

Loving Christ in All of Life
Week 11 - Wealth & Stewardship
Matthew 25:14-30

- This parable is primarily about fruitfulness in the kingdom of God, which encompasses all of life
 - Uses the example of business, finances, and property to command hard work and industriousness while condemning laziness and cowardice
- Foundation of the parable is that the wealth belongs to the master - all property is rightly God's
 - God delegates the care of His world to men - Gen. 1:28-30
 - From the beginning, man is given the right and responsibility of property ownership
 - Presupposed in the 8th commandment
 - Call to work implies the legitimacy of property ownership - Prov. 24:30-34, 27:23-27
- What is wealth?
 - God alone can create from nothing - no true wealth can exist apart from Him
 - Wealth must indicate something real in creation - value may be relative to a degree, wealth is essentially property ownership (possession of something in creation)
- Three primary ways to lawfully obtain wealth
 - Work is the most ordinary means (Gen. 2:15, Prov. 14:23-24, 10:4, 12:24, 13:4)
 - Work is commanded by the 4th commandment, and its fruit is protected by the 8th commandment
 - Case law calls for the giving of "wealth" in exchange for work (Lev. 19:13, Deut. 25:4, 1 Cor. 9:9-10)
 - Inheritance - passing down of wealth between generations - Prov. 13:22
 - Gift - giving of wealth with no expectation of repayment - Gen. 20:14-6, 32:13-15
 - Serves as a picture of what our salvation in Christ is like - Rom. 4:4-5
- God's people obtaining wealth is an element of His covenant purposes - Deut. 8:11-18
 - New Covenant people are promised to inherit the earth (Matt. 5:5) under Christ and according to His law (Eph. 6:2-3)
 - Does not justify inordinate love of wealth, trust in wealth, or obsessive pursuit of it
 - Acquiring wealth lawfully and stewarding it faithfully are means by which the dominion of Christ's people is extended
- Responsibilities of stewardship ought to temper our temptations regarding wealth
 - Not robbing God - obligation of the tithe - Lev. 27:30-32, Deut. 26:1-15, Prov. 3:9-10, Mal. 3:8-12
 - Refusal to tithe is refusal to give God His basic due - subtle rebellion against His authority

- Tithe is 10% of income or increase - God's rightful portion
- Moral requirement, basic acknowledgment of God's sovereign authority
- One tenth of the tithe funded the priesthood (Num. 18:26); also was used to care for poor, fund feasts, maintain tabernacle and its various ministries
- 10% is not a limit but a baseline - above is a freewill offering (Ex. 35)
- No reason to believe the New Covenant abrogates this requirement
 - NT church fulfilled ministries funded through OC tithe (1 Cor. 9:12-14, Acts 6:1, 1 Tim. 5:3-13)
 - NC should lead us to go above and beyond in giving (Acts 2:45, 2 Cor. 9:6-12)

"But more is implied in failing to give, and in mistrusting God's promise: it means that we do not feel the family relationship to God is a real one, and hence we have no sense of gratitude and family responsibility. We therefore treat our possessions as our own, not as a stewardship...If we give to ourselves and to our family, we give without stinting. To a landlord, we give only what is his due, not a penny more. If we give in a like manner to God, we give as to a landlord, not as to our Father" - RJ Rushdoony.

- Generosity - Eph. 4:28, Gal. 6:9-10, Lev. 19:9-10
- Provision for others - Matt. 15:4-6, 1 Tim. 5:8
-
- Provision (especially for family) - Matt. 15:4-6, 1 Tim. 5:8
 - Especially an obligation for recipients of an inheritance
 - Increase - to multiply what God has given us - Gen. 1:26, Matt. 25:27-19, Luke 12:16-21