

FINANCIAL TRUTHS FOR FINANCIAL FREEDOM
Developing A Kingdom Perspective
Luke 16:1-15

INTRODUCTION

- How many of you believe that prayer is important? Jesus said that My house shall be called a house of prayer. We are given much instruction in the Word of God about prayer. In fact there are approximately 500 verses on prayer in the Bible. BUT did you know that there are about 2000 verses giving us instruction about money. We have four times as much instruction in the area of our finances than in prayer. Obviously, our understanding and use of money is important to the Lord.
- How many of you believe faith is important? Faith involves everything we do in the kingdom. It is extremely important and there are 750 verses instructing us about our faith. Yet, this is roughly a third of the number of verses on finances.
- There are 16 of the 38 parables that revolve around money. Many of them deal with covetousness.
- 1 in 4 verses in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John speak about our finances. The gospels contain more warnings concerning the misuse of money than any other singular subject. Jesus taught more about money than any other subject.
- 1 in every 6 verses in the N.T. makes some reference to money.

In the next few weeks, we are looking at some of what the Lord has to say about our finances. We are calling this series: Financial Truths For Financial Freedom. Jesus said in John 8:31-32 “that My disciples shall know the truth and the truth shall set them free.” He said in Galatians 5:1, “It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.” God wants His people free in every area of our lives.

Freedom in our finances does not mean what freedom means to the world. To be financially free in the world’s eyes means that you have enough money in the bank that you don’t have to worry about working again. You can just kick back and enjoy yourself on the golf course or at the lake house.

Financial Freedom To God means:

- You are free from anxiety over finances.
- You are serving the Lord Jesus Christ and your finances reflect who the Lord of your life is.

- Your hands are open and the Lord can add or subtract as He pleases.
- You are like the Apostle Paul and have learned to be content whether you have much or have little.
- You are trusting God in your finances and are not trusting in your own ability to make money, or in your own bank accounts.
- You are following God's principles concerning finances.
- You are not in debt financially.
- You look forward to giving generously unto the Lord.
- Your money is a tool, rather than a master.

God not only wants His people free in their finances, He wants to pour out a blessing on His people. He wants to give to us "pressed down, shaken together, running over."

(Luke 6:38) ""Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.""

Listen to the blessings in Deuteronomy 28 that He promises:

Deuteronomy 28:1-14 ""Now it shall be, if you will diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. {2} "And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you will obey the LORD your God. {3} "Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country. {4} **"Blessed shall be the offspring of your body and the produce of your ground and the offspring of your beasts, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock.** {5} "Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. {6} "Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. {7} "The LORD will cause your enemies who rise up against you to be defeated before you; they shall come out against you one way and shall flee before you seven ways. {8} **"The LORD will command the blessing upon you in your barns and in all that you put your hand to, and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God gives you.** {9} "The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, as He swore to you, if you will keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and walk in His ways. {10} "So all the peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of you. {11} **"And the LORD will make you abound in prosperity, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your beast and in the produce of your ground, in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you.** {12} **"The LORD will open for you His good storehouse, the heavens, to give rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand; and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.** {13} **"And the LORD shall make you the head and not the tail, and you only shall be above, and you shall not be underneath, if you will listen to the commandments of the**

LORD your God, which I charge you today, to observe them carefully, {14} and do not turn aside from any of the words which I command you today, to the right or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them."

Today, we are going to look at Luke 16 and we are believing God to give us a kingdom perspective in our finances.

THE TEXT: Luke 16:1-13 "Now He was also saying to the disciples, "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and this steward was reported to him as squandering his possessions. {2} "And he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.' {3} "And the steward said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the stewardship away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg. {4} 'I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the stewardship, they will receive me into their homes.' {5} "And he summoned each one of his master's debtors, and he began saying to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' {6} "And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' {7} "Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said^ to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' {8} "And his master praised the unrighteous steward because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light. {9} "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings. {10} "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. {11} "If therefore you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous mammon, who will entrust the true riches to you? {12} "And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? {13} "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.""

I. A Look At The Certain Rich Man

1. God's Ownership

In this parable we have two primary characters, a certain rich man and his steward. The certain rich man represents God and the steward can represent any one of us. The certain rich man is the owner and the steward is merely the manager of the owner's property. It is very important that we understand that God is the owner of all things. Let's take a look at God, the owner.

A. He is Owner because He created us. Sometimes I will see children fussing over a duplo block house that they have made. One will say to the other, "That's mine because I made it." He claims possession because he created the house.

We find the same principle working in patents. When someone invents something, he can patent his product. No one else can create and market that product without his permission. It belongs to him because he was the one who made it.

My father has been in the oil business his whole life. Nearly 40 years ago he developed a product in the oil business that is still being used today. My dad was working for Dresser Industries and so they got the patent on the product. He was an employee working on their behalf. If he had created the product on his own, he could have got the patent and it would have been worth a substantial amount to him.

We find in Psalm 24 that God has the patent on the earth. It belongs to Him because He founded it and established it. He has the patent on us because He made us. We did not make ourselves, but the Lord created us. Let's take a look at some Scriptures.

Psa 24:1-2 "(A Psalm of David.) The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains, The world, and those who dwell in it. {2} For He has founded it upon the seas, And established it upon the rivers."

Psa 100:3 "Know that the LORD Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture."

Psa 50:10-12 ""For every beast of the forest is Mine, The cattle on a thousand hills. {11} "I know every bird of the mountains, And everything that moves in the field is Mine. {12} "If I were hungry, I would not tell you; For the world is Mine, and all it contains."

Recently I read about a scientist that had a conversation with God. He stated that he no longer needed God anymore. He could clone people and so some miraculous things. He told the Lord to go somewhere else in the Universe and chill for a while. The Lord responded to the scientist that perhaps they should have a man making contest. The scientist replied, "OK, great!" But God added, "Now, we're going to do this just like I did back in the old days with Adam." The scientist said, "Sure, no problem" and bent down and grabbed himself a handful of dirt. God just looked at him and said, "No, no, no. You go get your own dirt!"

B. He is Owner because He bought us and redeemed us. As if it was not enough for Him to own us because He created us, He bought us and redeemed us. I drive an old 1988 Ford F-150 pick up. It is a five speed with electronic ignition. It runs great and it has been

such a blessing for us. We use it for bread ministry and for hauling all kinds of things. We believe in wisely investing our finances into the kingdom, not putting any more than we need to in depreciating assets. I could have bought a new truck for \$27,000.00 and I could also have qualified for a loan. However, I also strongly believe in being debt free and so I paid cash for it. This truck belongs to me. I have the title to this truck. When I paid for the truck, the title was transferred from the previous owner to me. I bought the truck and so it now belongs to me.

When Adam fell, he yielded himself to the control of Satan. He became a slave to sin. Satan now claimed the title to Adam. But the story does not end there. God created us for fellowship with Him. He knew what the cost was to purchase back that which had been lost. He loved us so much that He was willing to pay that price. So He gave His only begotten Son so that whosoever would believe in Him would not perish but have everlasting life. He bought us back or redeemed us with the blood of Jesus. When Jesus was gasping for air in His final moments on the cross, He said, "It is finished, paid in full." We belong to God because He bought us and has the title to our lives.

1 Cor 6:19-20 "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? {20} For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."

Deu 7:8 "but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt."

Deu 9:26 ""And I prayed to the LORD, and said, 'O Lord GOD, do not destroy Thy people, even Thine inheritance, whom Thou hast redeemed through Thy greatness, whom Thou hast brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand.'"

Psa 19:14 "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Thy sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer."

Psa 78:35 "And they remembered that God was their rock, And the Most High God their Redeemer."

Isa 43:1 "But now, thus says the LORD, your Creator, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine!"

Isa 48:17-19 "Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; "I am the LORD your God, who teaches you to profit, Who leads you in the way you should go. {18} "If only you had paid attention to My commandments! Then your

well-being would have been like a river, And your righteousness like the waves of the sea. {19} "Your descendants would have been like the sand, And your offspring like its grains; Their name would never be cut off or destroyed from My presence.""

1 Pet 1:17-19 "And if you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each man's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay upon earth; {18} knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, {19} but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ."

Heb 9:11-12 "But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; {12} and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."

1 Cor 7:23 "You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men."

John 19:30 "When Jesus therefore had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished (teleo)!" And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit."

C. He is Owner because He adopted us. I have 10 children. Nine of my children are mine by birth. I am a foster parent for little Darius, who is 3 weeks old. We do not have permanent possession of him, just temporary custody. The nine children are ours because we created them. If Darius were to come up for adoption and we adopted him, he would become legally our son through adoption.

We began to adopt a little girl a few months ago. We knew about the girl for a couple of months and sought the Lord for a name. When the mother gave birth to the girl, we were notified and went and picked up little Magan Grace. Magan means to be delivered over safely. This little girl was a crack baby who was delivered safely by the grace of God. The mother has 10 days to change her mind before the adoption papers are finalized. After a couple of days, we got a call from Peggy Cochran, who runs "In His Great Love." She notified us that the mother had changed her mind and we needed to bring the baby back. The adoption process was halted. Little Magan Grace did not belong to us because we were not able to adopt her.

When we receive Christ into our lives, God, the Father adopts us into His family. We become legally His through adoption. It is a sealed thing, a done deal. God is the owner of us through creation, redemption and through adoption.

Rom 8:15-16 "For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" {16} The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,"

Gal 4:5-7 "in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. {6} And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" {7} Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God."

Eph 1:5-8 "He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, {6} to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. {7} In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, {8} which He lavished upon us. In all wisdom and insight"

2. Actions Of The Owner

A. He entrusted His possessions to the steward. He has given responsibility to His stewards to faithfully carry out His wishes. He has not given up ownership, but He has given up the management of His resources. He has certain expectations of His stewards in managing His talents.

B. He makes His stewards give account. From time to time, He evaluates His stewards, hoping to reward them. In the parable of the talents, the one who had been faithful with the five talents, was entrusted with five more talents to manage for His master. Likewise, the one with two talents was given two more. But the steward who had only one talent and buried it, was reprovved severely. The one talent that He had was removed from him and given to the steward with ten.

Mat 25:14-30 ""For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves, and entrusted his possessions to them. {15} "And to one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. {16} "Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. {17} "In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more. {18} "But he who received the one talent went away and dug in the ground, and hid his master's money. {19} "Now after a long time the master of those slaves came[^] and settled[^] accounts with them. {20} "And the one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me; see, I have gained five more talents.' {21} "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in

charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.' {22} "The one also who had received the two talents came up and said, 'Master, you entrusted to me two talents; see, I have gained two more talents.' {23} "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' {24} "And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed. {25} 'And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground; see, you have what is yours.' {26} "But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I scattered no seed. {27} 'Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. {28} 'Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.' {29} "For to everyone who has shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. {30} "And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

II. A Look At The Unrighteous Steward

1. Definition of a steward:

The dictionary defines a steward as “a person entrusted with the management of estates or affairs not his own; an administrator.” The N.T. word, “oikonomos” literally means: house + to parcel out, especially food. The derived meaning is the manager of a household or household affairs; a manager. A steward is an individual who has been delegated authority by an owner to oversee his possessions, property and household affairs.

2. A look at our stewardship.

A. Our stewardship is temporary. The Owner is going to take away the stewardship. The Owner has given us the responsibility for a season. Our earthly stewardship is going to be taken from us when we die. We are encouraged by the Lord to make wise use of the stewardship while we have it.

B. Our stewardship will have eternal consequences. We are encouraged to use it for eternal purposes. The unrighteous steward was praised by the Owner, not for the unrighteous actions that he took, but for his shrewdness in preparing a place for himself once the stewardship had been taken away from him. The Lord praises him and encourages us to use our wealth to make eternal friends.

How can we do that? We need to be using the talents and resources that God has given us to further the kingdom of God. We need to invest in winning people to Christ. We need to invest in discipling people. We need to invest our time and talents in things which are going to impact the kingdom eternally.

C. Our Stewardship requires faithfulness. Jesus tells us that stewards need to be faithful. He gives three principles of faithfulness.

a. Stewards need to be faithful in little things. If someone will not be faithful in little things, he will not be faithful with many things. Stewards need to be diligent and faithful in little things. A lot of people throw away pennies. Not me. I pick every penny up that I find. Pennies are the small things. If you cannot be faithful with pennies, who will entrust dollars to you. I roll my pennies and every so often I trade them in at the bank for dollars.

I have a son who is learning to drive. He loves to drive and drives at every opportunity. He has driven downtown to the zoo with the 15 passenger van. He has driven downtown in the pick up with the stick shift. He drives at night. He drives in all kinds of condition and Bill is a very good driver. He drives carefully and slowly. But, we are watching Bill in the little things. We are watching how faithful he is in his school work and in his chores at home. We are watching how responsible he is towards his brothers and sisters. If he is faithful in the small things, when it comes time to get his license and drive on his own, we will be able to entrust him with that area also.

Our children need to be taught the faithfulness with the allowances they receive or with the income they receive from working. It will be natural for them to be entrusted with more riches as they learn to tithe and give offerings now with just a little.

As we serve faithfully, more responsibility can be given. As we are faithful with our tithes and offerings on our current income, God can increase our seed for sowing and entrust us with more income.

2 Cor 9:10 "Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness;"

b. Stewards need to be faithful with money. Jesus said that if we cannot be trusted with unrighteous mammon, how can we be entrusted with true spiritual things. One of the requirements we have to be on the worship team is to be a tithing member. One of the requirements to being in leadership is to be faithful in

tithing. If we cannot be faithful in our use of money, the Lord said that He cannot entrust true riches to us.

In the church today, we are asking God for true riches. We are asking God for a mighty move of the Holy Spirit. We are asking Him for signs and wonders and miracles. But according to George Barna and other statisticians, the average giving by church members is 2.5 %. Why should God pour out true riches when we are not faithfully using our mammon? He would be violating His own principles to give us signs and wonders while we are being unfaithful. We need to repent of this so that God can begin to pour out His Spirit on mankind and we can see revival breaking out. It is imperative that we get this right.

c. Stewards need to be faithful with that which belongs to another. If we will not take care of that which belongs to others, what reason does the Lord have for believing that we will take care of our own. We joke about renters and how they tear things up. There are not many renters who leave a property better than they find it. A Christian should always leave the property looking as good as he found it? Why? Because of the principle of being faithful with that which belongs to another.

This principle is used in raising up leadership in the church. If someone is not faithful in the vision of the church, why should leadership raise the person up in his own church or work. People need to faithfully serve another's vision so that God can raise them up at the proper time. There are many talented individuals with lots of potential, but there aren't many faithful people. I would much rather choose someone with less talent and gifting, but who has tremendous character and is faithful. He will impact the kingdom far greater in the long run.

Prov 20:6 (KJV) "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?"

3. A look at who we serve. Jesus goes on to talk about how we cannot serve two masters. We cannot serve God and mammon. We must choose who we are going to serve.

Luke 16:13 ""No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.""

How do we know whether we are serving God or mammon? We can take a look at our pocketbooks and see if we are following God's commands. The Scriptures are full of principles to guide us in our finances. As stewards, there is no excuse for most of us for not walking in the truth. Here are a couple of the principles.

In 1 Samuel 8, we find the account of Samuel appointing his sons over Israel. His sons were dishonest and so the elders asked Samuel for a king to be appointed over them. Samuel is led by the Lord to tell them what that would entail. They would give a tenth of their crops. They would give a tenth of their flocks. He would take their daughters and sons and place them in his service. They would become his servants. The people heard this and still asked God for a king. This displeased the Lord.

The principle of tithing goes beyond the Levitical law. It reflects who you are serving. It reflects who you are trusting for your protection. It reflects who you are submitted to and whose authority you are under. The nation of Israel wanted the king to fight their battles. They willingly chose to serve the king.

We can easily answer the question that Jesus raises about who you are serving, either God or mammon. Are you paying a tithe to your local storehouse?

1 Sam 8:1-20 "And it came about when Samuel was old that he appointed his sons judges over Israel. {2} Now the name of his first-born was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judging in Beersheba. {3} His sons, however, did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after dishonest gain and took bribes and perverted justice. {4} Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah; {5} and they said to him, "Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations." {6} But the thing was displeasing in the sight of Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the LORD. {7} And the LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them. {8} "Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day-- in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods-- so they are doing to you also. {9} "Now then, listen to their voice; however, you shall solemnly warn them and tell them of the procedure of the king who will reign over them." {10} So Samuel spoke all the words of the LORD to the people who had asked of him a king. {11} And he said, "This will be the procedure of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and place them for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen and they will run before his chariots. {12} "And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and of fifties, and some to do his plowing and to reap his harvest and to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. {13} "He will also take your daughters for perfumers and cooks and bakers. {14} "And he will take the best of your fields and your vineyards and your olive groves, and give them to his servants. {15} "And he will take a tenth of your seed and of your vineyards, and give to his officers and to his servants. {16} "He will also take your male servants and your female servants and your best young men and your donkeys, and use

them for his work. {17} "He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his servants. {18} "Then you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day." {19} Nevertheless, the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said, "No, but there shall be a king over us, {20} that we also may be like all the nations, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.""

A. The principle of tithing. Tithing was begun as far back as Genesis 4 when Cain and Abel brought their offerings to the Lord. Abel brought the fat part, which represents the choice part. He was giving the very best offering that he had from his herd.

Gen 4:3-7 "So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. {4} And Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; {5} but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. {6} Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? {7} "If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.""

We find the first mention of tithing in Genesis 14 when Abraham tithed to Melchizedek, the priest. This was well before the law. Tithing became a part of the law, but the principle of tithing goes beyond the law. Tithing reflects submission to authorities. Tithing teaches us to fear the Lord. Tithing reflects God's ownership of everything that we have. It is a way that we honor the men of God in our lives.

Gen 14:18-20 "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. {19} And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; {20} And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tenth of all."

Num 18:21 ""And to the sons of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they perform, the service of the tent of meeting."

Num 18:24 ""For the tithe of the sons of Israel, which they offer as an offering to the LORD, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance; therefore I have said concerning them, "They shall have no inheritance among the sons of Israel.""

Neh 10:38 "And the priest, the son of Aaron, shall be with the Levites when the

Levites receive tithes, and the Levites shall bring up the tenth of the tithes to the house of our God, to the chambers of the storehouse."

Prov 3:9-10 "Honor the LORD from your wealth, And from the first of all your produce; {10} So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine."

Mal 3:10 ""Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows."

The tithe was used to support the God's servants. The tithe was used to support the men who served in the local storehouse. It was used to take care of the Levites and Priests who served the Lord. The tithes today should have the same purpose, to honor the men who watch over the church.

Mat 10:10 "or a bag for your journey, or even two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for the worker is worthy of his support."

Luke 10:7 ""And stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house."

1 Cor 9:8-14 "I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things? {9} For it is written in the Law of Moses, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING." God is not concerned about oxen, is He? {10} Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops. {11} If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we should reap material things from you? {12} If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. {13} Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share with the altar? {14} So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel."

1 Tim 5:17-18 "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. {18} For the Scripture says, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages.""

2 Tim 2:6 "The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of

the crops."

One of the principles included in the tithe was that a congregation needs to support those who make their living by the gospel. A congregation has a responsibility to sow materially into those who sow spiritually in their lives. We are to give and honor those who sow into our lives. When we have a guest minister or a trans-local minister into the congregation, it is not a matter of whether we should give, but how much should we give. We are to sow materially back into them. If we sow generously, we will reap generously.

The elders who rule well are to be considered of double honor. That means double pay. That means they are to be well taken care of, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. The mind set of most churches is how little can we pay our minister and still retain him. It is the business mind set. The mind set of the Lord is to bless and honor the men of God in your lives. They are to be well taken care of. This is a two edged sword. They are to do it voluntarily and not for sordid gain. If someone is doing it for the money, then they should not be in the position of an elder or overseer in the church. They need to repent and serve God, not mammon.

The tithe was also used to support the needy. Every third year the tithe was divided up three ways. It was divided between the Levite, the stranger, the orphan and the widow. We are still exhorted to take care of widows in the N.T. There are some conditions that must be satisfied, but the church still has responsibility to provide for those who are widows indeed. The purposes of the tithes have not changed, even though we are now in a new covenant.

Deu 26:12 ""When you have finished paying all the tithe of your increase in the third year, the year of tithing, then you shall give it to the Levite, to the stranger, to the orphan and to the widow, that they may eat in your towns, and be satisfied."

1 Tim 5:3-5 "Honor widows who are widows indeed; {4} but if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family, and to make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God. {5} Now she who is a widow indeed, and who has been left alone has fixed her hope on God, and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day."

Some people have said that we are under the covenant of grace now and we do not have to tithe. Jesus never took away the tithe. It was established before the law. We also serve Jesus, our great high priest, who is according to the order of Melchizedek. The order of Melchizedek received tithes. Jesus also told the Pharisees that they should tithe without neglecting the weightier provisions of the law. He also told us that if our righteousness did not exceed that of the Pharisees, we could not enter the kingdom of heaven. That would mean that we need to be giving more than the 10% tithe.

Heb 7:1-17 "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, {2} to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils, was first of all, by the translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace. {3} Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he abides a priest perpetually. {4} Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils. {5} And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest's office have commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham. {6} But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them collected a tenth from Abraham, and blessed the one who had the promises. {7} But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater. {8} And in this case mortal men receive tithes, but in that case one receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives on. {9} And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes, {10} for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him. {11} Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron? {12} For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also. {13} For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar. {14} For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests. {15} And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, {16} who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life. {17} For it is witnessed of Him, "THOU ART A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK."

B. The principle of offerings. Besides the tithes, we are commanded to give offerings. Many Bible scholars estimate the total tithes and offerings that the people gave in the old covenant to be between 23% and 30%. If our righteousness and giving is to exceed that of the Old Covenant, we have a long way to go since the average church family gives only 2.5%. In reality, the average giving by non-Christians to charity organizations is less than 1% different than the giving by church members.

When the Lord chastens the nation of Israel in Malachi for robbing Him, He specifically mentions in tithes and offerings. We can still be tithing and robbing God. We are to give both tithes and offerings.

Mal 3:8-11 ""Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed Thee?' In tithes and offerings. {9} "You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you! {10} "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows. {11} "Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it may not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes," says the LORD of hosts."

There are offerings for the poor. God tells us to give with an open hand. We are to give offerings to our building funds. They had a temple tax which went for the upkeep of the temple. There are offerings for repairs made to the temple. There are offerings for missions. There are all kinds of offerings that we need to be offering up to the Lord. These are all in addition to our tithes. God says that we should test Him in this. He said that He will pour out a blessing on us until it overflows. He will rebuke the devourer for us. The Lord goes on to say in Luke that when we give it will be given back to us pressed down, shaken together, running over.

How do you know who is poor? How do you know if you are wealthy? Statistically, if you have sufficient food, decent clothes, live in a house that keeps the weather out, and own a reasonably reliable means of transportation, you are among the top 15% of the world's wealthy.

If you have any money saved, a hobby that requires some equipment or supplies (fishing, hunting, skiing, astronomy, coin collecting, painting), a variety of clothes in your closet, two cars (in any condition), and live in your own home, you are in the top 5% of the world's wealthy.

We have a responsibility to honor God with our wealth. We need to be giving generously to the poor and needy. There are lots of people with legitimate needs. Our community is full of them. The mission fields are full of people in poverty. We need to reach out and begin to touch people with our mammon.

Luke 6:38 ""Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.""

CONCLUSION

Luke 16:14-15 "Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things, and they were scoffing at Him. {15} And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God."

The Pharisees who were lovers of money were listening to all these things, and they scoffed at Him. We have an opportunity to scoff at the Word of God today or to examine our hearts. We have a decision to make whether we are going to walk in the light of God's Word or walk in darkness. We can choose this day whom we are going to serve, either mammon or God. Are we going to be like Joshua and respond, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Josh 24:15 ""And if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.""

"Alfred Nobel was a Swedish chemist who made his fortune by inventing dynamite and other powerful explosives, which were bought by governments to produce weapons. When Nobel's brother died, one newspaper accidentally printed Alfred's obituary instead. He was described as a man who became rich from enabling people to kill each other in unprecedented quantities. Shaken from this assessment, Nobel resolved to use his fortune to reward accomplishments that benefitted humanity, including what we now know as the Nobel Peace Prize.

Nobel had a rare opportunity—to look at the assessment of his life at its end, but to still be alive and have opportunity to change that assessment." (Money Possessions, and Eternity; by Randy Alcorn; page 151)

We have the same opportunity. We can look at God's word as a mirror. A mirror reflects the image of the person in it. As we look intently at God's word, we will see exactly where we are in relationship to our finances. We can see God's assessment of our attitudes and actions in the area of stewardship. We are told to look intently at His word so that we can abide by it and be an effectual doer. It also tells us that we will be blessed in what we do. We, like Alfred Nobel, have an opportunity to change the assessment of our lives.

James 1:25 "But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does."

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I hereby grant to the Lord my God myself and all of my money and possessions and all else I've ever thought of as mine, even my family. From this point forward I will think of them as His to do with as he wishes. I see myself as His steward and as such, I will do my utmost to prayerfully consider how He wishes me to invest His assets to further His kingdom. In doing so, I realize I will surrender certain temporary earthly treasures and gain in exchange eternal treasures, as well as increased perspective and decreased anxiety.

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WITNESS: _____

FINANCIAL TRUTHS FOR FINANCIAL FREEDOM
Developing A Kingdom Perspective
Luke 16:1-15

10/17/99

INTRODUCTION John 8:31-32, Galatians 5:1, Deuteronomy 28:1-14

Financial Freedom To God means:

- You are free from anxiety over finances.
- You are serving the Lord Jesus Christ and your finances reflect who the Lord of your life is.
- Your hands are open and the Lord can add or subtract as He pleases.
- You are like the Apostle Paul and have learned to be content whether you have much or have little.
- You are trusting God in your finances and are not trusting in your own ability to make money, or in your own bank accounts.
- You are following God's principles concerning finances.
- You are not in debt financially.
- You look forward to giving generously unto the Lord.

I. A Look At The Certain Rich Man

1. God's Ownership

A. He is Owner because He _____ us. Psa 24:1-2, Psa 100:3, Psa 50:10-12

B. He is Owner because He _____ us and _____ us. 1 Cor 6:19-20, Deu 7:8, Deu 9:26, Psa 19:14, Psa 78:35, Isa 43:1, Isa 48:17-19, 1 Pet 1:17-19, Heb 9:11-12, 1 Cor 7:23, John 19:30

C. He is Owner because He _____ us. Rom 8:15-16, Gal 4:5-7, Eph 1:5-8

2. Actions Of The Owner

A. He entrusted His possessions to the _____.

B. He makes His stewards give _____. Mat 25:14-30,

II. A Look At The Unrighteous Steward

1. Definition of a steward: The dictionary defines a steward as "a person entrusted with the management of estates or affairs not his own; an administrator." The N.T. word, "oikonomos" literally means: house + to parcel out, especially food. The derived meaning is the manager of a household or household affairs; a manager. A steward is an individual who has been delegated authority by an owner to oversee his possessions, property and household affairs.

2. A look at our stewardship.

A. Our stewardship is _____.

B. Our stewardship will have _____.

C. Our Stewardship requires _____.

a. Stewards need to be faithful in _____. 2 Cor 9:10

b. Stewards need to be faithful with _____.

c. Stewards need to be faithful with that which _____ to another. Pro 20:6

3. A look at who we serve. Luke 16:13, 1 Sam 8:1-20

A. The principle of tithing. Gen 4:3-7, Gen 14:18-20, Num 18:21, Num 18:24, Neh 10:38, Prov 3:9-10, Mal 3:10

- **The tithe was used to support the _____.** Mat 10:10, Luke 10:7, 1 Cor 9:8-14, 1 Tim 5:17-18, 2 Tim 2:6
- **The tithe was also used to support the _____.** Deu 26:12, 1 Tim 5:3-5
- **Abraham's tithe went to Melchizedek.** _____ is a priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Heb 7:1-17

B. The principle of offerings. Mal 3:8-11, Luke 6:38

CONCLUSION AND APPLICATION Luke 16:14-15, Josh 24:15, James 1:25 "But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does."

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C. He is Owner because He adopted us. Rom 8:15-16, Gal 4:5-7, Eph 1:5-8

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2. A look at our stewardship.

A. Our stewardship is temporary.

B. Our stewardship will have eternal consequences.

C. Our Stewardship requires faithfulness.

a. Stewards need to be faithful in little things. 2 Cor 9:10

b. Stewards need to be faithful with money.

c. Stewards need to be faithful with that which belongs to another. Pro 20:6

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