

So, hey, I'm going to echo something that when Quentin was reading that passage from Acts about pouring out the spirit of God, pouring out his spirit on all flesh, I'm just going to pray about that real quick. God, I pray in this room, you would pour out your spirit on all of us. Your word says you pour out your spirit on our sons and our daughters and old and young alike. So I just pray that you would pour out your spirit on us abundantly. Amen.

Question for the day. And if you were here last week, my opening question was, who do you envy? And you were probably like, oh, great. So here comes another one. You'll like this question, though.

Who wants to be a millionaire? All right. That's the question of the day. Who wants to be a millionaire? Do I have any takers here?

I got something for you. Has one million. That's one million. Currency. All right, the currency.

He's a millionaire now, but his name's John. John. If you want to be a millionaire, you have to go to the country of Lebanon because you have an envelope. \$11.16. We'll get you \$1 million, Lebanese pounds.

All right, so he's a millionaire now. All right. All right. So unless the exchange rate has changed in the last two days. So it's a horrible currency right now.

It's also called the lira, but he can get a million liras if he wants to go to Lebanon. So make your. You and Sam should go ahead and make your plane tickets soon so you can get your million. Yeah, sure, whatever.

Why do we want to be millionaires? You're like, what's a dumb question, Matt? Why do I want more money? No, really, why? Why do you want more money?

Why do I want more money? Why would I love to be a millionaire?

Well, I could pay off debt. I could pay off mortgage, medical bills. Some of you might have consumer debt, college loans. I'd love to be a millionaire to have a bigger house. I'd love to have a home.

I'd love to be able to pay my rent. I'm acknowledging there's all kinds of financial realities in this room. Some of you want more money to buy a nicer car. Some of you want more money to buy a car. Some of you want more money for retirement vacations.

We all want more money? We all want to be millionaires. All right, so I'm gonna show a picture up here on the screen. I am one of five brothers. That's me and my five brothers and my mom.

My dad died 40 years ago. I'm the good looking one if you can't tell. But one of these brothers of mine has a lot of zeros after his net worth. He's a millionaire. All right.

He's also my twin. So everybody has to vote A, B, C or D. Which one is my twin, the millionaire? All right, who says A, B, C, D? All right. My twin is B.

His name is Phil Philip Mark. I'm Matthew Paul. So that's his twin issues. My parents wanted to get just flip the initials. So those are my.

And I'm the best looking one up there. If we voted on that, we would all say I'm E. Right. All right. So anyway, so anyway, but I'm saying I had this picture up there because I talked to my brother quite a bit this week. We back before Texas and talk about money.

I mean, he lived in the world with people that had lots of money. And so I asked him, what do you think it means to be a lover of money? Now I'm saying this because I think even at the high levels of money, the symptoms of lovers of money are the same symptoms that the average income people among us. We have. It's just more.

It's more exploded. It's on steroids. Right. And I will say this, so many. Cause I'm just giving credit to my brother with some of his thoughts on this.

He is one of the most biblically generous people I know. He gives away more money in a year than I might make in 20 years. If it's about people finding and following Jesus, he tags money and throws it that way. He doesn't throw it, he gives it away. But he's very, very.

So he's very wise when it comes with money. Biblically wise and biblically generous. So that's some of his thoughts have woven itself into my sermon this week. So I just wanted to give credit where credit was due. So we've been doing a series on turning down the noise from the book of Ecclesiastes.

Ecclesiastes is an Old Testament book written about 3,000 years ago. Most people think it was written by Solomon. Very wealthy person who had it all, seen it all. It's part of what's called the wisdom books of the Old Testament because this is about wisdom, how to live life well. And like with series Title says, the noise of our culture and coming inside us and outside of us tries to send us down one path of living life.

Well, when God, the Bible, the life of Jesus sends us down another path. And so Jesus would have read this book. He would have known about this book. He would have read it. He probably knew it.

So today we've talked about, you know, the achievement, envy. And today we're talking about money. Next week, I think we're talking about comfort in the next week. All these things that we try to find out if that's the way it's gonna make my life what I want it to be. You know, so today is money.

And you might think, oh, great, now we're talking about money. All right, so what I wanna do is this. I'm gonna put three different verses on the screen, and I'm gonna stop with each one. And I'm gonna kind of talk about which words stand out to me. Because whenever you read the Bible, I think it's a good.

You know, sometimes you're reading, you'll be like, oh, that's an interesting word. I wonder what that means. And I think sometimes that's the Holy Spirit maybe guiding you to a certain idea. So I'm gonna do that for this sermon today. We'll put the passage on the screen, and then we'll talk about a certain word or phrase when it comes to this passage.

So the first passage. So read this out loud with me. Here we go. Whoever loves money never has enough. Whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income.

This, too is meaningless. What stood out to me, if I had a big yellow highlighter to blow on the screen, I'd highlight love's money.

Whoever loves money never has enough. Jesus talked a lot about money. Like, a lot. He said, your heart will be where your treasure is. You can't serve both God and money.

You either love one or the other. So you either love God or love money. He talked about the deceitfulness of wealth that chokes out God's work in our lives. Said, be on your guard against all kinds of greed. And then he talked about being trustworthy with money.

So Jesus talked a lot about that, probably more than we're comfortable with, because he liked to step on toes. But then also in the New Testament, Paul writes to Timothy and he uses the phrase lover of money literally. In the Old and the New Testament, it means a lover of silver. All right, Lover of silver, lover of money. So in the New Testament, Paul's telling Timothy, when you pick church leaders, all these qualities, one of the qualities is they can't be a lover of money.

There's that phrase then in two Timothy, Paul tells Timothy, in these last days, people are going to be proud and arrogant and lovers of money. There's that phrase again. In the book of Hebrews, we're told, don't love money, be satisfied with what you have. So what does it mean to love money? I want money, right?

I like it. I want to be a millionaire. But am I or are you? How do we know if we're a lover of money? Because here's the lover of money.

It was over here. Seems like scripture is saying pretty clearly that's a bad place to be for your soul. But then not a lover of money. Scripture seems to paint as being one of contentment, one of generosity. And let me just add with that, it's super important to be generous with time and money and volunteering.

But when the Bible talks about generosity, it's almost always attached to our money. So it's financially generous, content and satisfied with the place God's put you in your life. All right? And so lover of money, not a lover of money. I think most of us would say, we'd love to be here.

We'd still like to have more money. We just don't want to be a lover of money. So how do you know if you're a lover of money? Cause most of us would probably say, well, I'm not a lover of money. You haven't seen my bank account.

It's regardless of your size of your bank account, if you have millions, if you have dollars. All right, so this is a list. Actually, I got this from my brother, just from his thinkings about this a lot. And I kind of just tweaked a few things. But how do you know if you're a lover of money?

It's not an accusation, it's a self reflection. It's like a diagnostic for all of us. He said this too. He said there's no formula and there's no one size fit all solution. But here's what he said.

You might be a lover of money if first thing is this. You don't yet have a pattern of being a faithful sacrificial giver. And you might think, oh, I knew we'd talk about this money in the church. Sherbordox doesn't need your money. Of course we'll take it.

Of course we don't need it. It's about your heart being set free. And scripture is very clear about, even in the Old Testament, giving of Their first fruits, not their leftovers, their first fruits, their first cattle, their best cattle. Then it goes throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament becomes the tithe of giving. Your first day of the week.

Give money. So that's a clear, established foundation of what it means not to be a lover of money, is that you believe, you understand that God does own it all. As our friend Ron Blue says in his financial peace seminars, God does own it all. And I'm gonna break the chain of loving money by giving back to God. So that's the first thing.

If you don't, and if you're not there yet, maybe take some steps in giving, but that's like foundation number one that will prevent you

becoming a lover of money. You might be a lover of money if you're willing to cut corners in pursuit of wealth. You might be a lover of money if you have a drive to make and spend as much money as you possibly can. You might be a lover of money if you strongly deny you have a love of money, but you greatly enjoy the nice things money can buy more and more and more and more. Because even with great intentions, you start with great intentions.

The more money you have, the more you enjoy the things you can buy. The more you buy, the more you buy. Again, these are just self reflective questions. You might be a lover of money if you purchase a house more expensive than you can afford. You might be a lover of money if you don't deny yourself anything you can afford.

Just because you can doesn't mean you should.

You might be a lover of money if you don't deny yourself. I'm sorry. If you frequently buy nice clothes, new cars, eat out, take multiple vacations. None of these things are wrong. But it's a question of priorities.

You might be a lover of money if you ignore, disregard or avoid getting godly counsel about how you spend. You might be a lover of money if you don't stop and think seriously. Think before buying a luxury item. My brother actually told me that was the best advice he got because he said he can buy anything he wants to. But there's times where he thought, okay, I gotta think about this and see if this is what God wants me to do.

But this friend of his said the moment you stop thinking about whether you're gonna buy that luxury item or whatever it is, you've probably sliding down into lover of money. So just some of you again might say that I don't have a lot of money, but it's part of the infection of the human race, right?

Second thing, second verse. Read this with me. I have seen a grievous evil unto the sun. Wealth hoarded to the harm of its owners. All right, My word up there that I noticed, was hoarded.

And you might say, well, I'm not a hoarder. When I think of hoarders, I think of my aunt, God rest her soul, who had like 100 purses in her house when she died. And we're cleaning out her house. All right, we think about that. None of us are hoarders.

But this concept here is about money. And the idea of hoarding is this sense of guarding and protecting and vigilantly protecting with a really tight fist. All right? I have a silver dollar. Last service, I had a quarter.

Somebody brought me this silver dollar. So I'm making money on these

sermons, right? So I'm gonna put this. I want everybody to imagine yourself putting money in your hand. It's.

Put your. Tighten your fist. Tighten your fist, all right? If you start having cramps, you can let go, but just tighten your fist, all right? This is hoarding.

Your money is when you have this kind of protective sense about it. And Henri Nouwen, in his book, *Henry Nouwen*, he's passed away, he's a Catholic priest, wrote a lot about prayer, but it applies to money. He said this. Keep your fists tight, right? It's best to stand firm, get a good grip on what's yours, and hold on to hold onto your own against those who want to take it away from you.

You've got to be on your guard. And if you don't make a fist, you're just asking to be poor. And then he tells, keep squeezing, right? Cause that's what our hearts do to him. Then he tells the story of an old lady that was brought into a mental ward of a hospital.

And she was just flailing and swinging around wildly. And they had to kind of calm her down. But one thing she wouldn't do was open her fist. Cause she had a coin in there that was most likely, they realized, was her last coin. And in her mind, if I lose this, I lose my sense of identity.

And they took two. Two people to pry open her hand to get that out. Cause she would not let it go. You can relax your hand now, all right? But if you relax your hand with your money in it toward God, it's a little scary.

Cause what if he takes it? What if he wants it? What if he wants some of it? What if he wants more of it than you think he shouldn't want? But Then you have a wrong idea of God.

God is not in it to take from you. He's in it because, like we sang in the song, he wants you to be saved, set free, and delivered from the idolatry of money in your heart. He wants freedom for you. He doesn't want destitute, poor poverty. But it's so hard to keep our money like this before God, right?

Sometimes I do this. Sometimes I do this with my wallet. Sometimes I do it with my checkbook. But anybody under 30 has no idea what a checkbook is anymore. So I don't do that, right?

So. But I just use this silver dollar because it's like, is it okay to do that with God? I mean, do I trust God that he might not rearrange my priorities, my financial priorities? I gotta figure it out, right? I know how I want my money life to work, but sometimes I feel my heart kind of doing this and kind of like, I don't know, can I put my little finger on this silver dollar to hold, just in case.

I don't want God to think I'm giving it to him if I just drop it accidentally. No, open. Open, right? Open your hands before God and you can relax. Don't be a hoarder.

Cause our nature is we hoard because we're not sure we trust God. We're not sure we trust God. I'll say it personally. I'm not sure. I always trust God with my money.

Remember the story in the children of Israel when they were in the wilderness and God was giving them manna and it rained down every day? And he said, go out and collect enough bread just for you for that day. I love this story, but it's indicting. But then he said, only take enough that you need. And if you collect extra, what happened to it?

It's spoiled. Well, I'm one who'd be like, I'm gonna get a little extra just in case it didn't show up tomorrow. Just in case I can't trust it's gonna happen tomorrow. And then, of course, it would rot. But I would keep doing it till I was finally given.

But just in case God doesn't show up. But you can trust him. You can trust God with your money. You can trust him with everything in your life with your money. Knowing that his goal for you is.

Is freedom, life, supernatural joy, otherworldly peace, rest for your soul. And he said, the thief comes to steal and kill, destroy. I came to give you abundant life.

But he has a way of wisdom that gets us There. And the issue with money is a big part of it.

Last verse. Read this with me. Moreover, when God gives someone wealth and possessions and the ability to enjoy them, to accept their lot and be happy in their toil, this is a gift from God. Two words up there, two phrases. First is going to be accept their lot.

So my lot called to be a pastor. One of my brothers is a medical doctor. Another one's a teacher. Another one's a teacher. Another one is a millionaire.

That's their lot in life. That's how we say that. That's what this passage means. And I need to accept where God has called me and placed me, just like you do. Are there times I wish my brother and I would switch lots sometimes, yeah.

But I know this is where God wants me. I know in my life and my calling. And, you know, in your life and your calling, it's what God wants of you. And acceptance and contentment. Not apathy, not.

Not resignation. But it's just like this is where God has me, and I'm gonna be content with what he's giving me. All right, That's a lot in life. But then the word Enjoy. Read those three words to enjoy them.

1, 2, 3. To enjoy them. One more time to enjoy them. So God wants me to enjoy my wealth and possessions. Yeah, he does.

We think, wait a minute, I can use my wealth and possessions on things I enjoy. Yeah. Now, there's probably some boundaries you need to think about, but in the Old Testament, when they talk about there were festivals, you know, the Passover festival, festival of the Tabernacles, which was when they celebrated and remembered God taking them out of Egypt. And first time the word joy is used in the Bible. In the book of Leviticus, he tells them, have a celebration for seven days, and it's all about food and drink.

It's all about honoring God for what he's done in their life. Save, set free and deliver them. Right. It's all about that. But then he says, this is a time of great joy.

And it's attached to how they use their money, possessions, sheep, cows, whatever, to enjoy. Look in the Old Testament, the first couple of books, where they talk about those festivals. Enjoy, enjoy, enjoy. My favorite passage about this is in the book of Nehemiah, which is, you know, later on in the history of Israel. But God does some great things for the people.

They rebuild the city, rebuild the walls. They have a time of mourning over sin and things like that. And that's appropriate. But then. Then Ezra, who's talking to the People in the book of Nehemiah tells them this.

Go and celebrate with a feast of rich foods and sweet wine. Some of you are like, where is that? Let me find. Where is that? I gotta find that.

It's my life first now, right? Go and celebrate. Share gifts of food with people who have nothing prepared. This is a sacred day before the Lord. Don't be dejected, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

So the people went away to eat and drink at a festive meal, to share gifts of food and to celebrate with great joy. So God wants me. At times I can use my money for celebration. Great joy. Before God doesn't have to be, like, religious, but before, it's gratitude to God.

Yeah, I mean, when I read this years ago, when this passage kind of stuck out to me, I felt like God was saying, I want you to go find something that you really enjoy that you don't normally eat and indulge in it. And I want you to have joy. So I drove around

Bloomington, tried to find the best piece of cheesecake I could find. I think I bought two, ate them both, right? But it was more like I felt like I was being obedient, right?

No, but maybe that's what God wants of you. I said the first service. I said, not McDonald's. But then I had somebody come to me putting services. For years, I would go on Saturday morning to McDonald's and indulge in an Egg McMuffin.

And I'm just like, I have a hard time putting, indulging with McDonald's. But that was good for him, right? But maybe, maybe, maybe sometime these next seven days, you might even feel financially stressed. But maybe God's saying, no, I want you to enjoy rich food and sweet drink and do it as a commandment from me, God. Right?

Cause God wants you to enjoy it. I don't know if that's Yonko's Little Zagreb. I don't know if that's Cheesecake Factory. It's definitely not White Castle. But if that's you, then that's me.

If that's your indulgence, that's fine. Plenty of fat. I mean, the scripture even says, fat, fatty foods. And you're like, yes, I gotta find Nehemiah. Chapter 8 For those of you who are looking that to stick on your wall.

Right? Right. Sweet drinks and actually the sweet wine. So it's like, wow. Now, what does that tell us about God?

He is for your joy. He is for your deep peace. He says, Jesus said, I'm here for rest, for Your soul and the thief steals and kills and destroys. I came to give you abundant life. That's what God is like.

We tend to get stuck in all this oh, obedience, obedience. And it feels kind of oppressive. But you obey the way of Jesus and the way that God tells us to deal with, in this case money or your sexuality or whatever else you, you obey the way of Jesus. Obedience is the pathway. It's often a bad word, but obedience is the pathway to supernatural joy, deep and abiding peace, rest for your soul and a life beyond life, not eternal life.

I'm not talking that. I'm talking about even now. So what do you want? Do you want more money or do you want more of this joy, peace, rest. And you might say, but isn't that the same thing?

No, it's not. If you want more of God and more of this, then you have to die. To the I want more money doesn't mean you're not looking phrases to wake more income. Not saying that. But if it's a drive, do you want more of that or do you want more of God, Jesus and the peace and joy, deep and abiding rest that he can give?

What do you want more of?

Last challenge. Kind of like I phrased it last week, but it's this. Invite Jesus to turn down the money loving noise in your heart, right? And you might say, well I don't, I'm not a money lover. We're all infected with that.

We always but. And the outside world screams at us with loud noise about you can have it all. Every TV commercial, they know what they're doing. Every magazine ad, they know what they're doing. Everything on the Internet, they know what they're doing.

They're trying to tell us this, this car, this house, this vacation, this is the way to deep, abiding peace, joy and rest for your soul. But then God says, no, no, it won't get you there. The first passage we read was it won't be satisfying, but invite Jesus not just to turn your ears down to that outside noise, but he also said that that comes from inside us, coveting and greed and turn down that noise, Jesus, I don't want to be that way. I don't want that noise to dictate my decisions or how I spend my money. I don't want that because I believe, and I think most of you do too, that the way to joy is through the obedience of how love God and keep his commandments.

That's the very end of the book. The writer Ecclesiastes says, here's my conclusion. Fear God and keep his commandments. It doesn't mean fear like, oh, I'm afraid. It just means respect his ways, obey what he said to do, and you will be led to the kind of life you've always wanted.

It's the way to get there.

So we're going to. I have one page here that has all of my financial realities on it. I made it primarily that if I'm not planning to die, but if I were to die, I want my wife to know where everything is, right? So it has on here checking account balances, retirement savings, how much I still owe in my house, how much we're still going to help our kids paying off college loans. And I'm guessing if you saw this list, you'd probably think, well, you got, you know, we're all good in different ways.

But I'm blessed, right? And I have a plan. This is my retirement. But what if God says, no, I want you to let me be more involved in the plan? And I.

And I was like, well, no, I. It's a plan, God, it's gonna work, right? And then my hand starts making a fist, right? I don't know what my next 10, 20 years are gonna look like financially. I have a plan, but I want to trust God, so I want to keep my hand open.

I don't know what he's gonna ask me to do with some of this money. I don't know. I want to be open that. If he says, I want that to go

there and this to go there. And I want you to be more like your twin brother who gives money away left and right to anything attached to Jesus, right?

So here's what we're gonna do. Everybody stand up, stand up, stand up. And I want everybody to have an open hand in front of you. You get down, waist high. I don't care where it is, but I want you to see in your hand all of your financial realities.

And some of you might say, well, that's not gonna take much, right? But some of you, you know what I mean, your income, savings, hopes for the future, retirement debts or whatever, and I want you to keep your hand open. And we're gonna sing this short chorus. We're gonna sing it through just this. Jesus, I adore you.

Lay my life before you. Money's life, right? I lay doesn't work syllable wise. I lay my money before you. But we're gonna say, I lay my life before you.

And do I really mean that? Do you really mean that? Will I Lay this before Jesus. All right, so keep your hand open with your financial portfolio in your hand or whatever you call it. And now sing this with me.

Jesus, I adore you Lay my life before you How I love you. Sing it to Jesus. Jesus, I adore you Lay my life before you How I love you Jesus. It's scary to lay this before you.

We trust you, but we know we don't trust you in the way we want to trust you. And so our fingers start to curl up. We start to get a little bit afraid, insecure. But will you birth in us a greater trust in your goodness and in your ways to lead us to supernatural joy? Deep peace and rest for our souls.

That's who we want to be. Would you do that for us? We ask this in your name. Amen. Go ahead and have a seat.

So it's response time. This was already response time, right? What might God ask you to do? And maybe he will ask you to buy cheesecake this week. I don't know.

He's not. He's not. He's not against you. He's not against your financial realities. He's not.

He's for you. So we also do response, we, Jesus and I. He was betrayed, said, every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, remember me. Remember me. And there's always.

I always like to suggest something to remember in the book of Hebrews, when it says, don't be a lover of money. Because then it reminds us,

remember, because God has said, I will never leave you or abandon you. So maybe when you put this bread and juice into your body, receive again the promise of Jesus, I will never leave or abandon you. I'm never gonna leave you destitute. It's a promise.

It's a promise. The. That may be your response. And we start. People just come up and we start singing.

So if you're new here, you don't know, but just come on up. There's no dismissing by Rose. You just grab one, take it back to your seat, eat it on, eat the bread and cup on your own. It's all in the one container, same time. There'll be few on the corners.

In the back, they have orange lanyards on that May. They're there just to pray for you if you want prayer. And maybe your prayer might just simply be, I just. I want to trust Jesus more.

That's that. And also, if maybe you're like, if this is what Jesus is like, if he is absolutely for my peace and joy and he did something to make that happen, for me on the cross. I'm in. I want to follow Jesus. You can tell the people with the lanterns that same thing.

We can baptize you today. We can have another time, but we can do it today. So it's a time to respond to whatever the Holy Spirit is saying to you and Jesus. We do love you, and we lay our lives before you. Amen.