

**THE BIG IDEA: If you follow the money trail, you'll eventually find your heart.**

### The Take-Off

Have you ever kind of heard something but then wondered if you actually heard what you thought you heard?

That's pretty much the basis for every passage in Luke 16-17 that we'll be looking at over the next 6 weeks, and so we've packaged them all together in a little True Story miniseries called "Wait, What?"

Maybe you've never heard anyone use that expression, but it's something that might follow a somewhat surprising statement.

For example, if I said "Last night I had a fantastic meal at a restaurant even though the server spit in my food" then your response might be, "That's nice. Wait, what?"

Get it? Well, Jesus talks about some difficult things in these 2 chapters - money, divorce, eternity, offense, entitlement, the end of all things - that have those "what, what" moments - SHOCKING moments - but as we look deeper into them, I believe we'll find ourselves in AWE of the grace, truth and love behind them.

So, 6 weeks of SHOCK and AWE in Luke 16-17.

Wait, what kicks off talking about how we can tame the big green monster.

That's right, this morning Jesus has a "wait, what" moment with us about ...

Money.

Before we talk through 3 truths from the passage, let's explain the strangest parable that Jesus ever told.

Context? He's talking with His disciples.

He tells them a story and challenged them to learn something good from someone bad.

That's important because sometimes it can seem like we're around bad people more than good people, and wise disciples are always seeking to learn about the kingdom wherever they are.

You can learn about the kingdom in a bad job, in a hard marriage, from people who are far from God, and Jesus uses a manager who basically steals from his boss in order to ensure future employment as a teaching moment for the need to steward well the money we're entrusted with.

Here are 3 reasons we need to pay attention to money and how we use it.

## **1. Money is a resource for the Kingdom**

- a. Obviously, the Bible has a lot to say about honesty, truthfulness and integrity, so the takeaway from this is not that Jesus suddenly said to His disciples, "Forget all that other stuff I said about truth and just cheat and steal because the ends justify the means."
- b. It sounds a bit like that, and that's the shocking part of the WAIT WHAT moment we're all having.
- c. Can you imagine the disciples hearing this story? How confused they must have been when they got to the 8th verse (of course, there weren't verses, but you know what I mean)?
- d. "The master commended the dishonest manager..."
- e. Wait, what?
- f. "...because he had acted shrewdly."
- g. That word shrewdly? Only used this one time in all of the NT and it means "prudently"
- h. Prudently means "in a way that shows care and thought for the future"
- i. And Jesus goes on to say that worldly, unsaved people show more care and thought for the future than the church, and that sad fact drives our first truth found in verse 10: money is a resource for the Kingdom
- j. Jesus said we should use our money in order to bless others, to gain favor with others
- k. How much would it move your neighbor who lost his job to have you show up and pay his mortgage? His power bill? With groceries for his family?
- l. Think he'd care more about what you care about? I do, and that's exactly what Jesus is saying.
- m. See money as a resource. Use it for kingdom purposes. Invest in the salvation of others.

## **2. Money is a revealer of our character**

- a. I can hear some of you, and you're probably not much different than the disciples were.
- b. "Great idea, Jesus. I'll get on that just as soon as I have some money to use as a resource."
- c. So Jesus basically says, "Do now what you think you'll do then."
- d. Jesus knew the second truth, that money is a revealer of our character

- e. Saying we'll do amazing acts of generosity with future money that we don't have when we're not even doing simple acts of generosity with current money that we do have is like saying we'll go to another country and witness for Jesus when we never open our mouths here.
- f. It's insanity, and Jesus pressed in hard on it when he reminded the disciples in verse 12 that they weren't even stewarding their own money. They were handling GOD'S money, and if they couldn't do that faithfully, then they were never going to be faithful with true, eternal riches like the salvation of others, the discipleship of others, the renewing and rebuilding of a city.
- g. Money is entry-level, and it reveals whether or not we have the character for higher levels.

### 3. Money is a robber of our passion

- a. If you're like me, this makes you wonder why more people don't move past the entry-level to the greater things of the kingdom, and Jesus explains the bombshell truth: it's impossible to be half in either way, and when we realize this, we begin to see that money is a robber of our passion.
- b. In verse 13, Jesus is super clear: as your love for one goes up, your love for the other will go down.
- c. Love God, love money less. Love money, love God less.
- d. It's not because God is against money - He isn't. He's against you and me trusting money instead of Him.
- e. In Matthew 6:21, Jesus explained it this way: where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
- f. Our money and our passion is connected, so if your passion is God and His kingdom, then your money will follow.
- g. Luke (who is a doctor, so he's not just throwing words around randomly) made sure to explain to us in verse 14 not only that the Pharisees struggled with this, but why: "who loved money."
- h. **We'll never use our money to build an eternal kingdom if we're not passionate about an eternal King.**

#### The Landing

As we land this, let's work backwards through the truths:

If we're passionate about Jesus, we'll steward faithfully what He's entrusted us with, and we'll use it to resource the Kingdom so that others will benefit eternally as a result.

The end result would be a church full of people who have won people over through their generosity, not necessarily to salvation, but to a place where they would listen to us tell them about the great love Jesus has for them.

Imagine it like this: what would happen if a downtown business that was an instrumental part of our city suddenly had to close because of a financial crisis, but because we had stewarded well our money here at The Gathering, we were able to take care of that crisis and the business stayed open and continued to bless the city? Do you think people might want to know more about why we would do that? I do.

How do we accomplish this? Malachi 3:10 - build up the storehouse so we're always ready to be a blessing

**If you follow the money trail, you'll eventually find your heart.**

So, start where you are giving what you can to the things that you want to be passionate about

Let's pray.