

1. (Introduction 5)

- a. Introduce self: Family, where live, brief history
- b. Recap author, recipient, reason for letter
- c. Recap some previous highlights
- d. Reintroduce Venn diagram
- e. Nikki reads passage
- f. Prayer
 - i. “Father, we thank you for your Word. We thank you that you have not remained silent, but you have spoken to us. We thank you most of all for Christ. Thank you that you personally stepped into our world and provided a way to perfection, something we could never achieve on our own, through Christ. I pray that each one of us would engage with this tough topic, and be willing to admit any hold that it might have on our hearts. Finally, we pray that you would provide a clear path forward, and that we would have the courage to take that path so that we can not only grow in godliness, but also live fuller, and healthier lives. Thank you again for Christ that we can approach this topic under grace, rather than law. In His name we pray, amen.”

2. (What is the main truth? 15)

- a. Main point: Godliness should be our supreme concern, and we should be invested the Kingdom.
 - i. Godliness: making the things that matter to God matter to you, pursuing Christ-likeness
 - ii. Investing in the Kingdom: Doing good that lasts for eternity. What lasts for eternity? Human souls, all this stuff is going to be eaten by moths, rust way, be stolen, but making an impact in the lives of others lasts forever
- b. 1 Timothy 6:1-2, Paul’s address to bondservants
 - i. Many new converts were bondservants
 - ii. What do we know about bondservants; we know that there were many avenues to slavery
 - iii. ¹Half the population of the Roman Empire in the first century was composed of bondservants
 - iv. They had less than their wealthier counterparts
 - v. Paul’s concern is how the conduct of believers reflects on Christ
 1. ³An unbelieving master would have to respect a religion that made his servant honest, industrious, obedient, respectful, and morally consistent.
 - vi. Poor had less than the rich, but similar instruction, use what God has given you to his glory
- c. 1 Timothy 6:17-19, Paul’s address to the rich
 - i. Don’t be haughty, or arrogant
 - ii. Why? Because they are not worth less! Earthly wealth has no bearing
 - iii. He reminds them of how uncertain riches are, but we don’t need this reminder right? Or do we? This one gave me pause. I think in principal we all would agree, but in practice we tend to heavily rely on riches. Have you really let it sink in how uncertain earthly riches are practically?
 1. Ever bought something just to have it immediately break? Maybe something expensive?
 2. Housing crisis? It is estimated: \$7 trillion in real estate losses to Americans⁷
 3. Stock market? October 10th, 2018 Dow Jones dropped 832 points, 3.2% loss⁸
 4. Matthew 6:19-21 “¹⁹Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”
 5. From one perspective, riches are very certain: 100% of people die, 100% of people’s things are left behind
 - iv. Paul then acknowledges the giver of all good gifts: God!
 1. We are stewards of the resources entrusted to us, not owners
 - v. With all of this in mind, Paul instructs the rich is to do good, just like bondservants. Finally, Paul hints at a concept of heavenly riches.
 - vi. Rich: You’re no better for your money, invest in the kingdom
- d. 1 Timothy 6:2B-10, Paul’s warning to all people against the love of money
 - i. Rebuking prosperity doctrine, if you teach this, you are depraved in mind and deprived of truth.
 - ii. He then goes on to describe what the love of money does to people.
 1. This is a frequently mis-quoted verse, the love of money, not money itself is the root of evil.
 2. ¹The sentiment is, that there is no kind of evil to which the love of money may not lead men once it takes root in their heart
 3. Focus on worldly riches does not promote human flourishing
 - iii. We are all equal at the foot of the cross.
 1. Money is a tool to serve the kingdom. And he is giving us a fierce warning against the pursuit of money, and urging us to instead pursue godliness.

3. (Why is the main truth important? 5)

- a. Restate main point: Godliness should be our supreme concern, and we should be invested the Kingdom
- b. Our use of money is tightly tied to our character
 - i. Jesus Christ said more about money than about any other single thing. All through scripture, there is an intimate correlation between the development of someone's character and how they use their money
 - ii. As Jesus himself interacted with people, he frequently used people's use of money as evidence of what is going on in their heart
- c. Pursuing worldly riches will never satisfy you, may ruin you
 - i. Do you know how you would spend \$1,000? \$10,000? \$100,000? Few have experienced how truly empty wealth is.
 - ii. Did some research on some of the most wealthy, first step is to have impressive facial hair!
 - iii. William Henry Vanderbilt lived 1821-1885. He was a businessman who inherited \$100M, he had doubled his fortune when he died 9 years later, equivalent to over 6 billion:
 1. "The care of \$200 million is enough to kill anyone. There is no pleasure in it."
 - iv. John D Rockefeller lived from 1839-1937, was an American oil industry businessman, industrialist, and philanthropist. He is widely considered the wealthiest American of all time, and the richest person in modern history. Had the equivalent of \$340B "I have made many millions, but they have brought me no happiness."
 - v. Solomon in the OT, the wealthiest man in the world, estimated to have had the equivalent of \$2.2T, lived from 990-931BC wrote: Ecclesiastes 5:10 "He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity."
- d. There is a theme in the bible of heavenly riches in the bible, somehow we are investing in the future by pursuing godliness instead of worldly riches is where true life is found
- e. This is the best way for the church to function.
 - i. Cast vision for a Tallgrass where people of all backgrounds, nationalities, ages, races, and yes, socio-economic statuses coming together in love, showing a broken and hurting world a better way to live, and pointing toward the one who will ultimately give us the best lives.

4. (How can we put the main truth into practice? 15)

- a. Whether we resonate more with Paul's words to bondservants or the rich, we all are missing the mark to some degree. God wants us to grow, take steps of faith in this category, not just because he commanded, but because it is better for us, and for those we impact. It is just better!
- b. Prayerfully consider whether you are hotter pursuit of worldly riches, or heavenly riches.
 - i. What things do you find yourself daydreaming about most?
 1. That new boat, that daily round of golf all through retirement, that lavish vacation, or that new house all may be biblically permissible, or ever a good thing, but have you de-throned God in your heart, and put money in his place? If more of your thought life revolves around your next financial goal than God's kingdom, you may be guilty of this.
 - ii. What about how you actually spend your money? Does this indicate focus on worldly or eternal?
 - iii. What about how you use the things you do have? Do you see the things you have as tools to serve the kingdom, or things to serve your own purposes? Are they actually used that way?
 - iv. I'm guessing we all have some room to grow here. I know I do.
- c. Go and do good!
 - i. A great realization for me comes from Matthew 6:21: "Where your treasure is, there your Heart will be also"
 1. I had always read this as "The things you treasure indicate where your heart is"
 2. This can also mean "Put your treasure where you want your heart to be". We can use our treasure to lead out hearts.
 3. So pray for God's conviction, look for opportunities, and take some money, time, and effort you may have used otherwise, and invest in the kingdom!
 4. If your heart is not there, you are in luck, this investment may push it in that direction!
 - ii. Some practical ways you can invest in the kingdom:
 1. Dave did a great job last week discussing giving to the church. I think this is a primary place to invest kingdom dollars
 2. Look for needs in your community. They are out there. You have no idea how God may use your quiet generosity in someone's life.
 3. Fund missionaries. There are many out there who have given their lives to missions. We are not all called to give up everything and minister overseas, but we are all called to spread the gospel under the great commission.
 4. Plug community resource spreadsheet
- d. Invite outside input on your finances
 - i. America, personal finances have become an untouchable topic.
 1. No different than seeking accountability in other areas of life.

2. Why then, are we taking the topic that gets the most air time in the bible, and giving it the least air time in our communities, and our Christian conversations.
- ii. We don't expect anyone to publish their giving in the church directory, or to announce their entire budget during announcements at Life Group.
 1. This could look like choosing one or two brothers or sisters in Christ and asking for input on how money is being spent.
 2. Ask for a good next step or two toward growing in both fiscal responsibility and generosity.
- iii. This is one application that I didn't think I could get away with not doing it as I recommend it in a sermon.
 1. I was actually really nervous to ask, so I played coy.
 2. I called this friend, one I perceived to be cautious with his money, and faithfully walking with God. I had several things we could talk about so I led with that, then at the end, tagged on "well, maybe if we get time, you know if you're willing, we could...look at my budget?"
 3. I am telling you, I am so glad I did. As I have struggled with this topic over the last year, this has been one of the single most freeing interactions I have had. We all want to grow in Christ's-likeness. We are all in a community, and the primary purpose of this community is to help each other do so. This friend did not assume the judgement throne. He did not look down on me. Rather he offered me insight, vision and grace.
- iv. One final thought on letting others into our finances:
 1. Consider Matthew 5:14-16, and its application to this category¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that[a] they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."
 2. Jesus calls us to stand apart from the world, very clearly and evidently to all who see! Not to hide what distinguishes us from the world (yes, even in how we spend our money). We must be careful not to veer into the ditch on the other side of the road which would be flaunting our generosity to earn man's praise, which is also clearly spoken against. But somewhere in between hiding and flaunting we can glorify God, and testify to a lost world that Jesus lives because of how we interact with each other, and use our resources.
- e. Put the rightful judge back on the judgement throne
 - i. We judge what we can see, since we can't see people's hearts
 - ii. This is the specific instruction to the wealthy, but in our culture, this is a two-way street.
 1. Sometime the poor look down with equal disdain on the rich
 2. One may think of themselves as more holy, with better priorities, etc. It may be easy to look at someone's big house, time consuming or expensive hobbies, or other nice things they have and assume they are living for the world. Meanwhile one may overlook the endless hours spent caring for their widowed mother, substantial funds given to adoption, missions, or the local needy. We don't know their whole story, and it is not our place to judge.
 3. We must be careful not to use ourselves as the yardstick with which we measure others value and holiness. Instead we are being called to serve and give generously.
 4. Instead we are called to be introspective, and focus on the one heart we can see, our own
 - iii. This was the hardest point for me as I have reflected on all God has blessed my family with. I have struggled with questions like
 1. "Is it okay to be rich?", or "Have I already failed because of what I have?" "Is it possible to be a wealthy Christian?"
 2. As I investigated this in the word of God, I began to regain my security in Christ, but then it was time to face the tougher questions "Do I love money?" "Am I the rich young ruler?" "Am I just a fraud?"
 3. This has been a tough year. I wonder if that is why I am preaching on this topic, to force me to face this issue.
 4. In many ways, I am a fraud. I've had successes, but also many failures. Through this I have discovered new depths of grace through this season. Jesus' perfect sacrifice on the cross is enough to cover my failures
- f. Finally, live in grace! One thing that would be easy to do is to set up some new law for ourselves. This is not Paul's intention, nor Christ's! He perfectly fulfilled the law, and we now live under grace.

5. (How does the main truth relate to the gospel? 5)

- a. Because, let's face it, we are all under the bus here. We are all guilty of misusing our resources, our money, time, and efforts for less than holy reasons. All of our hearts are guilty of longing for things other than godliness.
- b. Thank God that he has provided a way to perfection outside of ourselves. Jesus Christ, both God and man came to earth. He perfectly stewarded his resources, perfectly resisted every temptation we succumb to. He perfectly saw men and women's hearts rather than their wealth. He made God the Father's priorities his, and he did eternal good.

- c. In his time on earth, Jesus perfectly fulfilled Paul's instructions to the poor by serving sincerely and lovingly, giving Glory to his Father in heaven. And through his sacrifice on the cross, he perfectly fulfilled Paul's instruction to the rich, by giving from his indefinite wealth an eternal inheritance to those who believe in him.

6. (Conclusion 5)

- a. (Pray again): Thank you Jesus that you gave us the perfect example of service and generosity. I pray that we here at Tallgrass Church, and those belonging to the greater Church throughout town here in Manhattan would take steps toward Christ's likeness in how we steward our time, efforts, and our money. I thank you that you use us to impact your kingdom, and that we can join you in work that has eternal implications. I pray that you would change our hearts. Make them more and more like yours. We want to submit both our treasure and our hearts to you, please help us to do that. We pray that those who do not yet know Christ would look into this community, and see something different, and be curious. Thank you that we are not under the crushing weight of the law, but rather can walk in grace through Jesus' perfect sacrifice. Amen.
- b. Recommended resource: Money Possessions and Eternity
- c. Q&A

6:00 band ready to go

Citations and Resources

¹Gaebelein, F. E. et al, (1978). The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 11. Grand Rapids, Michigan: The Zondervan Corporation.

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³Barlow, Rev. G., Tuck, Rev. R. B. A. (1996). The Preacher's Homiletic Commentary, Volume 29. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books.

⁴Buttrick, G.A. et al, (1955). The Interpreters Bible, Volume 11. Nashville Tennessee: Pierce and Washabaugh.

⁵Alcorn, Randy, (2003). Money, Possessions and Eternity. Carol Stream, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

⁶Mackie, Tim and Collins, Jon (The Bible Project). (2017, October 9, 17, 23). Justice Part 1, Part 2, and Part 3 [Audio podcast]. Retrieved from <https://rss.simplecast.com/podcasts/1434/rss>

⁷<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/how-much-did-the-financial-crisis-cost/>

⁸<https://www.cnbc.com/2018/10/10/us-markets-bond-yields-and-data-in-focus.html>