



## LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

### “48 Days: Treasure”

Ps James Lowe - October 4, 2015

#### WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. *No right or wrong answers.*

- What was a possession you especially valued in your childhood?
- What is something special you wanted as a teenager and had to save up for to buy?
- What is one of your most meaningful possessions, and why?

#### WORD (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at <http://www.bethelworld.org>

God is the one who blesses us. He is the ultimate provider of all we have. He blesses us with "treasure." We are responsible to God for the use of the treasure with which we are blessed. God has a right to our treasure. If the government (through taxes) and banks (through loans) and businesses (through our purchases) have a right to our treasure, God has a greater claim.

If we don't fulfill our financial obligations to the government, banks, and businesses, we will quickly be held accountability. God, however, often continues to bless us if we fail to honor him through our tithing and giving. If we are not biblically informed, however, we will misinterpret our continued blessings and think they are a sign that God doesn't care whether we obey his commands and follow his ways. But this is not true.

The story of Cain in Genesis is a sad one. Cain failed to honor God appropriately with his treasure. He then became jealous and angry with his brother, who had appropriately honored God with his treasure and was subsequently commended by God. His failure to honor God coupled with his bad attitude opened the door to jealousy and anger which led to violence and murder.

Jesus himself taught that we cannot love God and money. In the end, we will choose one over the other. God wants us to learn to put him first in all things, including our money, possessions, and wealth. Honoring God with our treasure helps guard us from becoming possessed by our possessions.

2 Corinthians 9:10 ESV *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.*

God doesn't want us to consume all of our treasure, but instead to sow some for the purpose of future harvesting. In fact, that which is to be sown is more important than what is consumed, because it is your future provision. God promises to be faithful to bless us, and he expects us to set some aside for further giving.

Matthew 19:16-22 ESV *And behold, a man came up to him, saying, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments." He said to him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The young man said to him, "All these I have kept. What do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you*

*possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.*

This man loved his treasure more than God. The fundamental issue was not the dispossession of all of his material wealth. However, this challenge was absolutely necessary to depose the idol of money in the man's heart, which was the real issue. God cannot condone a heart that loves self or things more than himself. God is the only one worthy of our first and highest affections and loyalties. Sadly, the man failed Jesus' test. The question remains for each of us: Do we pass the test? Do we love God or material possessions more? Do we live to serve God or our own material desires? Which is truly most important to us? What does your daily reflect?

*Matthew 19:23-30 ESV And Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?” But Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” Then Peter said in reply, “See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”*

Jesus promises to reward every person who puts him and God's kingdom first, especially if that results in suffering or loss on our part. God is no person's debtor. He will always reward and bless everyone who makes sacrifices for him. These blessings and rewards are given in some measure in this life, but will be fully given in the age to come after the return of Jesus and the resurrection of the dead. Jesus himself is our example. He gave up his career, possessions, and even his very life as a generous sacrifice for the benefit of others. In response, God has exalted him to the highest place of rank, honor, authority, privilege, and wealth (see Philippians 2:5-11). A carpenter's son has become God's designated ruler over the entire earth. Jesus himself illustrates the saying formed in the rhetorical question: Who can out give God? The answer is: No one!

### **PERSONAL APPLICATION (10-15 minutes)**

**Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related topic for discussion.**

- What is your relationship to your possessions? How much are you simply a steward over them versus being controlled by them?
- When was the last time you engaged in an act of large, sacrificial generosity? What inspired it? What was the result in your own life?
- How has God blessed your giving and generosity toward him and the things that matter to him?

### **PRAYER (10-15 minutes)**

**Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.**

- Pray that God will convict us of any misplaced affections, loyalties, or priorities in our lives, especially as related to our finances, possessions, and wealth.
- Pray that God will guide each of us in obedience to his commands as regards our giving and generosity, so that we will grow to become examples of cheerful sacrificial giving.
- Pray that God will open our eyes to all of his blessings in our lives, especially as they come in response to our obedience to him in the areas of giving and generosity.