day with parables to correct this perverted teaching on the part of the Pharisees. One of those parables is found in Luke 16. READ

This is called the parable of the shrewd manager. It is the story of a man who was in charge of his master's estate. He took care of his master's business deals and financial matters. He was in charge of his master's money.

- This manager was dishonest in handling his master's money
- The master discovered that the manager was faithless and wasting his money
- The manager was siphoning off the master's funds for his own consumption
- The manager was told to "get the books in order" and move out --- he was fired

Before the manager left his master's estate, however, he used his time to plan for his future.

- The manager did not have any money to support himself

- He did not think he could get another job
- He did not want to beg for money

Therefore, the manager decided to count on the “reciprocity ethic” of the Roman world.

- He calls in his master’s debtors and gives them a break in return for staying in their homes
- The manager used his last moments in office for his own personal benefits
- The manager demonstrates a wise, worldly self-interest which is used to provide for his future.
- The manager acted cleverly and made good for himself.

The Master praises the manager for his wise action on his own behalf. The manager is praised for his worldly wisdom. The manager had the shrewdness to “seize the opportunity” to provide for himself.

Seize the Opportunity

What is the lesson here for us? The 1st lesson is the one of contrast. Jesus divides the world into 2 groups.

- The people of this world are those who only live for the here and now with no regard for eternity
- The people of the light are those who see the big picture and live for eternity.
- I Thessalonians 5:5; Ephesians 5:8; John 12:36

For us who believe in Jesus and confess our sins....for us who believe in heaven and know that our true home is there...for us who believe in eternal life...

- We use our resources that God has given us for spiritual purposes
- We use our resources to promote the Kingdom of God
- We use our resources with heaven in mind.

Why? Because of what Jesus has done for us.

- “So by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.” Romans 5:19
- “For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” II Corinthians 5:21
- “He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.” I Peter 2:24
- “Our Savior Christ Jesus...who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.” II Timothy 1:10
- “The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.” I John 1:7

The 2nd lesson of Jesus’ parable of the shrewd manager is this: Those who have been helped by us on earth will someday meet us in heaven. We will meet the people who were helped by our resources.

As the manager looked ahead to the future so we are to use our resources for the promotion of God’s Kingdom. How can we help others spiritually with the resources we have been blessed with?

The Bible says God has blessed us with money to be used...

- For the support of our family I Timothy 5:8
- For the support of others I Timothy 6:18-19
- For the support of God’s work Luke 12:15, 21; I Corinthians 16:2; II Corinthians 9:7

How can we be concerned about the interests of others?

By faithfully serving God Luke 16:10-13

- With the riches He has entrusted to our care as his managers
- For the people of this world money is the greatest
- For we believers money is little compared to the treasures of heaven

Jesus is teaching us to keep in mind the true value of earthly money.

Seneca said: “Money has never yet made anyone rich.”

Earthly wealth is...

- Temporal --- it doesn't last
- Fleeting - it comes and goes "Wealth makes itself wings"
- Seductive – people are tempted to think they will be "secure" if they are "well off"
- Proverbs 23:5

Jesus says

- **"Live for what is really of true value"**
- "Keep in mind who really owns your wealth"
 - Earthly wealth is given to us as a trust from the Lord
 - Our money is not our money----it is God's

Where does it all begin when it comes to how we handle our resource?

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" Luke 12:34

What you believe is important in life, there your heart will be.

Money is not the ultimate treasure in life

- Money can buy medicine but not health
- Money can buy a house, but not a home
- Money can buy companionship but not friends
- Money can buy food but not an appetite
- Money can buy a bed, but not sleep
- Money can buy a crucifix but not a Savior
- Money can buy the good life but not eternal life
 - Charles Swindoll

"With money one can selfishly serve his own desires; and with money one can generously answer to the cry of his neighbor's need. With money one can make it easier for someone else to live as God meant him to live."

I Timothy 6:18-19 “Do good, to be rich in good deeds and to be generous and willing to share. In this way you will lay up treasures for yourselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that you may take hold of the life that is truly life.”

Charles Swindoll says: “Be a great-hearted person of wealth. Let generosity become your trademark. Be generous with your time, your efforts, your energy, your encouragement and yes, your (God’s) money.”

Jesus is our Master....

- The Master of our resources
- The Master of our lives
- The Master of our eternity

We are investing in eternity...We take hold of the life that is truly life...

“May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.” I Thessalonians 3:12ff