

**Who is Your God?**  
**Advent 2022 - Week 1**  
**Matthew 6:19-24**  
**11/27/22**

### Introduction

**Pray.**

**Matthew 6:19-24.**

**I'm excited to kick off our advent series for us. My goal tonight is to lay a foundation for where we're heading with our Give like God Series and our Give like God initiative over the next four weeks as we close out 2022.**

Now I thought before we get into the text, it would be pastorally wise to just acknowledge what some of us in the room might be feeling as we anticipate an entire sermon series on money. (I said this last week too).

I've been in church long enough to know that when a pastor says we're talking about money, we can respond anywhere from a little bit squirmy to downright defensive.

And I think there's a few reasons for that.

First, money isn't something generally talked about openly in our culture. It's not the topic of conversation over dinner, right? SO - how much do you make and how much do you give to your church?

But also, some churches do and say some really wacky and unhelpful and even hurtful things when it comes to money and finances - whether that be how it's spent or how it's talked about it, or how those who give more are treated - just not good things.

And so to be honest with you – because of the stigmas and the stories – I've sort of shied away from it and wanting to tackle it head on like we're about to in this series. And the Lord just brought me under conviction about my own fear and doubt and our need to preach and rally around generosity. And so like 3 weeks ago we changed the preaching calendar.

And here's why we feel like the Spirit is leading us to do this...

**Here's why we're spending advent talking about money - Because we as a church are chasing after an all-of-life discipleship to Jesus.**

One of the just consistent drum beats of our church in the few years we've been around is the reality that our discipleship to Jesus should run counter to the ways of this world.

And the ways of this world, as Garrison laid out for us so well a few weeks ago in his sermon on simplicity, is one of consumerism and consumption.

**He gave us the stats:**

- Storage facilities in the US are now a \$29.5 billion dollar a year industry with over 7 sq ft of storage space for every American adult.
- Americans as a whole spend \$1.2 trillion dollars a year on non-essential items.

- The average American household carries \$16,000 in consumer credit card debt (not student loans, not vehicles or mortgages - credit card debt).

**And I think we all know this cultural current of consumption just gets exacerbated over the next month leading up to Christmas, will it not?**

- Experts are predicting that this year, the average American will spend just shy of \$1,000 on Christmas presents.
- On Black Friday alone, Americans typically spend > \$50 billion dollars.

A season that throughout church history has been set aside to mark the generosity of God in giving us Jesus has been co-opted to be almost exclusively about getting and consuming more things.

**So as we think about and strive for counter cultural discipleship in all of life, I believe there's a specific challenge for us as Christians in this season of Advent not just this year, but every year.**

**That we would be marked not by the way of America towards consumption, but by the way of Jesus towards generosity.**

So we're pausing as a church in this season to ask this question:

**How do we look at our generous God who gave us so much in Christ Jesus and learn to give generously in response?**

Specifically we will take time to look at:

- **The heart behind generosity** - how do we learn to be cheerful givers?
- **The means for generosity** - how do we learn to be good stewards of our finances so we are freed up to give?
- **The reason for generosity** - how does Jesus in a manger in Bethlehem propel us to be generous people?

But to kick us off tonight I want to spend just a few minutes considering this question from Matthew 6: **Who is Your God?**

### **Walkthrough Matthew 6:19-24**

#### **Matthew 6:19-24.**

**Context** → Sermon on the Mount. Jesus' longest recorded sermon. All about a flourishing life with God. In this section in particular, he goes after our hearts towards money.

Let's look at it together, starting in v19...

**19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.**

Now it goes without saying that they didn't have quite the online banking system that we have today - no Vanguard or Wells Fargo or Bank of America online - so if you had wealth what you would do is store it in typically one of two ways - either you would bury it in the ground in a safe place where only you knew where it was or you would build a storehouse, a building set aside to keep your money or your grain or whatever it is that you had for wealth.

And Jesus starts his larger teaching on money by saying that storing up all of this earthly treasure is foolish because moths and rust can destroy it or thieves can break in and steal it. If you put your treasure in something earthly - watch out because that will not provide you the lasting security you think it will.

**Temporary Treasures.** Now we might not have actual holes in the ground where we store our money, but the principle remains today - if we put our treasures in earthly things, it is not a sure foundation. Earthly treasures are fragile and temporary.

*And we know this:*

- That house you purchased - the HVAC can break, a pipe can burst, a tree can fall.
- That car you saved up for - someone can run a red light, a person can stop short at a stop sign, a deer can run across the side of the road. And even if something doesn't happen that drastically, eventually it will wear out and fade.
- Those financial investments you were finally able to make, 2022 happens and what - 6th worst stock market year in the history of America.
- And even if you make it through life with your possessions and treasures largely intact, one day you will die. 100% death rate in the world. And you can't take it with you when you go.

In the words of author **John Ortberg** - **"When the game is over, it all goes back in the box."**

**Earthly treasures do not keep.**

So, Jesus says – put your treasure somewhere lasting. Someone sure. Somewhere guaranteed. He's teaching us that there are ways you can use your treasures now, that can in the kingdom of God produce fruit that will last. Produce and cause something that will not fade away.

*Because here's why...*

**21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

***With Jesus - it's never about the money, it's always about the heart.***

**The reason you care deeply about what you care about is so often because you're got money wrapped up in it.**

***In other words – Your bank account has a direct line to your heart.***

**Minivan.** A few months ago, Lindsay's car gave out and so we made one of the best decisions of our married life - we bought a minivan. Not just any minivan, but a 2018 Honda Odyssey. I know - car goals. And I don't know if you've tried to purchase a car recently - but it ain't cheap. Covid supply chain issues, etc. etc. - It cost us what felt like an arm and a leg and then some.

Now, I'm not what you would call a slow or safe driver. I get where I'm going. The car is a means to an end that I want to be finished as quickly as possible. It's a problem - the Lord is sanctifying me too, ok. But I tell you what when we bought that van, and I drove off the lot at CarMax on Independence. And I'm driving like 4 miles to our house, I'm going 25 mph max on 74. I'm 2 hands on the wheel. I'm literally repeating the price of the car over and over and over again in my head gripping that steering wheel as tightly as I possibly can.

Where your treasure is. Where your money is - there your heart will be also. There your cares will be, your concerns will be.

I've seen time and time again as a pastor that those who care the most about the Kingdom of God are often the most sacrificially generous towards the Kingdom of God. Because where your treasure is there your heart will be also.

Here's the bad news for me though - you know what I was doing just a few years earlier when we bought Lindsay's other car that just broke down - driving it slowly and carefully. Making sure I didn't wreck it. Taking diligent care of it because it was new (to us) and we spent a good chunk of money on it.

Possessions don't last. So invest in what is eternal.

**Then Jesus continues...**

**22 "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, 23 but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!"**

Now this sounds weird to us in our day, but would have made much more sense in the ancient world.

**In Jesus' day, "the eye" was a widely used phrase to refer to greed and generosity.**

If someone had a "good eye", it meant that they were a generous person who was always willing to give to others in need. If someone had a "bad eye" or "evil eye", it meant they were greedy and envious. Someone who both loved their own money and was jealous of the stuff other people had as well.

And Jesus draws a straight line between having a bad eye, and the entire person being full of darkness. In other words - if you are greedy, watch out because it has the power to consume and corrupt all of you.

Paul picks up on this very idea when he writes to Timothy in **1 Timothy 6**. He says...

**9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.**

If your eye is bad, meaning if your life is built around **getting** more and more and more and more OR **keeping** more and more and more - more wealth, more money, more possessions, more affluence - it will lead to not just sin around money, but sin in so many other areas of your life. It can corrupt your whole person.

**Which has crazy implications for our spiritual life, does it not?**

That means according to you Jesus you can have incredible habits and rhythms around spiritual practices - you can read your chapters a day in Scripture, pray consistently day in and day out, be the most faithful participant in Community Group, worship passionately on Sundays, practice a robust sabbath, and be incredibly missional in your neighborhood...**and if you're not generous - your whole body is full of darkness.**

Shocking, right? Like when is the last time someone asked you - how are you doing spiritually? Like how's your walk with Jesus? And you thought about your generosity. You thought about your posture towards money. You thought about your worry towards money. Not just - how's my Bible reading, how's my prayer life, how's my anxiety and worry - but how's my wallet?

Or when someone at group is sharing about struggling to read God's Word or care about evangelism you looked at them and said - "have you thought about giving more money away to the Kingdom of God?"

Jesus connects our view of wealth right to our heart - where your treasure is, there your heart will be also - and says so if your view of your treasure is bad, evil, greedy, stingy, corrupt - your whole soul will be corrupt as well.

### **God vs. Mammon**

**And then Jesus lands at the crux of the matter:**

**24 “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”**

That word money there is more than just finances. It's the Gk. word “Mammon.”

And in the Jewish culture at this time, “mammon” was more than just money - it was the personification of all wealth, prosperity, finances, and possessions. And in Jewish literature, the allure and power of Mammon was such a dangerous thing that they would write of it as if it was a demon or a spiritual force pitted against the kingdom of God.

And Jesus picks up on that, and agrees - Hey, there's two competing forces at play here vying for your soul - God and Mammon.

And Jesus says you **cannot** serve both. Not should not. Cannot. It is not possible. You will love the one and hate the other. These two forces are so at odds that you must choose which you will serve, which you will be devoted to.

Which leads us back to where we started this evening – **Who is your God?**

### **God or Mammon? God or Money?**

That's the question that sort of sits under the surface of Jesus' teaching here:

- Are you going to lay up treasures on earth or treasures in heaven?
- Are you going to have a good eye or a bad eye?

Who is your God? You cannot have both.

**Which at a deeper level makes you wrestle with these two questions:**

#### **1. Who gets your worship?**

**Who gets your allegiance and devotion?**

**Who does your heart and thoughts and decision making gravitate towards?**

**When you think about changing companies or changing career paths or changing cities - is your decision making driven by the salary number or by where you can have a greater impact for the kingdom of God?**

**When you make your budget for the month, are the first priorities comfort or security or is generosity toward God and His people?**

**Where are you seeking to lay up treasures?**

#### **2. Who gives you salvation?**

**Meaning – Who gives you identity and security? Value? Meaning? Purpose?**

**What makes you feel like you matter or are going to be okay? Who holds your future?**

**Is your security for the days ahead found in the number in your bank account or the one who calls you Son or Daughter?**

**Is your hope for the future found in the return of the stock market or the one who reigns over all things?**

**Lottery.** A few weeks ago when the lottery jackpot got to like \$1.6 Billion or whatever it was, Garrison sent me an article that was so fascinating. It was written by a psychologist that talked about in her research why people play the lottery. She was addressing why even though you're 250x more likely to get struck by lightning and 80x more likely to get eaten by a shark - so many people keep playing. And her argument is that the reason why is not because they think they'll win, but because for those few hours they have the ticket while they wait for the results, they can fantasize about all the ways winning will give them peace, give them security, give them hope for what their life could become.

**That is Mammon as god. It offers identity, security, peace, and hope if we will only give it our allegiance.**

### **God as the Giving God**

**But, if you worship money, remember the problem according to Jesus – it's temporary and it corrupts.**

It will not give you what it promises to give you. It will not provide the security it claims. It will not give you the peace you think it will. It will not bring the life it offers to bring.

That's why John D Rockefeller, whose fortune in the early 1900s made up 1% of the US economy, when asked by a reporter "how much money is enough?" famously said "Just a little bit more."

Or why Zig Ziglar, businessman and author and speaker once said - "Money won't make you happy, but everybody wants to find out for themselves."

If you worship money – it's temporary and it corrupts.

**But if you worship God, here's the promise – will your heavenly Father not take care of your every need?**

That's what Jesus tells us. Right after he says you cannot worship God and money, he goes into what seems like a new teaching, there's a different header in your Bible, but is actually right in alignment with his whole train of thought. Look at v24...

**24 "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. 25 "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not be anxious,**

saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34 "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

- Does God not give us the security we look for in money?
- Does He not promise to care for us, provide for us - feed us like He does the sparrow and clothe us like he does the lilly?
- Does Jesus not, even in the title He gives to God "Heavenly Father" - remind us that we are children of God? Remind us that we are beloved sons and daughters?

**Harper.** I've gotten such a picture of this since becoming a dad. Harper doesn't fret over whether she's going to have something to wear each day, or whether or not food will be available for her each meal - she just knows mom and dad give it to her. She knows we take care of it. That's the picture the Bible gives us over and over again of our posture towards our heavenly father.

**Don't fret over His provision - trust He's your dad. Trust if he would care about flowers and birds, that He would care for His children.**

Now that provision may not look how you want. He may not provide in the ways you desire. His provision doesn't mean showing up to take care of the debt you have put yourself under. **But He will provide. He will give us what we need.**

**And do we not have the clearest evidence of that every year in the advent season?**

**We know God will take care of our every need, because He took care of our greatest need.**

2,000 years ago God sent His only Son, Christ Jesus, to take on flesh and enter into humanity. To come down into our weakness. To come down into the brokenness of humanity, the sin of humanity, the desperate need of humanity. And yet live perfectly. Live the life we cannot live. And yet die the death we deserve so that He could through death put death to death and rise again to give us new life in Him.

We have this promise in **Romans 8:32 – 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?**

Do we not in the hope and promise of advent, see that God will take care of us as His people? If He would not even spare His own Son - but send Him to earth to accomplish our forgiveness and salvation - will he not also make sure we have food to eat and a roof over our heads?

**Here's the reality:**

You cannot serve both God and money – but when you take a step back and look at the two does the question not become – and why would you want to?

**We have everything we need in Christ Jesus!**

Is not God a more sure foundation than money?

Does God not speak a more true identity over us than our wealth?

Is the eternal one not more sure and steady than our perishable possessions?

And when we see that He is our great provider - that He provides our every need - we don't have to live with stinginess or greed or close-handedness because our security isn't found in that stuff anymore. It's found in Christ – and we are free to be generous.

### Christmas Offering

**This brings us back to our Give Like God Initiative. It's a chance for us to tangibly put into practice the invitation of Jesus in Matthew 6.**

**Jesus tells us a few times in a few different ways how we practically learn to serve God and not money:**

**20+21 – but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

**22 – So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light.**

**33 – But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.**

Part of how we learn to serve God and not money is by being generous. Where our treasure goes, there goes our heart. Want to learn to have deeper faith in the provision of God? Be more generous.

**So if we want our hearts to be directed in worship to God, our treasure must be directed towards Him as well.**

**So we're giving ourselves as a church the opportunity to do just that this advent season.**

**\*\*Talk about cards and 3 next steps:**

- 1. Give to Citizens**
- 2. Give to Christmas Offering 2022**
- 3. Sign up for the Personal Finance Class**

**COMMUNION**