“Jesus’ Words About Money”

Jesus did not often speak about money. But what He did say falls among the most important words anyone has ever said about it.

Now, did you know that Jesus spoke about the poor exactly the same amount of times He spoke about the rich? And of the LORD’s 38 parables, more than a dozen of them refer to possessions, inheritances, mammon, your labor, and your treasure.

For example, the prodigal son is a parable about squandering your inheritance. The parable about the laborers in the vineyard is about surrendering to the will of the LORD. The parable about the rich man who built larger and larger barns is about greed.

And in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said this. Matthew 6:19 *“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: (20) But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: (21) For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”*

So, as I begin today, you might not be fully convinced that Jesus Christ really is the final authority on money. But, please keep an open mind and you will be happily surprised that Jesus does know very well what He’s talking about.

I’ve titled today’s sermon “Jesus’ Words About Money.” Shall we pray?

Some of us sometimes think that the only way to reach a person’s heart is to use religious terms and talk about religious things or even show your religious duties to people. Yet, Jesus, the Excellent Teacher that He is, simply told stories. Many of them included the topic of money.

Now, grant you, the parables, weren’t always easy to understand. But they were designed to make you think about your life and things that are right, and things that are wrong.

Please open your Bible with me to the Gospel of Luke and chapter seven. Luke was a medical doctor, remember. So, let me ask you this. Does your doctor know something about finances? Luke certainly understood money. But he also understood this basic tenet of life. Jesus is The Authority on every aspect of life, both in time and in eternity.

Look at it like this. If you won’t receive what He says about money and finances into your heart and life, why should you believe what He says about eternity?

This is true when you read this story here in Luke seven. Look with me at verse 41. Luke 7:41 *“There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. (42) And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?*

*(43) Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged… (47) Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.”*

Jesus very capably spoke about finances. He often used the subject of money to teach the wonderful truths of Heaven. And in order for me to show you what He said and taught about money, you need to see that as often as Jesus talks about money, He makes a specific point about your heart.

Parables, as you know, are stories with a point; usually one point. And the point of this parable is that the people who love the LORD most are the ones who have felt forgiven the most.

Now look with me at verse 47. *(47) “Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.”*

You see, the original term in Scripture for “forgive” means “to cancel a debt.”

Have you heard of the IRS form 1099-C? It’s a “Cancellation of Debt Income,” a CODI. Some 5.5 million tax payers have to file a CODI each year. What is it? If a bank or mortgage company has cancelled your debt by more than $600.00, you have to complete a 1099-C. And how does the IRS define the cancellation of your debt? They call is “Debt forgiveness.”

This is exactly what this word “forgive” means here in verse forty-seven.

Now, whose sin is it that’s being forgiven here? For the answer to that question, you need to look at the context of this parable; Luke 7:36.

Luke 7:36 *“And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. (37) And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,*

*(38) And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. (39) Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.”*

Then Jesus proceed s to tell Simon the parable. So, who’d debt of sin had been cancelled by the LORD? The woman who had taken the alabaster box filled with perfume and anointed Jesus’ feet.

So, yes, I want to go the Jesus as the authority on money. But, what do I find. I find that the LORD knows exactly what forgiveness means. And He’s teaching us that when the LORD forgives you or when you forgive someone else, remember this; it’s a cancellation of a debt.

By the way, do you know why the IRS has 5.5 million people complete a CODI each year? Because if you’ve been forgiven more than $600.00, guess what? You have to pay taxes on the rest; or at least a portion of it.

Now, can you see that the words Jesus uses imply that if you can understand the feeling of what it would be like to have a huge debt cancelled, no strings attached, then you have, to a certain degree, understood His forgiveness.

Who had forgiven this woman? What were her sins? How many and how large were her sins? And, how did she feel about the LORD Who had so graciously forgiven her? She loved Him so much she took a box of perfume, probably worth what you get paid in ten months.

How do I know this? Turn back with me to Mark’s gospel at chapter fourteen. Mark 14:1 *“After two days was the feast of the Passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. (2) But they said, not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people. (3) And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat,*

*there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. (4) And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, why was this waste of the ointment made? (5) For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.”*

So, how many of you have given ten months of your income to the LORD just because you’ve felt His forgiveness in your heart? Here’s Luke seven again. *(47) “Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.”*

You see, the LORD speaks authoritatively about money. But He speaks directly to your heart about something much more important than your financial well-being. He wants you to know that both finances and forgiveness are both matters of the heart.

And, did Simon, the Pharisee, who had invited Jesus to dinner that day answer the LORD’s question correctly? Let’s see. Luke 7: 41*“There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. (42) And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? (43) Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged…*

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Isn’t it interesting that your heart came expecting to hear what Jesus says about money and now your heart is hearing what He says about forgiveness?

Let me show you this in another place. Please turn with me to Matthew chapter eighteen. And find with me verse twenty-one.

Matthew 18:21 *“Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? (22) Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. (23) Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.*

*(24)* *And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents [one talent = 1,000 weeks of work]. (25) But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.*

*(26) The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. (27) Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.*

*(28) But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. (29) And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.*

*(30) And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. (31) So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. (32) Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:*

*(33) Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? (34) And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. (35)**So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses.”*

Did you notice how the One Who is The Authority on money fully understands forgiveness again? This time, though, the LORD’s point is this. You will forgive other people in proportion to how much you feel His forgiveness for your sins. And further, being unforgiving towards anyone is totally inconsistent with a Christ-owned life.

And folks, just for a side note. People don’t have to deserve your forgiveness in order for you to forgiven them. As a matter of fact, who here feels like they deserve the LORD’s forgiveness for their sins?

The Christian teaching is this. Ephesians 4:31 *“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: (32) And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”*

You see, in almost all of what Jesus says about money, He’s not technically speaking on the topic of money. But, He is speaking the truth of Heaven into your heart. In this lesson to Peter, He’s teaching the *meaning* of forgiveness.

So, what does forgiveness mean to you?

Does it mean “Lots of money forgiven means your debt has been canceled”? And does it mean “Lots of sins forgiven means your sin debt has been canceled?” And how then can you be unforgiving towards someone who has any size sin debt against you?

The debt of this man in verse twenty-four was ten thousand talents. How much is that?

“The denarius was one day’s wage for a typical day laborer, who worked six days a week with a Sabbath day of rest. Allowing approximately two weeks for various Jewish holidays, the typical laborer worked fifty weeks of the year and earned an annual wage of 300 denarii (50 weeks x 6 days). Therefore, 100 denarii would be one-third of a year’s salary; about four months’ wages.

Now suppose you continued to work as a day laborer earning 300 denarii each year. After 20 years of such labor, you will have earned 6,000 denarii. At this point, the king would say to his debtor, *“Congratulations. You have worked for 20 years and have now earned 6,000 denarii. That’s enough to pay back one talent. You only have 9,999 more talents to go.”*

From this you can easily see that if it takes 20 years to earn one talent; then repaying 10,000 talents would require working 200,000 YEARS! How absurd then for the servant to beg for mercy and tell the king that he would “pay back everything.” As a day laborer, he had no hope—almost literally “not in a million years”—of ever repaying his debt.”

Folks, Jesus died on the cross for a whole lot of sins; a whole lot of your sins; actually all of them. You have no idea how many sins you committed over the years of your life. Yet, the Savior was so loving and so kind and so faithful that He willing suffered the pain of the cross and then death so that you might be forgiven and go free.

Now, two things.

One, how much do you love Him? And how much have you shown Him how much you love Him?

And two, do you feel you have a right to withhold forgiveness from anyone who’s hurt you?

Well, that leaves us with just one more word on money from Jesus. Look with me at Luke chapter twelve.

Luke 12:16 Now as I read this parable, see if you can find what the Authority on money says about your heart.

Luke 12:16 *“And he spake a parable unto them, saying, the ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: (17) and he thought within himself, saying, what shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? (18) And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.*

*(19) And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. (20) But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? (21) So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”*

Can you see what the LORD says about money here? Can you see what He says about greed? The, note with me the point of the parable. Verse twenty-one. Luke 12:21 *“So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”*

Folks, the LORD is your Provider. If He sends rain and sunshine and thereby prospers your land and your life so that you have to add silos to store all your harvest, then so be it. After all, that’s His will upon you.

Now, if you respond to God’s mighty hand of provision by simply basking in your success and then proceed to waste all your prosperity on yourself, you can be sure you will lose more than you gained.

Folks, here’s what Jesus teaches about money. Being rich towards God supersedes being rich in this world’s goods. You are rich in material things when the stock market treats you well and when your business succeeds and when your wealth multiplies. But are you towards God? Do you see Him as your Creator? Do you see Him as your Sustainer? Do you see Him as Provider? Do you see Him as your Protector? And do you see Him as your Judge? And do you see Him as your Savior?

The LORD’s message is very apropos for you and me 2016. You may succeed financially. It’s certainly possible to greatly succeed in this world. But are you truly a success if you are not rich towards God? No.

God calls you to faithfulness with whatever He sends into your life. If it’s a little, then be faithful with the little. If it’s a lot, then be faithful with the lot. Be faithful to use it for good. Be faithful to use it wisely. Be faithful to use it ethically. Be faithful to use all the God has provided you for His glory. If He is your Provider; and He is; then it’s best to acknowledge this before others. Better to be a man or a woman of integrity and purity than to be owned by your money.

Your highest priority in this life is not your financial security. But rather, it is to be spiritually rich. You have been called to be faithful to God in every part of your life.

Here are some words from one of my favorite writers. “Our real god, is whatever our minds drift to whenever we have nothing in particular to think about. The most critical thing in the universe is that we love the true God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. Whatever in our lives fills that place is our god.

Whatever is in practical reality the love of our life – our greatest passion – is our god. Our god is whatever we look to for fun, happiness, security, fulfillment. There is only room for one in that position. We cannot serve both God and money (Luke 16:13) or God and pleasure or God popularity and or God and “success” or God and . . .” (C. S. Lewis).

Folks, the lessons about money from the lips of Jesus are always wonderful. He’s the Authority on money. But He always says more on the subject than a mere discussion of dollars and cents. His purpose is to bring both conviction and comfort to your soul?

I hope that you’ll allow these words to settle down and find a home in your heart today. I know they’ve already had an impact on my life.

1. Forgiveness is the cancellation of a debt; both financially and spiritually.
2. If you’ve been forgiven by God, you have no basis to be unforgiving towards anyone else.
3. Don’t lay up treasure for yourself if you are not rich towards God.

Now, as we close, let me remind you of the Main

Message of the Scriptures.

1. Man is a sinner. The wages for sin is death.
2. God provided a Savior in the Person of His Son, Who died for your sins.
3. The moment you repent, you will believe on Christ and receive the free gifts of forgiveness, righteousness, and a guaranteed place in Heaven.

So, Will you trust His Son as your Savior? This may be the greatest passage in the entire Bible. John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (17) For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”

My question to you today is this. Have you trusted in the One Who paid the penalty for all your sins 2000 years ago when He died on a Cross on the hill called Calvary? Are you enjoying His forgiveness?

Will you admit you are a sinner and not deserving of His Love? Will you admit you are a sinner and deserving of His Judgment? Then, tell God that you believe He sent His Son to die as your Substitute and that you want to be forgiven of all your sins. He will certainly receive you and grant you permission to enter into His Kingdom someday.

Today is the Day of Salvation. Today you can repent (change your mind) about God, Christ, Sin, and Salvation and find eternal life. Today is your day to trust Christ alone for His free salvation. Will you trust Him?

And, for each Christian here today, here is a prayer you will find life-changing. You can pray it both daily and all throughout your day. *“LORD, I submit all I am to you, my spirit, my soul, and my body. Do with me what is most pleasing to you. Work out Your will upon me today.”*