**Living Free - Money: Just a Little Bit More**

***Pastor Datuk Kee Sue Sing***

### **The Parable of the Tenants**

“Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit. “The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. Last of all, he sent his son to them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said. “But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance.’ So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. “Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,” they replied, “and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.” (Matthew 21:33-41)

# Introduction

*There was a strong man who travelled with a circus. One of his most impressive stunts was to take an orange and squeeze every last drop of juice out of it. Then he would offer one thousand dollars to anyone who could manage to squeeze as much as one additional drop from it. He went from town to town making his offer, but no one was able to win the one thousand dollars from him. Then one day he came to a small town in California and made his demonstration of juice-squeezing prowess and his challenge. A small, wizened, ninety-eight pound weakling type man came forward and said he'd like to take a try at the challenge. He took the crushed orange and proceeded to squeeze six more drops of juice from it. The strong man was amazed. He could hardly believe his eyes. He asked how he was possibly able to do this. The man shrugged and said, "Oh, I'm the treasurer down at the Baptist church and we do this all the time." –Story told by Billy Graham.*

Money is a touchy subject. However, whether we like it or not, we cannot avoid the topic. Even Jesus talked about money many times through parables about how we manage our possessions. In the Bible itself, there are more than 2,000 verses that talk about money and possession. In short, **money is the foundational indicator of the health of the human heart.**

*“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21)*

**![C:\Users\Pru\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\IE\3AXRQUTV\Light-Bulb[1].jpg]()Big Idea: Everyone betrays Jesus for money; but it is what we do next that counts.**

***“Our cheque book is a theological document, because it speaks of our priorities in life”***

***Billy Graham***

Many people are blinded with money, and if we can pull the root of evil (money) from our heart, something good will happen.

*Three right attitudes toward money:*

# An attitude of Gratitude

## God owns it all

At the end of it all, everything belongs to God.

“Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place.” (Matthew 21:33)

‘What else could I do for you?’ (Isaiah 5:4a)

“All the earth is Mine.” (Exodus 19:5)

“To the LORD your God belong heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it.” (Deuteronomy 10:14)

“… Everything under heaven belongs to me.” (Job 41:11)

“The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.” (Psalm 24:1)

“We have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.” (1 Timothy 6:7)

## The implications

1. Be thankful

“Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have …” (Hebrews 13:5)

We recognize that it is God’s providence that puts us where we are at, what we have and do not have.

*We’ve heard of an old Quaker who advertised that he would give 40 acres of rich farm land to anyone who was perfectly satisfied with that which he had. One seeker came to see the Quaker.*

*“Are thee perfectly satisfied with what thee hast?”*

*“Yes,” answered the hopeful guest.*

*“Then why dost thee want this land?” was the old Quaker’s significant reply.*

1. Be responsible

“… Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.” (Matthew 21:33b)

In the parable it was also told that God invite us to exercise careful management of all things given to us, whether as tenants, stewards, managers or caretaker.

There are two approaches to life:

1. **A clenched fist**
* Not willing to let go.
* Consequence: Trapped!
1. **An open hand**
* Let go. Have faith and trust in God.
* Surrender to Christ and free ourselves.

It’s in our hands – we decide how we use them.

1. Be accountable

We must think before we spend, becoming a better money manager and steward of God’s money. Before we spend,

***THINK…***

*1. Do I really need this?*

*2. What would happen if I don’t buy it?*

*3. What else could I do with this money that would be more important?*

*4. Is this going to require a lot of upkeep expense?*

*5. If I need this, is this the best value I can find?*

Look beyond the brand!

# An attitude of Faithfulness

## Acknowledge Jesus’ Lordship (*Matthew 21:*34-39)

*When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit (*Matthew 21:*34)*

But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance.’ So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. (Matthew 21:38-39)

The tenants should recognize the landlord’s ownership and return what is rightfully his.

Similarly, in our daily lives, even though we often declare that God is the master of our lives, but when it comes to the subject of money, we often call it short and take control of it ourselves. Money traps us little by little. It is always over time that we gradually succumbed to it.

There will always a temptation for us to hold tightly of our possessions and money. It is always so hard to give away. **If we are not careful, what we possess can end up possessing us.** The best classic example would be the Kalahari bushmen trap baboons to find water.

Knowing the nature of this animal, the Kalahari bushman put salt into a hole in a termite mount. The baboon likes salt and will put its hand in to take the salt. Once it clenches its fist, the hand is stuck in the hole, it is not willing to let go of its closed fist due to its greed. The bushman then feeds it with more salt. When it is thirsty, it will go and find water thus the bushman finds the source of water. The attachment to physical possessions and the unwillingness to “Let Go” causes the baboon to be caught.

**There are three conversions necessary; the conversion of the heart, mind, and the purse**

**(Martin Luther)**

***To ponder:***

* What have you held too tightly in life?
* How do I know if my money has me or if God has my money?

## The proof is in Giving it Away

Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. (1 Timothy 6:18)

“A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.” (Proverbs 11:25)

**People who win with money always are givers. One hundred percent of them are givers. Whether they are people of faith or not, they are always givers. Always. You will not win with money until you learn how to give.” (Dave Ramsey)**

Always a giver, and learn to give away.

# An attitude of VISION

“Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to these tenants?”

“He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,” they replied, “and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.” (Matthew 21:40, 41)

It is important to understand that our most important investments are heavenly, that is the most important investment in our life.

“… And He looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.” (Isaiah 5:7)

We must have a plan for our money.

The consequence of our failure to honour God:

## Personal and spiritual

“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, … So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?” (Luke 16:10-11)

Who can be trusted? As servants of God to serve His people, we must be trustworthy so that we can be entrusted with people’s life, marriages and ministries. It is like the kingdom’s kindergarten that we need to pass before stepping up to the next milestone of God’s intended journey for us.

## The church and its ministry we support

If the ministries of a church is not funded adequately, how can it be effective in the end of days? As God’s faithful servants, one should recognize God’s ownership and man’s stewardship. A story that illustrated the simple and literal truth:

*There was a farmer whose cow, after a long and arduous labour, gave birth to twins, one black and other white. He ran into the farmhouse to give the news to his wife, who reminded him of the goodness of God and encouraged him to give one of the calves to the Lord. He agreed immediately, but took some time to decide as to which calf would be his and which one would belong to the Lord. After a few weeks, one of the young cows fell ill and the faithful farmer spent the night caring for it. Early the next morning the farmer entered the house and was met by his wife who asked what happened. With a voice filled with sorrow he responded, “The Lord’s calf died.” His wife said, “I thought that you have not decided which calf belongs to God.” “At the back of my mind, it was always the white calf.”*

Ever so often for us, it is the Lord’s calf which died. When it comes to giving, we often follow the example of the farmer and pass on to the Lord what we no longer need. While we may find the story amusing, but God forbid, we may actually be laughing at ourselves. When money is the source of the issue, the first thing we economize is our contribution and giving to God.

While there is absolutely nothing wrong about enjoying life and having money, we ought to glorify God in use of them. We should always remember the ultimate key to earthly treasure.

CONCLUSION

Make **Christ** the **Glorious Treasure**, **Chief Joy**, and **Blessed Inheritance** of our heart.



Sermon summary contributed Chrisandra Wong.

Prayer pointers contributed by Prudence and Loong.



SERMON: Money: Just a Little Bit More

**Pray:**

* All Christians will have an open hand when it comes to money and our possessions.
* We will know how to be responsible with the money that God has given us, regardless of the amount.
* We will be accountable with our money.
* We will give to God what is due to Him.

 ***“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21)***

**MINISTRIES & EVENTS: Christmas Home-e**

**Cell Groups (CG) in DUMC will be having Home-e during the month of December 2017.**

 **Pray:**

* The CGs will be able to plan something no matter how small for this season of Christmas to share with their non-believer friends on the true meaning of Christmas.
* God to lead us to the people to invite to the Home-e.
* Our non-believers friends will make themselves available to go and attend the Christmas Home-e.
* God hand upon the whole program and that there will be salvations.
* Jesus will be glorified during the Christmas Home-e.

***For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)***

MALAYSIA MY NATION: Fake News

***Many ‘news’ going around are proven to be false.***

**Pray:**

* We will be careful not to believe in everything that we see.
* We will recognize when we see propaganda, fake news, lies, pseudoscience, false witness and not be fooled.
* We will be responsible with information we received and we will not share unverified information as facts.
* We will be discerning and deal with only facts.

***Do not spread false reports. Do not help a guilty person by being a malicious witness. (Exodus 23:1)***

* **A TRANSFORMED WORLD: Climate Change**

***Many still denies Climate Change despite steady rising of temperature worldwide.***

**Pray:**

* World leaders will recognize the problems and take necessary steps immediately.
* Governments will enact laws to protect the environment.
* Business leaders will not reap profit at the expense of the environment.
* Actions will be taken against perpetrators.
* The public will know and do their part to save the environment.

***The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. (Psalm 24:1)***