

Money, Possessions, & The Way of Jesus | Dave Geldart | Luke 12:13-21

1. Radical Jesus

- a. Difficult & controversial topics
- b. Topics in our cultural moment - 2021 America primarily
- c. Conversations we NEED to have in the church so we can see clearly what is the WAY OF JESUS in these things, and how we can follow him here and now.
 - i. Science: Old and Young Earth – a little → more we could have said on this one!
 - ii. Vaccines
 - iii. Refugees
 - iv. Women in Ministry
 - 1. Each impacting us uniquely – some higher heat/disruption than others
- d. Today we're going to engage with money and possessions & the way of Jesus
- e. **I'm curious today if that's how today's topic will play out for each of us**
 - i. As we talk about MONEY, POSSESSIONS, & THE WAY OF JESUS
 - ii. Curious if this will actually feel low heat, low disruption
 - iii. OR if today you'll feel some heat --- feel disrupted and enticed – AS ANY GOOD SERMON

2. NOISE IN THE ROOM

- a. This topic is difficult to talk about in churches in general – for 2 MAIN REASONS
 - i. CYNICISM & CONSUMERISM
- b. **CYNICISM**
 - i. Lots of cynicism around this topic – some already bracing themselves as they enter a new church
 - 1. Just waiting for the preacher to preach about giving and pass the plate
 - ii. Seeing it as fleecing the flock – a self-serving racket by preachers to get more money for their paychecks, and their buildings, and their pet projects.
 - iii. This noise is not without source!
 - 1. The so-called Health and Wealth and Prosperity Gospel has churned out preacher after preacher who does just that
 - 2. Spiritually abuses people into sending them money in order to get God's Blessing
 - a. we'll talk more about Spiritual Abuse and Power in a couple weeks!
- c. **CONSUMERISM has also seeped into mainline Christianity!**
 - i. The basic idea that my world is ordered for me to get happiness for me, at the lowest cost
 - ii. Consumerism mindset in the church, in regular churchfolks
 - iii. Bigger is better – buildings, attendance, budget, Programs
 - iv. Whats the best deal for me
 - 1. My preferences
 - v. You give to the church like a membership fee – to stay in good standing
 - 1. We're all coming in with a basic drive to find the best Christian program/product/experience for me, at the lowest cost to myself

3. Start by recognizing this noise in the room FOR YOU

- a. **Whats the noise level like for you on this topic?**
- b. Maybe it's only a slight background noise for you (easily identified and tuned out – like an AC)

- c. For others of you, this might be blaring in your ears like a klaxon, overwhelming your senses and thoughts so that no matter which direction you turn, it's all you hear.

d. Read Isaiah 40:8

- i. – as an invitation to God to speak his timeless word to us this morning in the mist of our distractions
- ii. **READ - The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.**
- iii. And trust that at the end of the day, with all these topics, we don't just have human voices to sift through, but the loving and Creator God has spoken. And we are not left aimless.

4. MONEY POSSESSIONS & THE WAY OF JESUS

5. Jesus talked a lot about money – which is super helpful as we consider this topic!

- a. 11 or his 30 recorded parables involve teaching about money
- b. 1 out of 7 verses of Jesus' words talk about money
- c. In fact, JC talks more about money than heaven and hell combined!
- d. So there's no way we can cover it all this morning!
 - i. So we'll get a representative sampling, enough to clearly hear his Word to us about this intimate topic

6. Lets start with perhaps the simplest and clearest: Acts 20:35

- a. "It is more blessed to give than to receive."
- b. You likely have heard the verse before
- c. Did you know that the word BLESSED actually means HAPPY?
 - i. The full, abundant, happy life lived God's way
- d. It's more HAPPY to give than to receive.
 - i. Does that feel right? – I mean, do you live this way?
 - ii. If you're like me, its easy to mentally assent to this at church
 - iii. I could get the right answer on the test every time
 - iv. But it's another thing entirely to live this out.
 - v. It's HARD to trust Jesus here → even as a seasoned Christian!

e. John Wesley – famous pastor and evangelist –last thing to be converted is a man's wallet

7. Jesus' financial ethic flies in the face of the American Dream that if we work hard, earn it, we'll get more and more money, enough to save and enjoy, send our kids to college, And then retire as young as we can in someplace warm – enjoying ourselves --playing golf and picking up shells

- a. Against this deep seated American Dream, Jesus' words seems crazy on the face of it → better to give then get? → Nope. Happier to GET!
 - i. Happier to GET THAT bday card full of cash? Or to give your cash to someone else?
 - ii. Happier to GET the new iphone, or to give that money away instead?
 - iii. Happier to GET that raise? Or to give more to your church?
 - iv. Happier to BUY SOMETHING FOR YOURSELF? Or buy something for someone else?

b. This last week, one of my kids brought this home from school → He already gets it

- i. SHOW PIC
- c. In college a friend of mine Justin Ostrander, amazing at guitar, and he's now made it in Nashville.
 - i. I was listening to one of his recent songs, he plays electric guitar on, think it sums up our thoughts on this nicely....
 1. I know everybody says money can't buy happiness
 2.but it can _____
 3. I know everybody says money can't buy happiness

4. But it could buy me a boat
 5. It could buy me a truck to pull it
 6. It could buy me a Yeti 110 iced down with some silver bullets
- ii. Chris Janson's breakout hit "BUY ME A BOAT" isn't just super catchy, but seems to make a lot of sense

1. What can money buy YOU that makes you happy?

d. Against that, JC's words seem out of touch

- e. That's why, for many of us, Following JC's teaching ACTUALLY seems like the path of ruin, fear, and suffering, FOOLISHNESS
- i. There's a real disconnect here!

8. Turn w me to Luke 12, starting in v 13 – Jesus tells us more about money and possessions

- a. ¹³Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." ¹⁴But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?"

i. Nice Jesusy comment – a question that makes a point – Does this man REALLY put himself under Jesus' authority?

- b. ¹⁵And he said to them, "Take care, and be on your guard against all types of greed, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

i. Hold the phone.

ii. Who's being greedy, man just wanting what's FAIRLY his.... Isn't JC overreacting?

- c. ¹⁶And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, ¹⁷and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?'

i. Seems pretty good. Honest gain. Good! – his ship's come in!

- d. ¹⁸And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry."'

i. makes sense, right?

ii. Good business sense

iii. This guy is basically the model American.

1. Working hard with his hands

iv. Living the American dream, looking to be successful, save up money, and retire early

1. And enjoy the good life

v. * This is our culture's ideal scenario.**

1. And by default, you and I want to be THIS GUY *****

e. But JC flips it all on its head

- i. ²⁰But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?'²¹So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

- f. No less disruptive to his original audience than to us!

i. Where did this guy go wrong?

ii. FOOL

1. Interesting he didn't call him evil (like he did others!)
2. But a FOOL.... Stupid

iii. Why was he stupid?

- g. Clues from the beginning

i. Already was a rich man

1. no rebuke for that, fine to be rich in itself

ii. Already had lots of wealth stored up (barns already full!)

- iii. Not only did this guy have enough already, had more than enough
- iv. THEN he gets more.
 - 1. And heres where it goes wrong
 - 2. He decides he should keep the excess excess too
 - 3. THAT'S WHERE THE GREED SHOWED FACE
 - a. **Greed – the practiced belief that more money & possessions will give life**
- h. So why did his greed make him a fool (instead of a BAD guy)
 - i. **He made 4 Foolish Assumptions**
 - 1. **He assumed he'd live a long time**
 - a. But that was a bad assumption – actually you're gonna die of a heart attack
 - b. Bad call
 - 2. **THIS IS MY STUFF**
 - a. He forgot who's stuff it was
 - b. **Ps 24, the whole earth is The Lord's and everything in it.**
 - c. A lot of I, My, and Mine in there..... assumed all of it was HIS and for him
 - d. But it was all Gods the whole time
 - e. He thought he was the OWNER
 - f. **BUT ACTUALLY** He was not an OWNER, but a Steward
 - i. Manager of someone elses money and possessions
 - ii. Supposed to use it for the MASTER's purposes
 - 3. **I'm supposed to spend it on myself**
 - a. He was supposed to give generously to GOD and his purposes
 - b. **He forgot the OT, Genesis 12:2-3 → we're blessed SO THAT WE CAN BE A BLESSING to others.**
 - c. Instead he hoarded it all for himself, for years of fat living that wouldnt come
 - i. Wasted
 - ii. And robbed those in need around him of the blessing GOD wanted to give them THROUGH HIM
 - 4. **HE assumed THIS WORLD is his real home**
 - a. When in fact we're just passing through.
 - b. On our way to our REAL HOME
 - c. **ANALOGY of airplane ride – RIPPED FROM Randy Alcorn's insightful and challenging book: MONEY POSESSIONS AND ETERNITY!**
 - i. Nobody lives on an airplane – Not your destination
 - ii. You sit there for a while ON YOUR WAY TO YOUR REAL DESTINATION
 - iii. But what if you forgot this, feeling like the flight was going to go on forever
 - iv. MIGHT as well make this feel like home
 - v. and went crazy with the skymall mag
 - vi. And lets say Amazon's Drone delivery service was all up and running, and could deliver to your plane
 - vii. You start ordering stuff
 - 1. Curtains
 - 2. Hang artwork
 - 3. Flat screen
 - 4. Chest of drawers – extra clothes
 - 5. Stove

6. Mower
7. DEER HEAD!

viii. Not only would this be weird, it'd be INSANE

1. This isn't your home!
2. You're about to land! And leave it forever
3. YOU'D BE A FOOL!

ii. In the perspective of Jesus, the Creator God of the Universe who sees reality as it truly is, this FARMER guy is truly a fool.

1. IT'S THE FOOL THAT INVESTS HEAVILY IN EARTHLY POSSESSIONS
2. You can't take it with you
3. **He's like John D Rockefeller**, famous business mogul 100 yrs ago who created the Standard Oil Co, considered by most to be the richest man in modern history (far more than any alive today!),
 - a. Net worth around \$400Bil adjusted to 2021
 - i. More than Elon Musk & Jeff Bezos combined! (2 richest in today's world)
 - b. After Rockefeller died, someone asked his lawyer how much money he left
 - i. And his lawyer famously replied..... all of it.**

iii. This Rich Man in Luke 12 left all of it too

1. He's a fool. And he's the posterchild for the American Dream
2. So what do we do with that?

9. Surely this isn't us, right?

- a. We're not really rich
 - i. Not like that guy Rockefeller
 - ii. Or Musk or Bezos
- b. We're not like that rich guy in Luke 12
 - i. Right?
- c. I'm not rich
 - i. And if I ever get rich I'll do differently

10. Let's test that a little

a. Go to givingwhatwecan.org

- i. Simply type in what country you live in, how much you make, and how many are in your family
- ii. And it will show you where you're at in world
 1. Adjusted for all the stuff
 2. Rich is such a relative category – there's always someone else you know that's got more than you do
 3. But if we compare ourselves to everyone else on earth, it's eye opening!

iii. Let's put in The Median Income for Kansas (2019)

1. Household of 4 – 59,597

- a. A married couple with 2 kids:
- b. Top 8.1% of world (richer than 91.9% of everyone in world)
- c. Earning 7.8x global median

2. Individual – 31,017

- a. Top 4.4% of world (richer than 95.6% of everyone in world)
- b. Earning 11x global median

iv. OK, what about those living in true poverty (which some do and are –11.4% in KS)

1. Fed poverty level 2021
2. **Household (4) - 26,500**
 - a. Top 21.2% of world (richer than 78.8% of everyone in world)
 - b. Earning 3.5x global median
3. **Individual – 12,880**
 - a. Top 16.3% of world (richer than 83.7% of everyone in world)
 - b. Earning 4.6x global median

11. **When we zoom out, and adjust for all the things, it seems even the poorest among us are richer than most of the people in the world today** – not to mention the average income levels among us!
 - a. We complain and fret over the latest repair we had to do on our car
 - i. Failing to realize that even having a car to repair makes us among the world's richest people.
 - b. If you drove here today in a vehicle OF ANY TYPE, IN ANY CONDITION, you're rich compared to the rest of the human race this morning
 - c. If you turned on the shower this morning and hot water came out you're rich
 - d. If you opened your closet today and had a CHOICE of what you were going to wear, you're rich
 - e. If you've driven through starbucks any purchased ANYTHING – especially if it's pumpkin spiced - you're rich
12. **Pause and remember** – Jesus doesn't seem to have a fundamental problem with people who have wealth
 - a. It's the BEING RICH AND NOT KNOWING IT that causes problems
 - b. It's the BEING RICH AND still wanting more that's Foolish
 - c. It's BEING RICH and keeping it all for yourself that he speaks strongly and lovingly against
 - i. When we're deep in the clutches of greed, but we don't even know it
 - ii. THAT'S THE DANGER ZONE – that I'd imagine most Americans are blindly in
 1. **Like when a brown recluse spider bites you, and you rarely feel the initial bite**
 2. But the venom is already racing through your body.... Beginning to kill you from the inside!
13. **Is it possible that we actually are rich people?**
 - a. WHETHER YOU FEEL LIKE IT OR NOT
 - b. Even if you don't SELF IDENTIFY as a rich guy, doesn't change the reality that you're RICH.
 - c. In fact, it's the blindness to our richness itself that is an alarm. A symptom that we're bitten
 - d. GREED makes us stupid also because it makes us blind. We don't realize it's happening.
 - i. **We're rich, BUT WE DON'T THINK WE ARE**
 1. We're rich, but we think we're poor.
 - ii. And even our poor are rich by world standards.
 1. Someone living at the poverty line in the US are still richer than 83.7% of everyone else on the planet (ADJUSTED FOR all the stuff)
 - e. **Is it possible that we not only are rich, but that we've come to Love Money?**
 - i. (the def of greed)
 - ii. Unconsciously looking to money and possessions for our happiness?
 - f. GREED comes in many forms
 - i. **We've been rocking lots of spectrums lately – here's the SPECTRUM of Greed**
 1. **Not from less to more – but from one KIND to Another**
 - ii. The spender kind, craving more and more to make you happy by consuming
 1. Stuff, pleasure, experiences
 - iii. And the Saver kind, fearfully looking to your MONEY to protect you from disaster
 1. What do I need? Just a little more Then I'll be happy/ safe

- iv. SEEMINGLY opposite
- v. But 2 sides of the same coin

1. Both looking to MORE MONEY to make their life good, fun, secure – Blessed – happy

14. Is it possible that we're the rich guy?

15. So..... what are we to do?

- a. **HOW TO WE ESCAPE? HOW DO WE KEEP FROM GETTING BITTEN BY GREED?**
 - i. By the LOVE of money.....
 - ii. **You cant. Not here.**
- b. Indeed this is where the analogy breaks down, its not near DIRE ENOUGH!
- c. that isn't just found in occasional spiders we might run across, but is in **the VERY AIR WE BREATHE** in this country?
 - i. The venom is in the very air we breathe here, so it's nearly impossible to avoid
- d. [pause]
- e. **Our only hope is to be constantly drinking the antidote.**
- f. SO WHAT'S THE ANTIDOTE???? [SLIDE]
- g. And thank GOD he's shown us what it is, and where we can get it
 - i. He is, after all, our loving father, desiring our good!
 - ii. Disrupting what is harmful in order to ENTICE US to what is truly good!

16. DRUMROLL: THE ANTIDOTE TO THIS VENOM OF GREED IS :::::::::::::::

- a. RADICAL GENEROSITY
 - i. Gospel Stewardship
 - 1. Stewarding God's resources for God's purposes
 - ii. Anyone feel let down? Bummed out? Underwhelmed?

17. Give. Graciously. And truly, radically generously.

- a. Because God has already given radically generously to you by giving himself completely on the Cross for you!
 - i. This is the GOSPEL →
 - 1. FOR GOD SO LOVE THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE _____
 - 2. God gave everything for you, when you had nothing
 - 3. He gave his very life on the Cross to pay for your sins, so that you can take hold of TRUE life
 - 4. With him → that starts now, and goes into eternity
 - 5. He's disrupting and enticing you to a way he's already walked FOR YOU → "For the JOY set before him"

18. APPLICATION

- a. **So what do we do with this teaching?**

19. 1) ACCEPT THE GIFT OF JESUS

- a. If you've never received the free Gift of Jesus, the Gospel, I invite you to accept that gift this morning, for the first time.
 - i. If you believe that Jesus is God's son, and that he died to save you from your sin and shame
 - ii. If you want him to become your love, and your king, simply tell him that in the quiet of your heart.

20. 2) GIVE GENEROUSLY

- a. Especially if you're rich!

- b. **1 Tim 6:17-19** ¹⁷ Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. ¹⁸ Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. ¹⁹ In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

c. **Are you rich (in this present world)?**

- i. Don't put your hope in money or possessions
- ii. Trust God for your life
- iii. Use your wealth to DO GOOD FOR OTHERS
 - 1. Sharing and giving GENEROUSLY**
- iv. So that you can invest your wealth WISELY
 1. In light of eternity
 2. So you can live your best life NOW

21. Take a step forward in your giving to our church

22. Very practical application for our church family right now – Tallgrass at The Well

- a. As we move forward together toward marriage, one of the key challenges for us together is financial
- b. Historically, Tallgrass has been blessed with a strong stewardship ethic
 - i. Most people give, and give generously! Even though difficult times.
- c. I'm excited for that Gospel Stewardship ethic to grow as we keep moving forward together.
- d. Most folks do it securely online → Tallgrass.church/give (BETTER TOGETHER FUND)

23. TAKE A NEXT STEP – a SCARY step of faith (most all next steps of value involve a scary step)

- i. Think you'll be able to give more later when you have more?
 1. Don't BE FOOLED! → The stats don't bear that out.
 2. Folks give LESS percentage the more money they make (including Evangelical Christians!)
 3. So now's the time to take a next step and practice Gospel Stewardship with what He's entrusted to you – especially if you're a "poor" college student!
- ii. **Modification! → Start somewhere**
- iii. If you're currently giving 0, start somewhere!
 1. Start somewhere. 10%? (we've talked about this elsewhere, how it's not a rule, but a good starting point!)
- iv. Seem too much of a stretch, start at 5%. Or \$50
 1. Take that scary step of faith, and see what God does
 2. You can always increase your giving as you go
- v. Remember, Scriptures don't tell us how much we should give, only that in light of the Cross and Eternity and our Loving Father and the Great Mission, we should give RADICALLY GENEROUSLY
 1. And it will likely be far more than we THINK we can
 2. Most of us can afford to give CONSIDERABLY more than 10% in light of our wealth
- vi. We should feel our standard of Giving in our standard of Living
 1. There should be some things we could do or buy, but don't, because of our choices to be graciously generous givers.

- b. **Test God in this... As God Himself invites in Micah 3:10** – take a step and see what he does → see how LAVISHLY he pours out his blessings.

- i. **I have a lot of the SAVER kind of instinctual greed.**
 1. Often afraid that I won't have enough.

2. But years ago as God began to open our eyes to our richness
 - a. Jenn and I decided to take a simple step in response to that revelation
 - b. We decided to try bumping up our regular giving from 10% to 11%**
 - i. We were SCARED
 - c. But God has provided for us, even lavishly.
3. **Recently we've bumped up to 12%.** And we always have enough.
- ii. **I've also taken the difficult personal step of also embracing opportunities to give sporadically**
 1. Most often in having money and supplies on hand to **give to beggars** I see when driving. Not only tossing them money, but slowing down enough to let myself be disrupted.
 2. Learn their names, stories
 3. And also give them the gift of my prayers to Jesus on their behalf
 - 4. It's actually been VERY difficult for me. But exceedingly blessed.**
 5. **Even happy.** A deep sense of peace and security not from nervously hoarding money, but giving it away to others, as I sense the Master Jesus would have me do with HIS money.
 6. I've been experiencing the radical truth of Jesus' way as I've taken baby steps with him – It truly IS happier to give, and practice trusting in Him, rather than my money.

24. WHAT'S YOUR NEXT STEP IN REPONSE TO THIS TEACHING?

- a. Pro tip: you can often identify these through your points of resistance!
- b. Who knows what God might do in you and through you as you follow the Way of Jesus with your money and possessions?**

25. Apostles Creed

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
 who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
 born of the Virgin Mary,
 suffered under Pontius Pilate,
 was crucified, died, and was buried;

On the third day he rose again;
 he ascended into heaven,
 he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
 and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the holy *catholic Church,
 the communion of saints,
 the forgiveness of sins,
 the resurrection of the body,
 and the life everlasting.

Amen.

LORDS SUPPER

- 1) Two lines down the center aisle
- 2) **This morning, in your heart, we're going to view this as a celebration**
 - a. **Like unwrapping a birthday present**
 - b. We're enjoying and celebrating
 - c. Sharing together in God's greatest gift – the Giver of his very life for us
 - d. The bread reminds us of Jesus' body, given for us
 - i. The juice of his blood given for us.
 - e. We take it into our very selves in expression and reminder of our transformation from the inside out by Jesus through the HS
 - f. And it's AMAZING!!!
- 3) **When you get back to your seats, with your eyes open, to help us remember that we TOGETHER are the Body and Bride of Christ, say a quiet prayer of thanks to Jesus for his gift to you.**