

We are continuing our series in the book of Mark, and we're looking at Jesus in the midst of a section that spans about the past three weeks, and it culminates next week in this difficult teaching in which Jesus is challenging our assumptions about what it means to follow Jesus.

We're going to jump into what Jesus has to say about the allure of wealth. So I want to start with a question: How much money is enough? It's a question that, in our day and age, may be something common that we might not explicitly ask, but beneath the surface, hovering in the index of our heart, it's a question we pursue. We seek after. How much money is enough?

In 2010 Nobel Prize-winning, Princeton psychologist, Daniel Kahneman led a study that tracked the levels of happiness and wellness and traced it to the increase of salary. And what the researchers found was that life satisfaction did, in fact, rise steadily with income, to a point. There's a level in which what they found was that money could, in fact, buy happiness to a point. They found through the study that there's a massive difference between \$5,000 a year to about \$75,000 a year, and that increase is significant to the level of happiness.

But what's more fascinating is beyond \$75,000 to \$5 million, there was little to no increase in your happiness based on your income. See, happiness can rise. Money can give us some level of happiness but to a point. The problem is barely any of us actually believe that. Most of us think another \$25,000, \$50,000, \$100,000, or \$1,000,000; if I just arrived there, then happiness would come.

In 2006 there was an article in *New York Magazine* entitled "Some Dark Thoughts on Happiness," tracked the rise not so much of wealth but of the increase of wellness culture and self-help culture. And they were tracking it specifically in the context of New York and New Yorker's lives. They did dip into the idea of how much money influences this. There's this quote in the middle of it that says, "Money doesn't buy happiness or even upgrade despair once our basic needs are met." A little bit later, the article goes on to discuss the problem of wealth, and it says that the allure of wealth is that it puts you on the "hedonic treadmill."

Think hedonism. It's the idea of a treadmill in which hedonism—meaning you exist for the very purpose of pleasure—and he says, what money affords you is you get on this treadmill. We all know this to be true, right beneath the surface, I just may or may not admit it. But the more you have, the more you want, the greater access, the more you desire.

In our culture, there's always more. There's always the next thing; there's another experience, the next purchase, the next tax bracket, and the next sense of safety. Whatever it is, money has this deceit to it. There's an allure to it in which we believe it will solve all of our problems. And Jesus, this morning in Mark 10, is going to challenge our preconceptions of what wealth can offer us. He's going to offer a very nuanced understanding of life with money, but it's a very difficult teaching in which he's going to confront those assumptions that we have made as well.

If you remember, this comes immediately after what Brandon preached last week about the children coming to Jesus. Mark and Jesus are brilliantly putting the children in contrast to the rich young man that we encounter in this text. If you remember, Jesus said, unless you become like a child, you cannot enter the kingdom of God. As Brandon unpacked last week, this concept of a child is one who doesn't have anything, who's utterly vulnerable to the state of the world.

Mark is going to contrast that person with someone who has everything and will walk away as sad and dismayed because he could not overcome that obstacle to entering the kingdom of God. [Mark 10:17](#)

This theme of people running up to Jesus in the Gospel of Mark is a prominent thing. If you remember, the man possessed by the demons forever ago in this series ran up to Jesus in pursuit of life and life to the fullest. Here we see this man running up to Jesus. There's an eagerness. And it says that when he runs up, he falls on his knees. He says, good teacher. Then he asks the question that, in some ways, all of us ask at some level, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" We've been waiting for someone in Mark to ask this question. It's the question at the heart of all of our beings where we desire this eternal life. But notice a few things about the question.

First, it's the question we all are fundamentally asking, which is, to what end do I achieve this life? Where do I find the ultimate meaning of existence? Where do I go to achieve all that I've been longing for?

Also, notice the second thing about this question is that it's slightly different than the way we tend to ask this question. He doesn't say, how do I get to heaven when I die? Instead, he says, how do I inherit eternal life? Now, this is an important distinction. The Greek phrase here is the word where we get eternal life.

But what's nuanced about this in the first-century understanding is it's not just about the quantity of life; it's also about the quality

of life. So this man is not just asking, how do I live forever, but rather this phrase in the first century meant more like "How do I get the life of the age to come?" Because for the first-century imagination, they split history between two different ages.

The first was this present age. Paul is fond of that statement. He'll use that throughout his letters. But this present age is the age that's ruled and run by evil and injustice. Sin is rampant, and brokenness rules the day. There's a rebellion in creation, both from the demonic world and the human world, in which we're warring against God and his ways. It's riddled with disease and despair and death.

We feel this age, don't we? We feel the effects of this present age with the war in Ukraine and shootings in Texas, and disease and diagnoses and brokenness. We all feel this present age. But the biblical imagination, the first-century hope was that there was another age to come, what the authors often will call eternal life.

This age to come is one that's not ruled by sin. It's ruled by Jesus in the manifestation of the kingdom of God. It's filled with life and peace and harmony and shalom. The reason you know this age stings is because latten within you is the hope of the age to come, which God has placed within you. So there is coming a day out on the horizon in which that age to come is present at the moment.

So the question is, as he's asking, "How do I then live into that new age here and now that will go on for eternity." But as Jesus at the beginning of the Gospel of Mark said, "The kingdom of God is here now." We live in the overlap of this present age and the age to come. So in that, we feel the tension, we feel and resonate with this question of how do I prepare now? What do I do at this moment so I am prepared for the full expression of the age to come in the here and now? He is asking how does he live into that? What must he do now so that on that day out in the future when God returns and casts judgment over creation, everyone is resurrected, and those enter the kingdom of Christ. He wants to know how does he get that life now? How does he inherit eternal life? Jesus responds in [Mark 10:18](#).

We don't know why Jesus does this cryptic back-and-forth dance. He's certainly not denying his own goodness; that would go against everything we understand about God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit as this triune being in which they are, in fact, God. So he is not necessarily asking that.

The best case we can understand is that this man's question, or this statement when he says good teacher, is he's actually trying to leverage his position. He's trying to sweeten it with Jesus. Because he knows he is asking a hard question. He knows that Jesus is probably going to ask him to do something that's difficult. So he says, "Hey, good teacher." My guess is he's assuming in response, he would hear, "Well, good fellow. How are you today?" It's an honor/shame society. Bartering and negotiation

are common practices, and so this man comes and says, "Good teacher." And Jesus, sniffing out his motivation, says, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone."

Jesus is picking up on this sense of almost coercion and manipulation, and what we know of Jesus is that he will not and cannot be manipulated. [Mark 10:19](#). Jesus is responding, and it's again a bit of a cryptic response, isn't it? The man asks, how do I inherit eternal life? And he says, you know the Commandments? But an astute reader of the scriptures will recognize that not only does Jesus not give the full ten commandments, he sneaks one in here that isn't in the Ten Commandments at all. Did you catch that? Nowhere in the Ten Commandments does it say do not defraud. What Jesus is doing is actually asking the man how he made his money.

In a culture like this, you had the upper echelon, just a couple percent at the very top of society who lived in opulent wealth and opulent luxury, and then 98 percent beneath them lived in essentially abject poverty. And the majority of that top percent would've made their money through injustice, oppression, and brokenness. So there was skepticism about that. Jesus is actually asking the man, "Hey, did you kill for this money? Did you steal, did you defraud, did you cheat the system?" Essentially, he's asking how did he come about his wealth?

Then the story goes on [Mark 10:20](#). Essentially, this man looks at Jesus and says that he came about my money in an honest fashion. What's fascinating is Jesus doesn't question him. Jesus assumes that he's actually telling the truth. Here is a young ruler, as Matthew would call him; he's this young man with wealth, and he seems to be Torah observant. He said I've kept all the commandments since I was a boy. It echoes of Paul's comments in Philippians, where he says, according to the law, he was blameless.

This man is saying I've kept the law. And he actually has. He's come about his money in a virtuous way. You can make money virtuously, or you can make it through vice. Jesus asked this man, and he said that he kept every law. This young man, who's wealthy and Torah observant, is probably in a position of power and authority. He seems to have everything going for him. He's the one who I imagine the disciples sitting in the back watching this exchange are thinking, "Man, this guy has everything." It says this in verse [Mark 10:21](#). It says Jesus loved him. What a beautiful statement because as we read, we know the way the rest of the story unfolds, and Jesus knows how this story is going to unfold. This is the only time in the Gospel of Mark that we explicitly read that Jesus loved somebody.

He looks at this young man, not with vitriol, not with skepticism, not questioning if it was true or not, but rather it says he looked at him and he loved him. This word "looked at him," in Greek, means to consider, to investigate. We assume it's like looking beneath the surface, looking into this man. He loved him and then

told him, "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

This young man who seemingly has everything this world could offer—wealth, position, and power. He's probably good-looking because that's the whole package; he's got all of it. He comes, and Jesus looks on him and investigates him. This man knows there's something lacking. When he goes to Jesus, he knows he has life put together, but there's something that provokes him to run to Jesus and say, "What is it in me? I have everything I could want, but there's something that lacks." Jesus essentially is saying, you're right; there is something you lack. And he says the man needed to go and sell everything and give to the poor. Then he would have treasure in heaven. Then follow Jesus.

We have to be careful with the concept of treasure in heaven because we tend to think it's just delayed gratification. You don't have to have the mansion now, but you can get it later. We have this vision of treasure in heaven as some American dream that lives on in eternity. I don't think that's what Jesus is after. What he's actually getting at is like the man who stumbled across the treasure in the field. Remember this teaching from Jesus in Matthew 13? This man is stumbling into this field. He finds this treasure, and when he sees the treasure, it says the man sells everything to buy the field because he realizes that is what life is all about—the kingdom of God.

Jesus tells the young man that he needs to go sell everything because there's something about the wealth you have that's luring his heart. There's an allure to it in which it is an obstacle to him following Jesus. That is what he lacked. He must be Jesus' disciple. He must learn to live in a different way, organized around a different set of conventions and understandings about the world. Jesus said to sell everything he had, give it to the poor, and then come follow him. It's the same command he gave to the 12 disciples—drop your nets and follow me.

There's something in this invitation that demands all of us. It demands every corner of our hearts. Jesus says if you want to experience eternal life if you want the life of the age to come, you must learn to live as a disciple that looks a lot more like dying on a cross than it does by gaining and accumulating. He says this way of Jesus demands everything, and there are things in your life, cornerstones of your identity, in which you construct your understanding of what it means to be human on things other than Jesus and the kingdom of God.

For this man, it wasn't just that he had wealth; it was that his wealth had become a god to him, something in which he organized the whole of his life. He couldn't imagine life without that, and so he was caught in this web. [Mark 10:22](#)

The word sad is like grief. It's a little more than just downtrodden. It's like he realizes he can't do what Jesus had asked him to do. It says his face drops. He goes away sad because he couldn't

imagine a life without everything that his wealth had afforded him. For this man, rather than his wealth being a gift from God, it was his God. And if I'm honest, for many of us, we may go away sad as well. The inconvenient truth is that the majority of us if you're in this room and drove here today, depending on how you want to relativize wealth, you are in the upper echelon of wealth globally.

So for most of us, we have to wrestle with this teaching in the sense that Jesus is demanding us to be able to release our attachments to the things of this present age so that we can attach to things of the age to come. And the uncomfortable truth is that we are in this boat. I am in this boat. You are in this boat, and however we want to realize the truth, our response is going to be similar to the disciples. [Mark 10:23-25](#)

The disciples are stunned because they live in a world in which wealth and prosperity mean the blessing of God. That was the latent assumption. So you look at this one, and you think, this guy must be blessed by God. Look how much he has. And the disciples look, and they watch him go away sad, and they think if this guy can't be saved, who can? They're stunned by Jesus' teaching because that was the worldview of the day. If you were wealthy, you must be blessed by God.

If we're honest, that's not all that unfamiliar to us. We tend to think of it in the same way. There are ways in the church that we say explicitly with something like a prosperity gospel that preaches that if you're faithful enough, if you give enough, God will give you back tenfold. And it's this coercive, manipulative relationship in which I can encounter God but not God himself, but rather to manipulate him, to give him what I actually deeply desire. So we can say that in explicit ways.

Most of us have been around church long enough to have issues with that prosperity gospel. I'm a little more interested and concerned about what happens beneath the surface, where we believe implicitly that if we act well, God will love us more. If I follow his commands, then certainly life will go well for me. But what we find is that it's just a prosperity gospel in the same way but with just a little bit more of a Jesus veneer on it.

Most of us approach economics and money in that sense. We view it as this game we can play with God. But the problem is this. If wealth is a sign of God's blessing, then what is poverty? A sign of God's curse? God's displeasure? If wealth is a reward for keeping God's commandments, then is poverty a punishment for not? This logic falls apart as we look globally, and we realize that the center of the Christian movement is not in the West. It's in the global south. It's with our poor brothers and sisters who have this fire and passion for the Lord in a way that if you've been on any mission trip, if you've traveled, you realize there's something we're not getting. In some ways, when I go on mission trips, I find myself asking some rendition of the same question, What do I have to do to get that? Because they've got something. It's

not caught up in the pleasures and the luxuries of life; there's something about that. The logic begins to fall apart because the majority of the poor world is also the majority of Christians.

So what are we missing? It's fascinating because Jesus holds a very nuanced view of wealth, and I want you to hear this clearly. I actually don't think Jesus is down on wealth and riches. You see that all over the gospels. Remember the woman who breaks the alabaster jar of extremely expensive oil and pours it at the feet of Jesus? He doesn't ask her to sell everything. Think of Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man of the early church who helped fund a lot of this. Think of the women in Acts who were funding this new Jesus movement. Even Jesus' teaching of the Good Samaritan. The teaching of the Good Samaritan assumes that the Samaritan had the means to put this man up for multiple days on his own dime.

Jesus is not actually down on money. What he understands and what he's trying to teach us today is he's trying not to call into question the idea that wealth is the blessing of God. I don't think Jesus wants us all to be poor. The way I understand Jesus in poverty is he's trying to eradicate it. He's trying to form a people in which we meet the needs of others. I don't think he desires for all of us to be poor. But here's the thing, he's very concerned about the trappings of wealth. He holds a very nuanced view of understanding wealth. He recognizes there's a unique trap of money that can garner our focus and our heart's desire. And he says it right here—how hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God.

He just means it. For this man, it was too much. He sandwiches this in this incredibly dense text. He says, "How hard is it for the rich to enter the kingdom of God?" In the next phrase, he says, "Children, how hard is it to enter the kingdom of God?" That's a broader statement. So it's not just the rich now; it says it's everyone. How hard is it to enter the kingdom of God? He says, "It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who's rich to enter the kingdom of God."

A camel in Palestine was probably the biggest animal they'd ever seen. The eye of a needle was the absolute smallest thing they could think of. I don't think there's any metaphor for a gate on the east side of Jerusalem, as some people might think. I honestly think Jesus is making a joke here. He's literally saying, "This is how hard it is; just try to get a camel through the eye of a needle." He's speaking in hyperbole in the same way he spoke about the plank in your eye. We don't think of Jesus as funny. He was actually pretty funny. He had a sense of humor. We think he's so serious, and he is like, this is a hard teaching, and he's making a point. He wants us to, with sarcasm, think through this issue. He says it is harder for a camel to get through the eye of a needle than it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God. The uncomfortable truth is that this teaching may be for us.

We can defer. We can deflect this, but the reality is that at some point, the trillionaire thinks this is for the billionaire. The millionaire thinks it's for the billionaire. The lawyer thinks it's for the doctor and the doctor for the lawyer. The teacher thinks it's for the nurse. And down the line, you go until you get to the beggar that's just simply wondering, is anyone going to help me with my next meal? We can deflect, we can push this away, or we can simply humbly come before Jesus and say, "Lord, I don't know how to handle this." And we can hear that same question. What's important to note, too, is that this question is specific before it's general.

This command of Jesus—sell everything he has to give to the poor—is not a blanket command for everyone. It is specifically for this man. And the reason is that because Jesus has encountered many rich people in the gospel thus far, and this is the only one in which he gives that commandment. But I want to caution you, church, if you hear that and you're like, "Okay, good, I'm safe." I don't know if we're hearing Jesus' teaching because the way we live our economic lives is important to Jesus. It will demand a lot of us. It will demand more than I am comfortable with, but Jesus cares about the way we spend our money.

Again, I don't think Jesus is down on wealth. Ultimately, if I were to summarize all of it, that in the way of Jesus wealth is useful but dangerous because what happens with wealth is that it ties you to the old creation dynamics. Remember the context of the question? It's how do I live in that age to come?

What happens is there are these old creation dynamics of this present age, and it's in this way that we organize life. For our day, this is around expressive individualism. I'm the captain of my own ship. I'm the author of my own destiny. That's an old creation dynamic in which we place the sacred self at the center of everything, and we make decisions about our life. That's one of those old creation dynamics. That's not the way of Jesus. Like consumerism, if I just acquire more, then I'll be satisfied. That's the old creation dynamic, that wealth is power and blessing. That's all old creation stuff.

Jesus is inaugurating this new creation in which we have to disciple under him, apprentice under Jesus to unlearn all of these old creation dynamics and understand what life could be like if I am not the center of the universe if I am not what I purchase if I am not what I make. And Jesus is inviting this rich young man to say, what would it look like for this not to be the cornerstone of your identity. He says in the kingdom of God; there's a different way. So this command is specific to this man, but there is a sense in which he is generally calling into question all these old creation dynamics.

Remember where we've been with this? He did this with relationships a couple of weeks ago with Dan's teaching on divorce. He's done this with children. Do you think the vulnerable aren't

of worth? He says no, these are the ones who the kingdom of God is. And he says, now here with wealth, you think wealth is the blessing? He says, no, it's different. Jesus is in this tour de force of what the kingdom of God operates in. You could call it upside down, but it's actually right-side up. And he's calling into question these old creation dynamics, and he's saying, those are the parody you think that brings life. Do you think that is how you inherit eternal life? He says it's not. It's not what leads to life and life to the fullest.

For Jesus, money does not equal success. Power does not equal influence. Looking out for number one is not the way. He says there's a different order, a different way to live. And did you catch in the middle of that difficult teaching in [Mark 10:25](#)?

The kingdom of God was for them. He looks at his disciples who are stunned, dismayed. I imagine he may be looking at you and me as we're like, how do we do this if we are, in fact, wealthy? If we are in that category? Lord, how do we do this? I want you to hear clearly. Jesus is saying, children, what's impossible with man is possible with God. There is, in fact, a way, and Jesus looks us in the eyes and says, children, the kingdom of heaven is for you. And in the midst of this brutally difficult, challenging teaching, Jesus has the wherewithal to look and to invite those disciples in and say there is, in fact, a way. Church, there is a way to live this. [Mark 10:26](#)

I imagine there are some questions you're asking. It's the question I've been asking this week. Who, then, can do this? [Mark 10:27](#) Then Peter, God bless him, he's the one that says the quiet thing out loud. We've left everything to follow you! He's like, we've done that which is true, and they have. Actually, Peter is not necessarily poor. Peter owned his own fishing boat. That's a big deal in the first century. If you own a boat now, it's a big deal. There's a sense in which Peter was probably doing okay. They left that. [Mark 10:28-31](#)

This is brilliant because Jesus says that when you leave everything to enter into the kingdom of God when you give up your house for the kingdom of God, what you gain is a house in every city you travel to and stay in because you're a part of the family of God. If you leave your brother, sister, mother, wife, whatever he says, when you leave, then you gain a family of God that's diverse and cosmic. Throughout the whole world, he says, you've welcomed a hundred more families because you're in a new family. Whatever you give up, you gain because the kingdom of God functions under this new creation dynamic in which we recognize what's mine is not mine alone. It's for us. It's given to live in this way. You do not belong to only your small family. You belong to the family of God. And he says when you leave stuff behind, and you enter into the kingdom of God, all of that is available.

But Jesus is not naive. He says it also comes with persecution. This way of the kingdom of God will be difficult. To live in the

new creation dynamics in the midst of the old creation will be difficult. It will bring persecution, it will bring hardship, but when it does, know that you are not alone. This teaching is hard, but Jesus, over and over again, reminds us of the upside-down nature of the kingdom, that those who are first will be last and the last the first.

The kingdom of God is this great reversal. It's the thing that Mark has constantly been asking us as we read this gospel where he is saying to question the certainties you think you had. Who's in, and who's out? It's Mark provoking the church to say are you sure? And he invites us to ask probing, difficult questions.

That's what this text is offering us today. It's asking us to look inside and say, where are the attachments of my heart, like this rich young man who came to Jesus and was asked to get rid of everything. That might be the question that Jesus is asking you. Maybe it isn't. Maybe it's something different. Maybe there's something else that's your attachment; your identity is found on.

What I do know with certainty is that Jesus will ask all of us, every part of us, to be laid before Jesus if we are to enter the kingdom of God. This movement toward the kingdom of God is not an act of triumph; it's an act of surrender. It's an act of laying down who we are, every part of us, but we're not left without God. Jesus, who's with us, inviting us, is welcoming us in.

If I were to summarize everything in this teaching, it's this: In the way of Jesus, money is useful but dangerous. There are three things I want to close with. The first one that's been challenging for me is I've come to the place where I believe, after this text and looking at Jesus' teaching on money, that I actually don't think money is neutral. I used to think that it was. Money isn't actually neutral. It's quite dangerous. And that's what Jesus teaches here. He says it's very hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of God. It doesn't mean there isn't a way. He makes that clear as well. With man, it's impossible, but with God, all things are possible.

But we have to, with wide eyes, look at this reality and say money may not be neutral. There's a unique allure to wealth that traps our hearts, makes us believe we can do it on our own, stunts our faith, that stunts our trust in Jesus. Again, it doesn't mean that it's inherently wrong or bad. It's actually quite useful, and Jesus wants us to use our wealth toward the kingdom of God. That is absolutely a path forward, and I've seen many examples. Many of you in this room I've watched live in a way that's open-handed with your things, your possessions, your wealth that says, what would God have me do with this position, this privilege? It's stunningly beautiful to watch people do that, but it's hard; it's dangerous.

Jesus says the road is narrow that leads to life. I don't think Jesus is advocating that poverty is the only way, but he's calling into question the belief that wealth is the blessed life. That has formed in us at a latent level beneath the surface as we are bombarded

with messages that your powerful wealth means you're good. All of that happens subtly beneath the surface, and it slowly forms our hearts towards that.

The second point is that money knits our hearts to this passing age. The more we have, the more we want. That's that hedonic treadmill. The more we think we earn, the more we get caught up in the things of this age that are passing away. The more access we have, the more we can connect to those things. But that passing age is wasting away. It's moving. Not this world, but this system of thinking is it is passing away as the kingdom of God is coming into the scene. And money has a unique way to knit our hearts to that which is passing away. And Jesus is saying, be careful.

Lastly, money possesses a deeply formative power. As we often talk around here about how we must counter form against the ways of this world, a world like ours that's organized around these sorts of old creation dynamics of wealth and position and power, those things are deeply formative, and we need to be aware of that. Money has a way of forming your soul, forming your loves and your longings in such a way that it can move you, not from the way of Jesus, but outside of that. Money possesses a deeply formative power.

So the question is, then, how do we counter this? Well, that's actually relatively simple. Not easy, but simple. Practice generosity. We get this. This is one of the reasons that we practice giving week after week. I know some of you're sitting here and thinking I'm just trying to get you to give to the church, but I want you to hear me. I haven't said a thing about that. The generosity of this church quite literally humbles me all the time at the way so many of you give of your money to support the work that we as a community are doing to keep the lights on, to have a building like this that is a staple in the Bay Area.

But I'm not necessarily asking you to do that, and Jesus isn't either. Where did Jesus tell the man to give the money? Not to the temple but to the poor. There are ways we do that at this church, and that's certainly part of it. I want you to hear that what I'm asking you to do is to guard your heart against that which wealth can distort. It may not be giving here. I would imagine there are ways you can give outside these walls, but what is so core to the practice of the church throughout the centuries is this practice of generosity. That was one, to meet the physical needs of others without question. But what's also going on in the act of giving is it is a way in which you are shaping your heart away from the very systems of this world that say wealth is the way.

I mean, what other community do you gather in where they have given for centuries 10 percent of their income away? It's an odd practice. That's strange, particularly in our world. But it's not just to keep lights on and this and that. There's something going on in your heart in which this practice of generosity, whatever the amount is, whatever it is, Jesus. He is saying you have to deal with the fact that your heart is pulled toward wealth.

So what is that step for you? What is it that you want to give away in order to grow in generosity? Because wealth is doing something to us. Money does something to our hearts. And if we're going to counter-form, we need a regular practice of generosity wherever it is. There are plenty of beautiful organizations that you can give to that promote the goodness of the world, promote the kingdom of God, and do all of those sorts of things, and I invite you to do those because Jesus wants to cultivate a practice that malforms against the ways of this world. Generosity malforms against how money and wealth want to form our heart.

I invite you to say this prayer.

Holy Father, there is nothing I have that you have not given me. All I have belongs to you and was bought with the blood of Jesus. To spend everything on myself and to give without sacrifice is the way of the world, but generosity is the way of those who call Jesus Lord. Teach us now to love with free hearts and to serve with renewed minds. Renew our minds to the deceit of riches that chokes out the word and tune our hearts to your kingdom, not the systems of this world. I am determined to be trustworthy with such a little thing as money that you may trust me with true riches. Above all, may we grow together as a generous people so we can reflect your unending generosity. It is the delight of your sons and daughters to share your traits and to show what you are like to all the world. Amen.

This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.

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Catalog No. 1469-28FC