

Devoting My Treasures

Message 03 of 04 in the series: "Devoted 2022"

A. God wants us to treasure a relationship with Him more than anything else.

"... Beware! Guard against every kind of greed. **Life is not measured by how much you own.**' Then he told them a story: 'A rich man had a fertile farm that produced fine crops. He said to himself, "What should I do? I don't have room for all my crops." Then he said, "I know! I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I'll have room enough to store all my wheat and other goods. And I'll sit back and say to myself, 'My friend, you have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Eat, drink, and be merry!'" But God said to him, "You fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get everything you worked for?"' **Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God.**"

Luke 12:15-21 (NLT)

1. We must trust God, not money, to give us security, pleasure, identity, contentment, etc.

- Money is unreliable. "Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life."
1 Timothy 6:17-19 (NLT)
- Money won't satisfy. "Those who love money will never have enough. How meaningless to think that wealth brings true happiness! The more you have, the more people come to help you spend it. So what good is wealth—except perhaps to watch it slip through your fingers!"
Ecclesiastes 5:10-11 (NLT)
- The love of money always leads to sin, pain, and heartache. "For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows." 1 Timothy 6:10 (NLT)

2. Money is a wonderful tool, but a terrible God.

"No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.**' The Pharisees, who dearly loved their money, heard all this and scoffed at him. Then he said to them, 'You like to appear righteous in public, but God knows your hearts. **What this world honors is detestable in the sight of God.**'" Luke 16:13-15 (NLT)

B. After God saved us, He left us here so we can share the Good News about Jesus and show our friends and neighbors how people with transformed minds devote their treasure to serving God.

"You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. **All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature...** God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. **He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.**"

Ephesians 2:2-3a & 8-10 (NLT)

1. Devoted people are generous givers, not hoarders.

"Don't hoard treasure down here where it gets eaten by moths and corroded by rust or—worse!—stolen by burglars. Stockpile treasure in heaven, where it's safe from moth and rust and burglars. It's obvious, isn't it? **The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being.**" Matthew 6:19-21 (MSG)

"For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.' And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others... he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you."

2 Corinthians 9:7b-8 & 10b (NLT)

2. Devoted people are faithful stewards of the money and resources God has entrusted to them.

“... the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip. He called together his servants and entrusted his money to them while he was gone. He gave five bags of silver to one, two bags of silver to another, and one bag of silver to the last—**dividing it in proportion to their abilities**. He then left on his trip. The servant who received the five bags of silver began to invest the money and earned five more. The servant with two bags of silver also went to work and earned two more. But the servant who received the one bag of silver dug a hole in the ground and hid the master's money. After a long time their master returned from his trip and called them to give an account of how they had used his money. The servant to whom he had entrusted the five bags of silver came forward with five more and said, ‘Master, you gave me five bags of silver to invest, and I have earned five more.’ The master was full of praise. **‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’** The servant who had received the two bags of silver came forward and said, ‘Master, you gave me two bags of silver to invest, and I have earned two more.’ The master said, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’ Then the servant with the one bag of silver came and said, ‘Master, I knew you were a harsh man, harvesting crops you didn’t plant and gathering crops you didn’t cultivate. I was afraid I would lose your money, so I hid it in the earth. Look, here is your money back.’ But the master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy servant! If you knew I harvested crops I didn’t plant and gathered crops I didn’t cultivate, why didn’t you deposit my money in the bank? At least I could have gotten some interest on it.’ Then he ordered, ‘Take the money from this servant, and give it to the one with the ten bags of silver. **To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away.** Now throw this useless servant into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’” Matthew 25:14-30 (NLT)

3. Devoted people trust God to provide all they need.

“Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.” Proverbs 3:9-10 (NIV)

“Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.” Matthew 6:33 (NLT)

C. As a church, we are devoted to combining our resources to increase our effectiveness in ministry and to helping each other grow in generosity.

“Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God. So two good things will result from this ministry of giving—the needs of the believers in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God.”

2 Corinthians 9:11-12 (NLT)

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.” Hebrews 10:24 (NIV)

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Connect Group Questions:

1. How do you feel about giving financially to the church and/or other Christian ministries? Why do you think some people believe it's wrong to talk about money in church?
2. Discuss the following statements about money. Which of them can you verify from personal experience?
 - Money is unreliable. (1 Timothy 6:17-19)
 - Money won't satisfy. (Ecclesiastes 5:10-11)
 - The love of money always leads to sin, pain, and heartache. (1 Timothy 6:10)
 - Money is a wonderful tool, but a terrible God. (Luke 16:13-15)

3. What do the following passages teach us about generosity and giving?
 - Matthew 6:19-21 & 33
 - 2 Corinthians 9:6-12
 - Luke 12:15-21
 - Luke 21:1-4
4. Read Matthew 25:14-30 & Luke 12:15. What can we learn from these passages about being good managers of God's treasures? How can our church help people become better money managers?
5. Discuss the "Treasure" section of the Centerpoint Devoted Steps card. How would you like to grow in serving the Lord with your treasures in 2023?
6. Spend some time praying as a group for our church. Ask God to help us become a church devoted to using the treasures He has given us to bring people to Christ, to disciple people to spiritual maturity, and to serve others. Ask God to spur every one of us on to generosity and joyful giving.
(Hebrews 10:24, Ephesians 2:1-10)