



**Series Title:** Stewardship – Making our Whole Lives Count for Jesus!

**Weekly Title:** Stewardship of Finances

**Date:** Sunday October 2

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 6:19-21

**Purpose of Preach:** To challenge people on how we are stewarding our finances.

**Introduction:**

Jesus is passionately concerned with how we steward our money. In the New Testament there are around 500 verses on faith, and also on prayer, and we all agree on the importance of these. Yet there are over 2,300 references to finance and money. Jesus talked about money more than anything else, and yet many Christians don't like talking about it all. In Matthew 6:19-24 Jesus teaches us on how we should steward our finances. We see in these verses that financial stewardship begins in the heart. Jesus says in v.21 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Jesus is interested in your heart. He is talking here about the "real you" – what you genuinely think and feel. He is challenging us what is the condition of our hearts when it comes to money. In these verses He asks us two questions.....

**#1: V.19-20. WHAT BANK ARE YOU SAVING INTO?**

Jesus is not talking about being saved or getting to heaven but about the reward we will each receive when we get there. Although this is a clear teaching throughout the NT, it is not clear exactly what these rewards are, but just that they will be glorious and incredible because they are from Him.

a) *Jesus is asking us: What bank are you ultimately putting your savings into?* We need to be clear that there is nothing sinful about being wealthy or saving money here on earth. Throughout the Bible we see very wealthy people such as Abraham, Joseph of Arimathea and Lydia walking with God and being gloriously used by Him. However, the challenge is: Where do we find our sense of worth and security? In our money or in Jesus? Perhaps if you are honest you find a sense of worth in the house you live in, the car you drive, the salary you receive and the career you are pursuing.

b) *Jesus is saying "Don't you see how temporary all this stuff is?"* Jesus says "do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal". In Jesus' day houses were made from mud and stones and people could break in and steal. The Greek literally reads, "where thieves dig under". In those days there were no banks or insurance policies; people could lose everything at once. Although we have these things today, the same truth remains. All of this earthly stuff is temporary and not eternal.

c) *Instead Jesus says "lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven."* RT Kendall puts it this way: "Jesus is calling for you and for me to have a spiritual detachment from earthly treasure and is giving us pragmatic advice. Summed up: All things here below are

temporary. All these material things that mean so much to us will come to nothing – not to mention the sorrow we will feel at the judgement seat of Christ after we put our eggs in one basket: earthly pleasure.” Jesus says “for yourselves”. This is something we can only do ourselves, we wont be able to share in someone elses reward. As Paul put its in 2 Corinthians 5:10 “each one” will receive what is due for the things done while in the body, “whether good or bad”. Again as RT Kendall puts it: “Treasure in heaven. What you give to God is sent onto heaven in advance of your arrival there. What you give to God is deposited in the Bank of Heaven.”

### **#2: v.24. WHO IS YOUR MASTER?**

Jesus then asks: “Who is your master? Who are you really living for?”

a) *Are we serving God or are we serving money?* The word Jesus uses here means “slave”. In the first century if you were a slave you were owned by your master. Jesus is asking “who owns you? Where do you find your worth and you security? Who do you listen to the most and place your trust? Is how you live motivated by money or is it motivated by God?”. Don Carson says that “the contrast between love and hate is based upon a common Semitic idiom, and neither can be legitimately taken absolutely. To hate one of the alternatives and love the other simply means that what is loved is what is preferred: what is hated means to love less.”

b) *Paul tells Timothy that “the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil”. (1 Tim.6:10)* Money itself is not evil but the love of it and the craving for more of it is. Money has power to bring influence and control and it can lead to pride and selfishness. Money can easily lead to self reliance rather than faith.

### **#3: SO WHAT? WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US?**

As we honestly and courageously ask ourselves these two questions I want to suggest there are at least four principles for stewarding our finances that flows from them.

a) *Find your worth in Jesus and not in your bank balance.* All that we own now in temporary, Grace is eternal. This is a challenge to those here who are secure in their finances. Where do you find your worth and value? If you were to lose the house and the car and the job would Jesus be enough? But there is also a wonderful encouragement here too. Perhaps you are struggling financially and you feel ashamed or worthless. Know afresh today His love for you. Our worth and dignity never comes from our bank balance but from the cross of Jesus.

b) *We need to continually assess the condition of our heart.* Is money the ultimate driving force in our jobs? Are we sacrificing time with the family or the ability to enjoy being part of a local church for more money? Where are the priorities in our lives?

c) *We need to give generously.* In the context of asking the Corinthians to financially support the suffering church in Jerusalem Paul writes: “The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:6-7) We are to take personal responsibility, to think through for ourselves and pray about our giving and joyfully and generously give into the work of God.

d) *We need to steward our finances knowing that a day is coming when we will give an account for it.* God sees everything we do for Him, He sees all the sacrifices and the costly steps of faith. He is no man’s debtor. If we steward our finances and protect our hearts and store up treasure in heaven a day is coming when we will see Him face to face and receive our reward in full.