

NOTES:

A. Introduction

1. In this mini-series on giving we began last week with Mike Bidell's sermon on "first thoughts." In a time of need is our first thought:
 - a. God is my Faithful Father, or lack?
 - b. All I have is His, or I need to hang onto what is mine?
 - c. I live in eternity, or I live in the now?
2. Our "first thoughts" about giving are linked to our family or origin. Pastor Derrick's mother taught that the Kingdom of God was first in finances and we are simply stewards.
3. **Pastor Derrick:** *"There is nothing that will illuminate the truth of your soul like your attitude toward giving. It shows the power of the Kingdom in you and illuminates that is in you. Money is spiritual."*

B. Money can be a principality – Luke 12:13-21.

1. Our attitude toward money can demonstrate our greed.
 - a. Rockefeller, when asked "How much is enough?" is said to have replied, "Just a little more."
 - b. Jesus warns against greed – Luke 12:15, then tells the parable of the rich fool.
 - i. Luke chose to communicate Jesus' teaching through parable stories because parables reminded his readers of Christ's teaching and recalled the power of His spirit.
 - ii. This parable illustrates how God interrupts our earthly plans and demands plans for eternity.
2. We are not to be seduced by money which can become a "principality" (also translated "rulers and authorities?") – Ephesians 6:12.
 - a. There is an evil array of forces working against Christians and truth. They are often connected to the mind and heart of Satan.
 - b. Money can become a principality of the enemy to work against, not for us. **Pastor Derrick:** *"Money taps into the unseen world. Satan uses money as a weapon to keep us captive and our thinking in bondage."*
 - c. This attempt at putting us in bondage happens even in church. Talk of money inevitably stirs up a reaction.
 - d. The enemy uses money as a spiritual launching pad of control and manipulation so that even otherwise "good" people lie on their taxes, cheat at work because the enemy has infiltrated with an attitude of stealing, hoarding, keeping from God. E.g. Gollum in the *Lord of the Rings* is a character corrupted and changed by greed.
 - e. We struggle against this attitude – Ephesians 6:12; 1 Timothy 6:10 and win because Jesus has broken the power of darkness – Ephesians 1:19-22; Colossians 1:13.

C. Money can be a sacrament

1. A "sacrament" is an outward sign of inward blessing. Baptism and Communion are sacraments.
2. How is giving sacramental?
 - a. It shows that Jesus is Lord over life. It's an outward sign of alignment to His family, passion and heart, a sign of self-denial and cross-taking.
 - b. Three things advance the kingdom: 1. Prayer; 2. Work (volunteering); 3. Money.
3. In Luke 12:21 Jesus talks about the destiny of someone who "... is not rich toward God." What does that mean?
 - a. Acknowledge that everything comes from Him; He is Lord of all and we give it back for His glory, honour, praise, not self-use.
 - b. This works out in practical gifts to the church (e.g. support the bus ministry, Alpha, Recovery Church, etc.) and the larger church (e.g. visit to the Arctic in the winter to bring encouragement, supply a feast to a grieving family, a heater to the pastor, support fundraising to send Arctic kids to Camp Yukon).

DISCUSSION

1. Our attitude toward money is shaped early and is caught as well as taught. Share with each other about the attitude toward money in your home of origin. How is your attitude toward money now similar? Different? If different, how did it change? How is one's attitude toward money spiritual?
2. How is money a principality? Have you ever been in bondage to money? How can we break away from Satan's control and influence over us in this area?
3. What is a sacrament? How can money be a sacrament of faith in Christ? What does it mean to be "rich toward God"? How do we become rich toward God? In what practical ways might this be evidenced in our lives?

PRAYER

Dear Father, please release blessing and joy in us in the area of giving. May we be a people who release Your Spirit through our means, remaining faithful in prayer, expending our talents, giving our time, and advancing Your kingdom through our means. Amen.