

## What's Mine is Mine?

by Chris Famisaran

All right. Good morning, everybody. All right. Well, we've had a baptism. And, Nancy, I have a question for you. Would you like to join the Downey church? All right. Is there a motion to accept Nancy into the Downey SDA church? Is there a second? Oh, all right. All those in favor, please say amen. Is anybody dare to say nay? All right, well, welcome so much. Here is a certificate of baptism. You've been baptized into the Downey SDA church. And as well, we have small gift, something that you can be able to take with you everywhere you go. And as well, read it well. Alright, that's it. Thank you. Amen. I know during times right now, where it is as well. So everybody, if you get a chance, please say hi to Nancy. I'll be it as well. We're still kind of coming out of COVID. So use good judgment. All right.

Let's begin with prayer. Father, we thank you for another opportunity to dive into the word and especially as we're going to close out our series on stewardship. Be with us as we look at the last part of the resources and the monies and everything that you bless us with. In Jesus name, amen.

So, I read this story, this this week of a gentleman I think is a pastor by the name of Mike Herman. And many, many years ago, he was at batting practice. And for 28 years of his life, he wanted to do one thing that was to catch a baseball in the stands, he didn't care if it was a foul ball, it was a home run or that it hit the ground and then popped over the fence. Even if somebody threw a ball to him. He didn't care. Now, as he was sitting he was watching. Mark McGwire should tell you how old this story is. There was a young man by the name of James sitting next to him. And they struck up a conversation. And little James who was about five or six years old also had the same dream and desire to be able to get one of those coveted baseballs. And fortunately enough, they were sitting basically almost right down at the lower seats almost where you could almost touch the ground. And he would call out to the players Mark or Mike. They would turn. They'd smile at him they wave. But they denied his request to get a baseball. Until finally, one of the batters hits the ball. They're watching Mike is tracking James is definitely tracking and all of a sudden it lands directly onto Mike, he catches the baseball. Now, in his conversation with James, he made it his mission if he would catch a baseball, he would give it to James. And not five minutes later after James shared his desire to get a baseball Mike catches this baseball. He looks at James and he says here you go. Beautiful story.

You know sometimes wonder how often God waits to give us something into our ready and willing to give it away. Ben Carson, famous doctor, said happiness doesn't result from what we get, but from what we give. Happiness doesn't result from what we get from what we give true or false. Is it better to receive or is it better to give? Now we're supposed to say to give right? Let's be honest, sometimes it's really nice to get stuff too, right? But maybe as a parent, you know, you were able to give your child something or you saw somebody struggling or maybe maybe somebody needed a jacket. Somebody needed a chair, whatever it may be. There's truth in the idea of it is better to give, than to receive. Truly,

I think it's something that we as disciples of Christ is something that we should strive for. Now, let's go to Scripture. Let's go to Psalm 24. Psalm 24. Pull out your Bibles. There may be a Bible in front of you in the pew. If you don't have a Bible, go ahead and pull out your tablet or your phone. Let's go to Psalm 24.

442, okay, the Pew Bibles 442 page 442. Thank you, Gustavo. I took note of that last week Bill did that. And then I realized, Oh, I should do that too. And I forgot to do that this week. I'm sorry. So I'll make a mental note. All right, we all there? All right. The earth is the Lord's and what? Everything in it the world and all who lived in it, for he founded it on the seas and established it on the water. So everything that is here in this universe, where does it come from? It comes from God. All right, God founded it God created, all the materials that are being used comes from God. And then it goes on, say, who may ascend the mountain of the Lord, who may stand in his holy place? Is it possible to stand above God? Absolutely not. The one who has clean hands and a pure heart who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god, they will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God, their savior and especially now this this last verse, verse six, such as a generation of those who seek Him who seek your face, God of Jacob. Now the writer, David, he uses the God of Jacob, he's looking back, because when looking back as a good Jewish believer, you take strength and stock from what happened in the past, the God of Jacob and God of Jacob, there is strength, there is trust, there is reliability. And what does last verse especially deal with that have faith? Do you place your faith and trust completely, with everything in it to God? The place that you came from this morning, the home that you came, the car that you drove, or the clothes that you're wearing right now? Where do they come from? God's blessings. Right?

Now, we also know God created the heavens and the earth. In fact, let's go to Genesis one. Genesis one, verse 26, through 30. Genesis 1:26, through 30. Six days, God creates the heavens in the earth and everything in it, and on the last day he rests, but on day six, he does something different.

All right. We all there? okay, in verse 26, God said, Let us make mankind in our what? our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea, and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all of the wild animals and over all the creatures that move from the ground. So God created mankind in His own image and the image He created them, male and female, he created them, God bless them, and said to them, Be fruitful, and increase in number, fill the earth. And what does it say here? subdue it, rule over the fish in the sea, and the birds in the sky and every living creature that moves on the ground. And then God said, I give you every seed bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit and seed in it, they will be yours for food, and to all the beasts of the earth, and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground. everything that has breath of life in it. I give every green plant for food. And it was so. Now in this one passage, there's a lot that we can unpack. First up, God creates man in God's image. But not only does God create Adam and Eve, but he essentially gives them responsibility to care for all that God had created. Can you imagine being Adam and Eve and having that responsibility of overseeing all of the livestock on Earth, all of the birds and the fish, caring for it. Here we see, Adam and Eve are the first stewards of what God has blessed them with. And God also blessed has blessed them abundantly, He blessed them with food, they have companionship with each other. And ultimately, as you find that they would get together with God. All

of this they were blessed with. And I think that this is an important lesson that we can take, as well that in our lives, what does God blessed you with? What has God blessed you to not only take care of and manage, but now, how can we pay it forward?

You know, one of the things that I think we're challenged by is we're inundated with the idea of we should have this or we should have that. Trying to keep up with the Joneses. Never heard that term before. Right? And sometimes, we think, the life that I'm living, am I living it for me? Am I trying to keep up with people? Or concepts and ideas that, frankly, is it driving me crazy and miserable? Or can I be happy? Do I have to have the Mercedes? Do I have to have what's a really nice car that you want? A Maserati. Okay. See more alpha males as well. And this past week than I have in a long time, random, I don't know why. But on the 5, they've been out there, right? Nice homes. But yet, I believe that God has called us as well to be able to live within our means as faithful stewards, we should live within our means now. Michael Kitsis, I hope I said his name right. He wrote an article A while back and he said, try to live within your means is a staple of prudent financial advice, recognizing that not everyone earns the same amount of income or means, and therefore not everyone can afford to spend the same prescribes that rather than just trying to keep up with the Joneses and their lifestyle spending, you should live within your means. Now, we live in a very interesting climate where or an area where I think it's safe to say that costs of living is much higher in LA, amen. I was looking at houses in other parts of the country. Man, it's a lot cheaper to buy a house in even Arizona or Oklahoma. Montana, surprisingly cost a little bit more than I expected. But you think it's so cold, but no.

You can move somewhere across the country. You can buy a nice three bedroom two bath between two and \$300,000. How much is it a house that's two or 300 bedroom, two to three bedrooms with a two car garage costs in LA County how much roughly? 7-800K. Right, that's maybe a third to half. And you're not having to pay exorbitant gas prices, Texas, you know how much their gas costs less than take \$1 off for every gallon, if not more. And I have to tell you, when I first became a pastor, and when Lisa and I got married, we basically just lived on my income because she hadn't become a dental hygienist at that point. And I remember that first first year of marriage where we were able to take care of all of our our bills, loans, we were able to take a couple of vacations not extravagant when we go across the world. But we also we celebrated our anniversary and and we took a few small trips. The amount of money back then that was roughly 2007 to now 2021 It seems man dollar has just gone down. And it seems like every year it keeps getting more difficult. So inflation does happen. Now he shares. He shares an article of where there is this couple, they make half \$1,000,000, \$500,000. They have a home that costs \$1.5 million. They she drives a BMW Series. Yeah, five series. He drives the Land Cruiser. And they take three vacations a year. I don't know if it was \$6,000 total or \$6,000 per vacation. I mean, saying they spent \$6,000 per vacation. So let's just say 13,000 \$18,000. Man, I can't do math today. Now a BMW five series, how much does that go for? 60 ish. A Land Cruiser which wow... That's awesome. Right? That's about \$85K. So that's a lot of money. Right? But do they need to have a Land Cruiser? Do they need to have a BMW? No. New York though New York City? Do they have to live in a \$1.5 million mansion. They don't have to. Now I'm not Pooh poohing the idea of it's a, it's not bad to have money. Like you look through Scripture, you'll find that there were many wealthy people, Abraham, of all people was very, very wealthy. So the idea of wealth is not necessarily bad. But how you live your life. And what you do

with your wealth can certainly mean a lot. Because ultimately, you're going to place value in what you buy, and how you spend your money is going to reflect your values. So they felt though with all of this money, they were living paycheck to paycheck. And I think that now, especially with this pandemic that we've experienced, is it fair to say that we've learned what's necessary? Right, number one, just breathing and being alive. That's a win. Amen. I'm not gonna lie like some of our brothers and sisters, there have been moments where we've had to pray hard. And we're grateful that they are still here. Having family community, I don't take this for granted being here. Amen. Even the last couple of weeks when they said, Hey, you got to start wearing masks, and the Delta variant is rising up. I don't take this for granted, because it could be taken away. And when it comes to fiscal responsibility, it's also important that we be able to manage what God has blessed us with, to live within our means to be good stewards with the money that God has blessed us with. And as if we become fiscally responsible. The other thing is, as faithful stewards we can share the blessing with others, there's a lot of people struggling. Or maybe you have a friend or a family member, their child needs braces, man, it and you don't realize how much braces costs. I wore braces as a kid. And I had no idea how much my mom and dad spent on my braces, All I knew is I had to get up and go to Moreno Valley every month to make sure that we get adjusted. And now, you know, after you wear braces, what are you supposed to wear? a retainer, right? Being a good steward, I should have worn my retainer. Now after a few years, you get lackadaisical or maybe you just lose your retainer. And now, my teeth started to kind of go a little crooked. And I could tell and then now that I would be on camera every once in a while I could see it. I'm not gonna lie, I got a little self conscious. And I realized, you know, I want my teeth to be straight. So last month, I went and got braces. Just my bottom teeth. You probably can't see that. But if I'd been a good steward, with all of the money that my mom and dad had spent and worned my retainer would not have done this again, right. Now, fortunately enough. It wasn't as expensive as I thought it would be. But when I looked at the bill, it's like, oh, that's a lot of money. But yet, by God's grace, and also, how shall I say it's nice to be married to a hygenist, I'm not gonna lie. Ended up being not as much, but was a good steward with my parents money. Personally, I wasn't. Because if I'd been faithful and kept wearing my retainer, I wouldn't have wasted the good hard earned money. And that's something that as I was thinking about this last week, man, I really regret so Mom and Dad, you're probably watching. My mom and dad text me in the morning randomly sometimes. And they're going to be saying that, you know, I'm watching you, I'm sorry, I didn't take good care of my teeth after my braces.

So it's important that we're also able to take good care of the finances and things that God blesses us with. But also, to be able to be a blessing to others, does it? I don't know who said it. But I learned to give not because I have much, but because I know exactly how it feels to have nothing. And maybe for some of you, when you first started out, you have maybe a couple of cents to your name, maybe you didn't even have anything. Maybe you had a credit card, definitely not the way to start life out on your own right. Or maybe you were in college, maybe you had \$2.34 in your bank account, hoping and praying, how am I going to be able to pay off the tuition. At some point, a lot of us have experienced what it's like, and maybe you're experiencing that right now. And I just pray that God, number one, God will be faithful, be faithful. But when you have the opportunity, when you have been blessed, and when God blesses you, remember to pay it forward, to be able to relieve the burden, that money can sometimes bring, again, be faithful and responsible with the finances that God blesses you with. If you don't know how to do a budget, anybody who knows how to do a budget, maybe tell me and we can, we

can get you connected together, we want you to be fiscally responsible. Or you can go to a Dave Ramsey seminar, whatever it may be, know where your money goes. And especially in today's climate is so easy to just go to in and out, or wherever you money just seems your wallet seems to get thinner a lot faster. Amen. So be able to pay it forward.

And the other thing is as faithful stewards we can support the gospel ministry in whether it's here in the church, or, you know, doing outreach, and being able to keep these lights on, and the nice, comfortable air conditioning. It was a hot one this week, right? And especially the last couple of weeks, I don't know if it's going to be hot next week. But whoever created air conditioning, thank you. And because of that person's, you know, gift that they gave to the world, we're able to be able to use it, but it doesn't come free. The lights, they all cost money, being able to do ministry, although God blesses it, we also have to do our part to be able to give. Now when it comes to, you know where in Scripture, does it talk about that?

Well, there are some examples of tithe in Scripture in Genesis 14, of actually let's go to let's go to Genesis 14. Genesis 14:19, through 20. Abram as he was known at the time before Abraham had a visitor, a priest by the name of Melchizedek okay. believe this was shortly after Abraham rescued his nephew. And it says "And he blessed him and said,

"Blessed be Abram by God Most High,

Possessor of heaven and earth;

20 and blessed be God Most High,

who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" sorry, and so in verse 21 . The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people and keep the goods for yourself."

22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "With raised hand I have sworn an oath to the Lord, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, 23 that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the strap of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, 'I made Abram rich.' 24 I will accept nothing but what my men have eaten and the share that belongs to the men who went with me—to Aner, Eshkol and Mamre. Let them have their share." he says, then Abram gave a 10th of everything. So this is the first mention of although does isn't called tithe, but the idea of Abraham gave God a tenth.

There's also in Genesis 28. Let's go to Genesis 28. A few passages over where we find Jacob. Now, does anybody not know the story of Jacob? Jacob had a brother named Esau. And the short version is, Jacob stole Esau's his birthright. Right? So there was a little hard feelings there. And so Jacob, at some point, he leaves, and he had has a dream that God comes to him in a dream. And after this dream, or in the dream, God promises that he will never basically leave or forsake Him. And so out of this story, Jacob

has this feeling of gratitude. And so he makes a vow to God. He says in verse 20, of chapter 28, it says, 20 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear 21 so that I return safely to my father's household, then the Lord[f] will be my God 22 and[g] this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth." So in Genesis, there are two instances where both Abraham and Jacob give a 10th and Leviticus. Now, this is a little more what would you call creating a system here in Leviticus, Moses now, Leviticus 27, verses 30 through 34. I hear pages still going.

Here we have this idea now of specifically of tithing being introduced, a tithing of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees belongs to the Lord. 30 "A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord. 31 Whoever would redeem any of their tithe must add a fifth of the value to it. 32 Every tithe of the herd and flock—every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd's rod—will be holy to the Lord. 33 No one may pick out the good from the bad or make any substitution. If anyone does make a substitution, both the animal and its substitute become holy and cannot be redeemed."

34 These are the commands the Lord gave Moses at Mount Sinai for the Israelites.

So this is something that even God now is instituting. Then finally, let's go to the last one and Malachi 3, verse 10, Malachi 3, verse 10. Bring the whole tithing into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And then Lord says something, sorry, I hear pages.

Alright, let's just start over, okay. 10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it." Now, there's a lot to be said about this particular verse, but here it seems, bring in a 10th of all that God has blessed you with. And based on some of these scriptures, there are other scriptures that we could look at. But if we were to look at all of them and take a long time... we bring a 10th to be able to support the work of the church in terms of the ministry. And so practically, what does that happen? You give a 10th and tie that 10th that 10% does not actually stay here, it actually goes to the conference, which is technically my employer, okay. And so that money that 10th is used to pay all the pastors in the Southern California conference. Some of you were asking what's the Southern California conference? Well, Southern California conference starts in Claremont goes all the way to Long Beach, all the way up to Santa Barbara, to Tehachapi, and Ridgecrest. That's a pretty good size area, right? LA County, Ventura, Santa Barbara counties. And it helps to support the work of the church. Now, there's other entities that eventually goes up to the union division and General Conference. But practically, that also helps to pay for all of our teachers, for instance, we are connected to AUS and San Gabriel Academy, that tithe helps to be able to pay the pastors, the staff, the teachers, overlooking. And then we have what's called a church budget here. We ask, Hey, would you mind giving an offering to the church budget, the church budget helps to run the basic, the basics here of water that we have for our baptism, the lights,

insurance, property taxes, you name it. And then there are various other things that if you want to give to certain ministries, for instance, we have we now have ministries of the church that we can help to fund and grow and be able to ultimately do outreach in our community, and to be able to help build up the church. So that's just kind of a premise of giving the how do we give Well, there's envelopes in front of you, but you can also give online.

Now, I've saved this particular topic for the last Sabbath, because I wanted you to see that stewardship is not just about paying tithes, and offerings. But stewardship is a whole encompassing idea of how we should live our lives. For instance, the first week, what do we talk about? time? Thank you. What it's important, how we spend our time. What are we dedicated to? Are we constantly working? are we spending time with our family and our friends? What do you hold valuable to? are we spending time with God? What are we talking about the second week? health, right? So that encompasses our well being physical, mental, emotional, spiritual. how we care for ourselves, is also going to impact how we live our lives, how we feel. And again, it you can't just focus on one, all of them are important, last week what Bill talked about. But spiritual gifts, right. And so we're all called to be here at the church, God has blessed each and every one of us with a gift or talent. Some of us maybe have a few more than others. But that's not the point. The point is that God gives us the ability to be able to go out, have a talent and share it with the world, that others may come and be drawn, and know who God is. Find God become part of this church in this movement, that they can also go out and share. And ultimately what is our end goal is to be with Jesus. Amen.

And finally, today, we've learned that it's important that we manage our resources that God blesses us with, to be able to enable all of these things take place. So I hope and pray that this series has been a blessing. We've got one more week to talk about it. And we'll come back next week. And we'll talk about the things that we learned and ultimately to be able to celebrate. And then our next series. I forgot Bill already mentioned it, but what's our next series? Nobody knows. Oh, Bill, they weren't paying attention last week. The Gospel of Matthew, we're gonna do a deep dive on the Gospel of Matthew. So we're really, really looking forward to that. So May you be blessed. God bless you. Be fruitful and serve one another. Let's pray.

Father in heaven thank you for life. Lord, thank you for new life, spiritual life, for Nancy's decision and Lord those perhaps maybe who are kind of on the fence or want to recommit their lives Lord, right now we just say if anybody wants to recommit their life, now to you in their heart, God, they are giving themselves to you and say, Lord, I want to follow you and be led by you. And Lord, if there's anybody who wants to learn more about you, Lord, give them courage to be able to step out and say, hey, I want to know more about Jesus because that is who we ultimately are. And Lord, for those who are wanting to figure out, Lord, what's my talent, I have no idea, Lord, help them to either figure it out or send them to us, and we can help them find their talent and their spiritual gift. Thank you, Lord, for the idea of stewardship. Again, may we be faithful representatives for you, and all that we do and also all that you have blessed us with. And Lord, may they know who we are, by your love In Jesus name, amen.

May God bless you and keep you. We'll see you next week.