

Good morning, Sherwood Oaks. Welcome to winter. I am reading today from Ecclesiastes 5:10. Whoever loves money never has enough. Whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income.

This too is meaningless. As goods increase, so do those who consume them. And what benefit are they to the owners, except to feast their eyes on them? The sleep of a laborer is sweet, whether they eat little or much. But as for the rich, their abundance permits them no sleep.

I have seen a grievous evil under the sun. Wealth hoarded to the harm of its owners, or wealth lost through some misfortune, so that when they have children, there is nothing left for them to inherit. Everyone comes naked from their mother's womb. And. And as everyone comes, so they depart.

They take nothing from their toil that they can carry in their hands. This too is a grievous evil. As everyone comes, so they depart. And what do they gain? Since they toil for the wind all their days, they eat in darkness with great frustration, affliction and anger.

This is what I have observed to be good. That it is appropriate for a person to eat, to drink, and to find satisfaction in their toilsome labor under the sun during the few days of life God has given them, for this is their lot. 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. They seldom reflect on the days of their life because God keeps them them occupied with gladness of heart.

Thank you, Crystal. When I was a kid, we. We loved to play this game, me and my cousins. The game was this. What would you do if you won the lottery?

Now, the lottery was billions of dollars as far as we were concerned. But we played this game. What would you do if you won the lottery? Does anyone ever play that game? Maybe you still do it.

Maybe you still play that game today. What would we do if we won the lottery? In our case, it was complicated by the fact that we couldn't buy a lottery ticket if we wanted to. So it was purely an imaginary sort of exercise. But I still sort of am tempted to play that game in my head, because at the end of the day, the question that I ask myself is, how much money will it take for me to be happy with the money I have?

That question was posed to Howard Hughes. He was a billionaire at the time, one of the wealthiest people. And his answer was this. Just a little bit more. Just a little bit more.

Now, depending on your financial circumstances, there could be a lot

of truth to the idea that just a little more would be very, very helpful. If you're living in abject poverty, there's a very practical side to a little more would be helpful. But if you're like me, my attitude toward money has more to do with my attitude than my bank account. Because I've got a confession, a true confession. Are you ready for this?

Solomon's talking about me when he says, those who love money. I love money. I love money. Now, not in the weird Scrooge McDuck way. You know, you remember that Scrooge McDuck, he's got the.

He's got the big piles of coins. He's got this silo filled with gold coins, and he gets in it. He just jumps around and rolls around in it. Anyone. Anyone have that kind of dream for their life?

I'm not weird like that. I mean, that wouldn't be. It wouldn't be horrible. But that's not what I love about money. I don't love the feel of it.

I love sort of the promises that it seems to make. The promise of security, the promise of control, the promise of happiness even. Because who doesn't want a little more security? Who doesn't want a little more control? Who doesn't want a little more happiness?

I want those things. And so it stands to reason to think that maybe a little bit more money would provide the security, the control, the happiness that my life could be improved by. The sad reality is this over the span of my life, maybe you're this way, too. My earning potential has increased gradually. Not dramatically, but gradually.

Every year, I seem to have a little bit more. And yet, weirdly, still am at the point where I think if I had a little bit more, it would be helpful. Am I completely alone in this? Am I preaching to a room full of people who are absolutely content with every aspect of their financial situation right now? Okay, I got some head negatives.

That's good. Okay, now I know who to preach to. Okay, you're in the same boat as me. When Solomon says, whoever loves money never has enough. Whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income, I go, that is me, Solomon.

I confess, that is me. And again, depending on where you sit in your finances right now, security, a little more of that control, maybe a little bit more of that even happiness sounds pretty good. But those promises, Solomon tells us, and maybe we've learned that ourselves from experience, those promises money makes rarely seems to deliver, because the more money we have, the more that we spend it on. And if you don't spend it. There's usually people in your house that will help you spend it.

And there just seems to be a lot of money coming in and a lot of money going out. Verse 11. Solomon says, as goods increase, so do those who consume them. My income has barely kept up with my expenses.

If we do find a few more dollars to add to our checking or savings, we find very soon that life presents other challenges for us to worry about. If it's not money. In the fall, some of you remember this. Robert ended up in the hospital for a week. And every day it seemed, the doctors would come in and they would have a different prognosis, a different idea of what maybe is going on with this heart and other things.

And every time they would leave, there would be an increase like heaviness and weight and anxiety and fear. Because I wanted. I wanted the security, I wanted control. I wanted to feel peace and happiness. And the doctors were not giving me any of that.

Did I turn to my Bed Fed app or my old national app and look at my accounts and go, oh, well, at least I've got money in my savings checking account. Did I call up my investment guy? Do I have one of those? And say, hey, are my investments doing no, no, no. Because that did not answer the fear, the anxiety, the lack of peace in the moment.

If I was going to know true peace in those moments, I was going to have to find it some other place than in my checking account. It's going to have to come from God, and I know that. And yet Solomon's reminder is something I need. And maybe you need it as well. A reminder that loving money is a chasing after the wind.

It's a vanity of vanities. And even as Jesus will tell us it is the root of all kinds of evil. Solomon says, you're never going to have enough. And he had a lot of it. So Solomon should know, the more you have, the more people come to help you spend it.

You watch it slip through your fingers. Investments can fail. Money can be lost overnight. Solomon says, we eventually end up the way we started. Naked we came into the world, and naked we go out.

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust. You may have heard that at the end of the day, Solomon says, you can't take anything with you out of this world. You brought nothing in, and so you end up as you started.

Now, it's always good to measure Solomon against Jesus. So Solomon says, and those are. These are amazing words of wisdom. But it's always good to say, now, what did Jesus say about this? Sometimes Jesus Adds a little nuance to what Solomon says, gives us a slightly different picture.

But in the account I'm going to read now, it's, it's. It seems to be just doubling down a little bit. This is coming from Chapter Luke,

Chapter 5. Jesus is teaching his disciples in a big group. And from the.

And from the back of the crowd, from the back of the room, a voice yells out, teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me. Oh, don't you love siblings? Don't you love it? And Jesus says, why am I going to get in the middle of your stuff? Who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?

Then he said to the crowd, listen, watch out, Beware. Be on your guard against all kinds of greed, for life does not consist in an abundance of possessions. Seems to echo Solomon really well, doesn't he? And then he tells on this parable. Parable, essentially a story with a message.

Sometimes the messages are real clear, and sometimes you got to dig a little bit with Jesus, but this one seems to be pretty clear. Here's the story he tells. The parable says, the ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. This guy's a farmer. And he thought to himself, what shall I do?

I don't have enough storage space for all my crop coming in. He says, this is what I'm going to do. I'm going to build some bigger barns. I'm going to tear down the ones I've got, and I'm going to build some new ones, bigger ones. And that's where I'm going to store all my surplus grain.

Then I'll say to myself, you have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy. Eat, drink, and be merry. And this is sort of what Solomon says at the end of his conversation about this. But God says to this man, you're being foolish.

You're acting a fool. Because this very night your life will be demanded from you. And then who will get what you have prepared for yourself? And Jesus concludes, this parable says it this way, this is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God. Now, I don't know if any of you guys are financial managers out here.

I think there are a few. I'm going to tell you, from a certain perspective, this farmer is making some, think some pretty savvy financial decisions. If you're a farmer and there's a few of you in the room, you know better than anyone else how much of your income is dependent upon weather. Weather, not weather or not, but the weather that comes down, whether it's cold, whether it's rainy, whether it's dry, whether it's hot, Farmers depend on the weather. And so this year the farmers fields in cooperation with the weather produced an amazing a bumper crop.

But every farmer knows that next year could be different. And next

year it could be drought. And then you've lost, you have nothing. And so, and so having a reserve is not a bad thing. Secondly, if next year's harvest is thin, if it does go south, then grain prices are going to skyrocket.

Law of supply and demand, economics 101. Those prices are going to skyrocket. And those barns one will pay for themselves with the income that grain has brought. And, and thirdly, he's looking at that grain going. That stockpile of grain can potentially comfortably fund my retirement.

I can finally take it easy and just enjoy life. I'm telling you right now, my sympathies are fully with this farmer right now. Anyone else like, yeah, yeah, I want to be like that guy. He's savvy, he's smart, he's making good investments, he's wisely handling what God has entrusted to him. He's looking towards the future.

He's planning to take care of himself in his old age. And yet God says, you're not factoring in something really, really important. I have ultimate control. And God says, tonight your soul will be required of you.

A couple weeks ago, our little Saturday morning Bible study guy, we were sitting around the table and we were talking about this chapter in particular and money. And someone brought up the idea of the saying that I think many of us are familiar with maybe in the 80s, that whoever dies with the most toys, wins. Whoever dies with the most toys, wins. Malcolm Forbes gets credit for saying that, but Jesus would say, listen, whoever dies with the most toys still dies.

Now, I want you to imagine a different scenario. It's another rich harvest. It's a bumper crop. This is amazing. The guy's like, I need to hire extra workers to come in and help bring this harvest in.

This is incredible.

But this time the farmer instead of going, I'm going to keep all this for myself. Remember he used that word a couple of times myself, myself, he says, I need to ask myself a few questions. Last week, if you were here, you remember, we talked about a guy who just worked from sunup to sundown. He had no family, no one to share what he had gained through his toil. And he looks around and goes, why am I doing this?

Who am I Doing this for now, just imagine if the farmer would do the same thing and goes, hold on, hold on, who is this for? Why has God blessed me so much? And he looks around his town, he looks around the area and he says, hey, I could use my excess, my abundance, to share and help out those around me, maybe with those who have nothing. In that way, his blessing blesses others. And when what God said happened

happens, the angel of death shows up at his doorstep and his soul is required of him that night.

That angel of death doesn't pass over barns stuffed to the gills with hoarded wealth. Instead, the angel of death passes over a whole community, people, families that have been enriched by the generosity of this farmer. Jesus says true life is not found in accumulating possessions. It's not found in building bigger barns, but it's found in being rich toward God. Now what does that mean, to be rich towards God?

Well, it's an attitude shift, says, listen, I'm going to think of myself not as an owner, but as a steward. A steward. We've had this lesson before. A steward is someone who simply manages someone else's stuff. And God says, I'm going to give you stuff and I'm going to trust that stuff to you to do good with.

My wealth, my possessions, even what they are, are simply entrusted to me by God to be used for his kingdom instead of my ever increasing need for more and more and more.

That's the first thing, to be a steward, to think of yourself as a steward, not as an owner. The second thing is to be actively generous. And for so many of us this seems to come really easy. And for others it's hard.

But it's looking for opportunities around you to say, how can I help in that scenario? How can I step into that place, provide support, provide encouragement and to share the Gospel. And Jesus says, when we are actively generous in this way, we are laying up our treasure not in bigger and bigger barns here, but in heaven. We're laying up treasure in heaven. And that looks like just valuing people over stuff, looking out for the well being of others.

Philippians 2, 4 says it this way. We are not to look out for our own interests, but each of you to the interests of others. Now that doesn't mean we don't take care of our family. We don't do what's responsible for the people that God has entrusted to our care. But it does mean that we measure that against the need in front of us, say, okay, we've got enough, let's help others this is.

This. This requires a focus on eternity rather than the here and now. It requires us to invest time and talent and treasure in things that have lasting value, not temporary value. Can I tell you about the car we bought? I'm off script right now, Bo, but I want to just share this.

We bought a new car. Is Robert in the room? Okay. I don't see him. He is.

He's back there. Okay, scrunch down, buddy. You might want to leave the room for this. Bought a new car. You know you want to provide good things.

So, about a new car. Within a week. Fender better. Oh, it hurts. It hurts.

And my first impulse is, let's just get it fixed, because I hate to drive around a car that has a big dent in the back. And I don't want Robert driving around a car with a big dent in the back.

But here's what a dent reminds me of, that cars are temporary things. They get scratched, they get dented, they get scuffed, the new car smell dissipates. Cars are temporary things. What's eternal. Eternal is a good relationship with Robert.

That's what I. That's what's priority for me now. We're going to get the car fixed eventually. We're not Scrooge and McDuck, though, so it's not going to happen next week. But we're going to save and we're going to get that car fixed because it is important to care for what God has trusted to you.

But remember that all of those things are temporary things. And in the meantime, we remember that God is our security. God is our source of control. God is our sense of our source of peace. Not our stuff.

Not our flush bank account, not our super amazing investment report. I've not seen one of those for a long time, so I'm not putting my confidence in those now. For those of us who have walked with God for many years now, none of this is new. You've heard many, many, many, many sermons on this right here. But I'm telling you, if you're like me, a periodic reminder is.

Is so helpful.

I love what we end with. This is what Solomon says. I've observed this to be good. This is what's appropriate. Man.

Eat, drink, find satisfaction. Enjoy what God has blessed you with. Work hard. Enjoy the fruit of that hard work. God may give you a lot.

God may give you a little. But trust God with what God has trusted you. Be happy in those moments and try not to overthink. Try not to dwell on what you don't have. Focus on what you do have and be thankful for it.

Now, this can be hard for us to understand, hard for us to deal with at times. Doesn't God realize the pain, the grief, the anxiety that comes with. With what Solomon says, our lot in life? Doesn't God understand that he's put us under some pressures here? Do we not feel

that at times?

Doesn't he know our struggles that we're going through maybe financially right now? Yes, he does. And that's why Solomon says, if you can find contentment here, it's a gift. This is a gift from God. God gives us these moments.

God gives us opportunities to find beauty in our lives, to find contentment, even when it's hard. And it comes when we trust God with what God has trusted to us. And we don't despise the gift that God has given us. We trust him with it. Now we're going to have communion.

I'm going to ask those who are going to help with that. You can prepare. Now. I know I would love a room in my house, maybe to open the basement door tomorrow morning and find it just filled with gold bullion. Wouldn't that be amazing?

Just go down and roll around in it. But that's not where lasting satisfaction is found. If you remember, Scrooge McDuck wasn't the happiest, most content of the McDucks. He was the least content of all the McDucks, and yet he had the most of any McDuck.

There were no other McDucks. It was just him, wasn't it? I mean, the rest of them were just ducks. Okay, another sermon.

That wealth, that silo of gold, did not bring him contentment. Jesus invites us into his own storehouse of blessing, storehouse of goodness. And he invites us to do swan dives and cannonballs into his treasure. And what is that treasure? It is the goodness of God that He invites us to live in every day.

He surrounds us with his faithful care, and he says, roll around in it. He surrounds us with his presence, and he says, take some deep breaths. Smell that. Smell the odor and the aroma of blessing. Ah, God is good.

Taste and see how good God is. Amen.

Jesus, we don't want to give our heart to the wrong things. We don't want to lay up treasure here and miss out on the treasure of heaven. We don't want to gain the whole world, but lose our soul. And so I am so thankful that you have made a way for us to enjoy life here, but also to enjoy the promise of life everlasting the storehouse of your treasure is open to us by way of the cross. Through the cross you opened the door and invited us in as your sons and daughters to experience the blessings, the wealth, the treasure of heaven, ours ours.

So Lord whatever blessings you have given us right now we want to be content, we want to trust you knowing that you will take care of us,

allow us to live generously and Lord where there is true lack, where there is true poverty, we pray for your provision right now in Jesus name provide for those needs and in this moment as we take the bread and the cup allow us to rest in the promise of your goodness. In Jesus name Amen. Thank you for listening to this message from Sherwood Oaks Christian Church. Did you know you can watch all of our video content, both current and past on our YouTube channel. Visit [YouTube.com sherwoodoaks](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...) to watch messages, series and complete worship services.