

THE ATTITUDE OF WEALTH

Ps. Antony Njoroge – 31 May 2015

Money Wise

Sermon Notes



Question of the Day: When it comes to money, what is your greatest fear?

How many said 'fear of not having enough/being broke?' How many said 'fear of having too much?'

Generally when it comes to money, the fear of most humans today is that they will not have enough! Money is so important in today's world! Without it, it's hard to pay our bills and meet our obligations. Without it, it's difficult to pay for the necessities of life, like food and rent. So understandably, the attitude of many towards money is to make as much as we possibly can and to keep as much as we possibly can so we can be as safe as we possibly can! At the very core of who we are, if most of us could be honest about it, our attitude when it comes to money is driven by fear!

For our visitors, we've been going through a sermon series called Money Wise, Lessons from a Billionaire, We have been learning some critical money lessons from the wealthiest man in the bible, billionaire Solomon. In week one, we looked at the wealthy heart and learnt that **'the use of your use of wealth reveals the state of your heart'**. Then we looked at the wealthy mind, and learnt that **'true wealth begins with wisdom, not the wallet'**. Last week we looked at wealthy hands and learnt that **'true wealth is built over time and not overnight'**. All these are certainly things that go against the grain in our culture today. We want to conclude our series today by learning about a Billionaire's ATTITUDE. Turn with me to 2 Chronicles 9:1-12... READ (NIV)

When the queen of Sheba heard of Solomon's fame, she came to Jerusalem to test him with hard questions. Arriving with a very great caravan—with camels carrying spices, large quantities of gold, and precious stones—she came to Solomon and talked with him about all she had on her mind. 2 Solomon answered all her questions; nothing was too hard for him to explain to her. 3 When the queen of Sheba saw the wisdom of Solomon, as well as the palace he had built, 4 the food on his table, the seating of his officials, the attending servants in their robes, the cupbearers in their robes and the burnt offerings he made at[a]the temple of the Lord, she was overwhelmed.

Have you ever had someone visit you and they were overwhelmed by your house? Maybe what overwhelmed them was the tea you served them! You need to understand that both King Solomon and the queen of Sheba were wealthy monarchs. Both of their kingdoms enjoyed a great level of peace and prosperity. But the queen of Sheba was curious to find out about this guy, Solomon the son of David, the most famous of all of Israel's kings. What she had heard about his wealth and wisdom was off the charts! He was the envy of the world, admired by other leaders across the known world.

Most scholars believe that Sheba was located somewhere in southern Arabia, around where Yemen is today. Some believe it extended to ancient Ethiopia, and the legend is that Solomon and Sheba had a love child who established a dynasty of Ethiopian kings! None of that can be proved historically, but of course Hollywood loves that kind of thing! What is clear is that this woman was a powerful representative of a prosperous kingdom. She was also clearly a very smart leader with a keen mind, and having heard about Solomon's reputation, she

decided to come and test him 'with hard questions', to see if he really was as wise as he was reputed to be. And she was evidently impressed...

5 She said to the king, "The report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom is true. 6 But I did not believe what they said until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half the greatness of your wisdom was told me; you have far exceeded the report I heard. 7 How happy your people must be! How happy your officials, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! 8 Praise be to the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on his throne as king to rule for the Lord your God. Because of the love of your God for Israel and his desire to uphold them forever, he has made you king over them, to maintain justice and righteousness."

After she gave her formal speech, see what she did next... *9 Then she gave the king 120 talents[b] of gold, large quantities of spices, and precious stones. There had never been such spices as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. 10 (The servants of Hiram and the servants of Solomon brought gold from Ophir; they also brought algumwood[c] and precious stones. 11 The king used the algumwood to make steps for the temple of the Lord and for the royal palace, and to make harps and lyres for the musicians. Nothing like them had ever been seen in Judah.)*

The queen of Sheba had not come empty handed. She came bearing generous gifts. 120 talents of gold is approximately 4 tons! The quantities of spices she brought were unprecedented! One of the things that my wife taught me when we were dating is that I should never go to visit someone without anything in my hand, even if it is a packet of milk. The Queen of Sheba's "packet of milk" was about 4, 000 kilograms! And then Solomon does something else that baffles my mind...

12 King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she desired and asked for; he gave her more than she had brought to him. Then she left and returned with her retinue to her own country.

The queen of Sheba had brought gifts such as had never been seen before. But Solomon gave her more in return than she had come with! Instead of holding back his wisdom, he showed her everything he had and answered any questions that she asked of him. Instead of just receiving what she had brought him, he made a decision to out do her in his gifts to her. We've seen this attitude of generosity before in Solomon, how he gave so generously that even God was impressed. Solomon teaches us that **the attitude of true wealth is generosity!**

This is not just taught in the bible! It has amazed me over the years that as I've read books on wealth creation written by secular writers, they too teach about the importance of generosity. Whether its Richard Kiyosaki or Donald Trump or Bill Gates. You see, there are three attitudes that exist in the world today when it comes to wealth. The first attitude is...

1. WHAT'S YOURS IS MINE AND I WANT TO TAKE IT.

One word would characterize this, and that is the word **GREED**. Greed is the attitude that says, "I am not satisfied with what I have. I want what other people have." It's an attitude of discontentment with what you have and an admiration of what other people have. Unfortunately in our world today, greed is good! Business books teach that unless you're always greedy for more, you will never succeed. Celebrities showcase their lives of ease on reality TV and make you feel like a poor child on the outside of the window looking in. Advertisers capitalize on our inadequacies to make us feel our lives will be better if we only have this new phone or that

new car or vacation in that resort. The result is an attitude that leads us to envy those who have what we don't have and maybe even resent them for it. [One of the reasons we don't watch TV much as a family is not immorality. It's because of advertising! Much of it targeted directly to our children. They don't have the maturity to filter through it to realize that it's not true that they'll be miserable without that product!]

Unfortunately for us, this is the reality we live in. This is the air we breathe! Work hard, buy more stuff, then work even harder to maintain the new stuff that we bought! It's crazy that this is even what is taught in the church today! The more stuff I own and flash around, the more God must have blessed me. We misinterpret scripture to make it all about me being rich.

ILLUS: A friend told me this story about 2 Christians coming from an overnight who saw a beautiful Mercedes parked by the road. They decided to walk around it and claim it. So they laid hands on it and began to claim the wealth of the wicked. Unknown to them, the owner had been clubbing all night and had blacked out in his car! As they walked around, he woke up and opened the door in an irritated tone and said... this one you get by hard work, not by claiming! What have you been claiming recently?

The problem with greed is that you'll never have enough! Your world will always be defined by unlimited wants and limited means so you will always need just a little more than you have! You might think that you will stop wanting more the moment you reach a certain level but rest assured there is no upper level! Millions will not stop you wanting more. You will find that money only creates cravings for more money. The problem is not money, it's you - no matter what you have, you will always need more! That's why Billionaire Solomon says in Ecclesiastes 5:10 *"Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless."* Why would you want to live a meaningless life, chasing what you'll never have? The 2nd prevalent attitude towards wealth is....

2. WHATS MINE IS MINE AND I AM GOING TO KEEP IT.

The word that characterizes this attitude is the word **SELFISHNESS**. It, it doesn't say, "I want what others have". Instead it says, "I earned my money the hard way and how I use it is nobody else's business!" And so I can give a little bit, when it's convenient, but I'm going to keep as much as I can to use for my own agenda. I MUST CONFESS THAT THIS IS MY OWN TENDENCY!

The problem with selfishness is that it results in a very small life. You see as a human being, we were not just created to live for our small wants. We were created to live for something infinitely bigger! You may have heard the story that in 1888, a humble Swede by the name of Ludwig died, and the French press confused him with his much more famous younger brother Alfred, and so wrote an obituary for the wrong person. Alfred was a wealthy entrepreneur and inventor who had amassed a fortune by making weapons such as dynamite, which had been used to kill many people. Presuming he was now dead, the newspaper article about him was titled, 'Tradesman of Death' and talked about Alfred's greed and how he had left the world a far worse place than he had found it. When a very much alive Alfred read his obituary, he was shocked beyond belief! In his heartbrokenness, he determined that he needed to change his legacy while he still had time.

And so this man wrote his will. In it he set out what he wanted to leave behind for his relatives. But he asked that the rest of the estate be invested in a fund, whose interest would be distributed annually to the people who had made the greatest investment to humankind, including ending wars across the world. Today, that

award is called the Nobel Peace Prize. Instead of leaving a legacy of selfishness and destruction, Alfred Nobel left a legacy that over a century after his death continues to impact the world for good.

Billionaire Solomon says something remarkable in Proverbs 11:24-5 *'The world of the generous gets larger and larger; the world of the stingy gets smaller and smaller. The one who blesses others is abundantly blessed; those who help others are helped'* (THE MESSAGE). An attitude of selfishness may seem natural or justified. But in the end it results in a small life that has little impact beyond you.

And that brings us to the 3rd attitude, which we saw with Solomon and the queen...

3. WHAT'S MINE IS GOD'S AND I AM GOING TO GIVE IT.

This is the attitude of GENEROSITY. Now, the biggest hindrance towards this attitude is fear – what if I help others then I end up broke? What if I end up not being able to provide for my family? What if I end up without retirement income? Another hindrance is how do I know that if I give it that it will be used well? We think this when we see a street child but we also see it when we think of the church. There are so many common preachers out there – how do I know the money I give won't be just used badly? And then a third barrier is why should I give others what I've worked so hard to make?

But Billionaire Solomon argues differently. In Proverbs 11:25, he says, *"A generous man will prosper, and he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed."* Look what will happen. "You don't end up depleted when you're generous. You don't end up empty. You actually end up refreshed! Some of you have experienced this many times. You went to help someone who needed it and you found that you ended up being the one who was blessed in the process. That's why Jesus said in Acts 20:35, Jesus said Himself, *"It is more blessed to give than it is to receive."* **The attitude of true wealth is generosity!**

Two areas where you can develop the attitude of generosity...

1. **TOWARDS OTHERS.** I'm not only talking about money here. I'm talking about the sacrifice of serving the people around you with your time, talents and treasure. There are amazing promises that God has given us in the scriptures when we help others. Billionaire Solomon says in Proverbs 19:17 *'Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed.'* There is one thing a poor person can do for you that nobody else can do, which is to put God in your debt! Miriam and I support several children every year in school that are not our own. Although this is not why we do it, I'm convinced that they pray for us not to run out of money for their fees. And God hears them! WHO ARE YOU SUPPORTING THROUGH SCHOOL? Exodus 20:12 says *'Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you'.* You can have wealth (in this case land) but not be able to enjoy it (or live long in it)! One of the things we've learnt to do is bless our parents regularly, whether they need it or not. AND IT'S NOT JUST MONEY. Some of you are in a position to provide jobs and mentorship to people in this congregation. It's not that God cannot make it without you, but He is looking for CHANNELS and not DAMS to pour His wealth into. **The attitude of true wealth is generosity!** 2nd area to develop the attitude of generosity is...

2. **TOWARDS GOD** Billionaire Solomon is very straightforward about this - Proverbs 3:9-10 *'Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.'*

Giving to God's work is not about financing God. It's not like God is broke and needs us to help Him out! It's about honoring Him as first in our lives. It says, "God, I want you to be number one in my life and to prove it I'm honoring you with the first part of every shilling I make." We've talked about this before – you can give without loving but you can never love without giving! The way you use your time and money tells me what's first. If you want to know what's first place in my life you look at two things – look at my bank statement and look at my schedule. Because it doesn't matter what I say is first in my life, what's important. The way I use my time and the way I use my money shows what's really important in my life. So I say, God, You're first. The first part always goes back to you.

Our story? I shared that we asked God to allow us to give an extra % point every year. We want to be the biggest givers at Mavuno all the time! **The attitude of true wealth is generosity!**

God is looking for people that he can partner with to expand his kingdom. To reach those who are lost with the saving message of salvation. Here at Mavuno, we don't want to be about building a bigger pile, a bigger church. We want to a generous church and you guys have been very generous in your giving over the last 5 years and serving and I thank God for you. But I believe too that God is calling up to the next level in our generosity. We want to plant churches across the whole of Africa that bring lost people back to Him. I'm praying that many of us will give sacrificially of our time and money to make that a reality. That churches will come about and people be blessed by the generous people of Mavuno. Because the attitude of true wealth is generosity!

PRAYER:

§ Confess my fear that has led me to greed or selfishness

§ Pray that my wealth will be my tool to leave a great legacy

§ Salvation...I want to start by giving my life back to the one who gave it to me...