

Pro Wealth & Poverty

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[0 : 00] So on the road that I grew up on, grew up on, grew up on, grew up on. And once a year on a Saturday morning about now, a huge trader, two huge traders would come up on the road very early on Saturday morning and they would make a massive delivery onto the driveway of the person who lived opposite us.

Malcolm and Linda. And it completely blocked their drive. It was a huge pile that was rich and warm and steaming. And truth be told it was very, very smelly. It was far more on manure.

And every year, Malcolm would order it and the three houses on the street that were really into gardening would spend the morning going backwards and forwards with their wheelbarrows. And they would take the manure down the sides of their houses into their back end so that it could be spread around the garden. Now the message of the servant tonight is a bit like that. Alright? If we'd left that manure in one place, in Malcolm and Linda's front drive, it would have had great consequences.

It would have stopped people getting into Malcolm and Linda's house. It would have blocked Malcolm and Linda off completely. It would have made them very unpopular on the street because the whole street would have stank and it would have done no good at all.

[1 : 32] But taken into the back gardens of our street, spread around, well, come August, come September, fruit trees, fruit bushes, roses, vegetable gardens.

All of which, the people on my street, they put a great deal of effort into. And they were able to produce wonderful things. Wonderful things that were shared with other people.

And that's what we're thinking about tonight. We're thinking about money. Now I don't need to give you a clever introduction. Because we know the relevance of money, don't we? We know it.

But I think it can be hard at a breakthrough some of your expectations. That when you think that the preacher is going to be talking about money, I'm sure that you're expecting me to say that all Christians should at least tithe.

Tithe is a biblical word for giving at least 10% of your income. And you are exactly right. I do think virtually all Christians should tithe in a couple of caveats. I really do. But that is not the only thing that I'm going to say.

[2 : 34] Some of you here may be expecting me to say money is an evil thing and we should concentrate on the life of the Spirit. Money is sort of beneath us. Because it's evil. And you're expecting that maybe you're going to go away feeling guilty for having money.

And for not giving every single bit of it away. Well I don't think that's what we're doing either. The book of Proverbs has a great deal to say about money. And it is a book about wisdom.

It is a book about wisdom, isn't it? In all the practicalities of life and the details of life. And Proverbs relates to the themes of life. To God.

To life itself. To death. To life's meaning and its purpose. And because money is a big part of life in our society. And it was a big part of life for the society in which Proverbs has written.

There's a lot of talk about it in the book of Proverbs. Now one of the striking things about Proverbs is its balance. It's so balanced. And Proverbs is subtle.

[3 : 37] And Proverbs is real. And you cannot sum up the teaching of Proverbs in any one Proverbs. It's too much. When you think about the Proverbs thinking of money.

You can't sum it up in one purpose statement really. It's too complex a theme to be able to do that. And so what I think it does.

Is I think it connects in lots of ways. With wealth. And with poverty. And with God. And that's what we're going to try and look at tonight. Wealth and poverty. So firstly.

If you look at. I've done an outline. An outline I think is for lazy preachers. Who can't make their points valuable. And memorable. Alright. But I know there's lots of people disagreeing with me on that. But I do think points should be memorable.

And by now tonight. So you've got to. You've got to now look at this. You can live in the first one. In the book of Proverbs. Wealth. Is seen as being connected with God.

[4 : 33] And with hard work. Wealth is seen as being connected with God. And with hard work. So all the passages that I'm going to refer to tonight. I hope are on this sheet on the right hand side.

I just thought if we were flicking back and forth. We'd be here all night. So look at chapter 10. Verse 22. The blessing of the Lord. Makes rich.

Or the blessing of the Lord. Brings wealth. The blessing of the Lord. Makes rich. And then there's this troubling bit. Isn't it? And he adds no sorrow to it. You see money is not seen in the book of Proverbs.

As being evil. Inherently evil. Or bad. And that is because in the Bible. As a whole. Money is not seen as being inherently bad. Or evil either. We know don't we.

The book of Genesis. The book of Genesis teaches us about the goodness of the material world. And the universe which God has created. The goodness of creation. God created it all.

[5 : 32] And he saw that it was good. It was good. It was good. It was good. And that goodness included the gold in the ground. Genesis 2. There's a reference to it there. There are two references to gold in the ground there.

All in the context of an instruction given to the first man and woman. To rule over the world. And to see its potential. And to develop its potential.

Ruling it for God. And that included getting gold out of the ground. And doing something with it. The Bible does not see money and possessions.

Gold, silver. Other means of exchange. Copper. Those kind of copper markets. All those markets in the city. It doesn't see those things as inherently bad.

It doesn't. And in many ways. It connects those things. With the goodness and the generosity of God. The God who has thoroughly given us all things to enjoy.

[6 : 33] The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. And God has put us in this world to develop it. To harness its potential. To bring it out of the ground. To bring out the human potential.

That we all have. The second line of that promise. Chapter 10 verse 22 says. He adds no sorrow with it. Now wealth can bring trouble. Can't it?

But if you are in contact with God. If you are fearing the Lord. There are ways to avoid it. Now it's important that we see this as the starting point tonight.

Wealth is a blessing from the Lord. It is part of his goodness and his generosity to us. And just as an implication. Let me say this. Those who are involved in wealth creation in our society.

Have a very, very important role. And we should own them. And we should typify them properly. So sometimes the rhetoric, isn't it?

[7 : 32] About people who are involved in wealth creation. Just think of what people think of us about bankers. It can be entirely negative. And we fail to appreciate what they do.

In creating wealth. So that it can be shared. So that it can be spread to others. But the other thing we see. That as well as work being connected with God.

And his blessing. And his gift. We see wealth is created with hard work. Wealth is connected with God. And his blessing and his gift. But wealth is also connected with hard work. So look at chapter 10 verse 4.

A slack hand. Think of that. A slack hand. Causes poverty. But the hand of the diligent makes rich. Now at this point we need to remember something. Don't we? We need to remember what we saw in the first week of the book of Proverbs. That these are not absolute universal truths. They are generalized truths.

[8 : 33] They are about how the world normally works. How the world often works. It's not saying this is true in absolutely every instance.

It is an observation about how life generally is. But the observation is this. The diligent hand brings wealth. The working hard in a sustained way over a period of time is how wealth comes for someone.

Now that doesn't mean invariably and automatically. It follows hard work. There are exceptions, aren't there? And Proverbs acknowledges those. But in the world that God has made, there are

general laws.

You reap what you sow. If you work, you generally will get something for it. If you don't work, you generally won't. And implicit here is an understanding of wealth.

And what we need to get by in life. Which says to us this. It says we all have a responsibility to work. You know this kind of life of leisure?

[9 : 44] This life of leisure that we aspire to. It's really a kind of upper class British ideal. But it is sub-biblical. It really is.

Each of us has a responsibility to work. Each of us has a responsibility to spend the very best part of our working week.

Either working in the home or some sort of paid employment out of it. There is a dignity. And there is a rightness about that, isn't it?

It's why, in our studies, it's so important that you can get there. That we look as a church at this topic of work. This book by Tim Keller. Every Good Endeavour. By connecting your work to God's plans for the work.

It's a really excellent book. Many of you are in the workplace. Many of you are not. But it's a really, really excellent book. On connecting your work to the gospel. I really recommend it.

[10 : 43] We've got a number of copies. But there is a dignity and a rightness about work. Work is affected by the fall. It is difficult, isn't it? It is frustrating.

And all the rest of it. But the responsibility to work remains. We are made to work six days a week. Most of us work five. But some of us may need to hear that.

Because we aspire to, don't we? That old-fashioned kind of life of leisure. Kind of full-time holidays. But that is a sub-biblical idea.

In fact, I would all say this is true. And maybe tonight, if you are bored in your job. Or you wish that you didn't have to work.

I want to say this to you as gently as I can. Biblically, you have a responsibility to work. And to work hard. But then look at the other proverb.

[11 : 43] The other proverb's proverb. So that takes us into our second point. If hard work is connected to God and his blessing. And wealth is created. Is connected to God and his blessing.

And with hard work, poverty is connected with foolishness. But also with injustice. So John 10 verse 4 takes you in that direction. Look at John 10 verse 4.

A slack hand, lazy hand, make for poverty. And immediately we're in a different area. We're thinking about poverty. And where that comes from. Now there are two kind of extremes, aren't there?

At the political level and the personal level. So you might get somebody. Person number one comes in and says. Well, poverty is a result of people being lazy.

Poverty. And that's why people are poor. They wouldn't shine. And they avoid work. Then there are others, aren't there? Who tend to be more sympathetic to the poor.

[12 : 41] And they see poverty as kind of external oppression. Or deprivation. Poor circumstances. Even injustice. And the book of Proverbs, like the rest of the Bible.

Is marvellously balanced. Because it shows us that poverty. Is connected with both foolishness. And with injustice. So just look at chapter 10 verse 4.

Lazy hands make for poverty. Says the Proverbs. But diligent hands brings wealth. People who won't work.

Are very unlikely to earn a decent wage. People who are lazy in their jobs. Are unlikely to be sustained. In their jobs.

People who are lazy in their jobs. Are unlikely to get new ones. With references from their current bosses. Slack hands. Not working hard. Not applying oneself in work.

[13 : 41] Is a sure route to poverty. And its challenges. People who would like to get rich. But don't want to work. And have fantasies about that.

That's one of the reasons. Why we have. Why I have. Huge issues with the National Lottery. Why do we have such issues with the National Lottery?

If you ask. Why don't you buy lottery tickets. For the church building project. It's a very good question. Well the reason why we're against the lottery. Is this. Because it encourages largely poor people.

To play the game. Doesn't it? With the most excruciating. Awful odds. You know what the odds are? 14 million to one. You've got more chance.

Of having a heart attack. By the end of this sermon. Than winning the lottery. You've got more chance. Of being struck by lightning. On the way home. Than winning the lottery. And yet it holds before people.

[14 : 40] Doesn't it? The illusion. Of a get rich quick thing. You know that bloke this week. Was it just. Just so. And it's so sad. This man who won the lottery.

And he said to his mate. I'm going to win it in the afternoon. And then he won it that night. And all over the newspapers. I'd love to have an interview with that man. In five years time.

And so a whole group of people. Spend the next day daydreaming. Buying their tickets. Hoping that they may win. It holds before people. This illusion. And it is an illusion.

Of Gingrich Crick. Now inevitably. In every culture. In every culture. There are people who work shy. And who are lazy. In every culture.

In every culture. There are people who want something for nothing. But Proverbs says this. A slack hand causes poverty. But Proverbs is so helpful.

[15 : 38] Because when you look at Proverbs. And when you read it. And when it gets into your bloodstream. Proverbs tells you. That isn't the only. That isn't the only cause for poverty. And we must be very very careful.

That we don't stigmatise poor people. As if it were. The poor you must be lazy. Get a job. So look at chapter 13. In verse 23. The fallow ground of the poor.

Would yield much food. But it's swept away through injustice. In other words. Somebody may be working hard. But may fail to get the results of their labours.

Because of injustice. And I thought of examples. But I'm not going to give them. Because you can think of examples. Can't you? There are scenarios. Where this is true. Where fair wages are not paid.

And people are exploited. And all sorts of possibilities. And all sorts of external factors. Reduce people to poverty. You don't have to go very far from this church.

[16 : 40] To see that. I read in preparation for Suman. That one of the big reasons. Why people are kept in poverty. In South America. Is because of lack of poverty.

The lack of proper property rights. And all they were saying. Yes. The actions of that kind of legal framework. Makes it very very difficult.

It makes it very difficult. For people to bring themselves out of poverty. They can't do it. And they can be exploited. So easily. By landlords.

By state agents. And it may well be the case. Where governments fail. To provide the basic means. To get on in life. Such as health.

And education. And other kinds of resources. People are stuck. And there's injustice there. And that needs to be corrected. One commentator says.

[17 : 37] Poverty. Poverty. Is often. Very simply. The outworking. Of ungodly. Worldviews. It's very helpful. Poverty. Is often.

Very simply. The outworking. Of ungodly. Worldviews. And we must be. Must be aware. Of making a simplistic. Connection.

Between poverty. And foolishness. As if it was the only. Explanation. For wise people. Do not deny the connection. Completely.

Equally. We must be. We must avoid. Making a simplistic. Connection. Between poverty. And injustice. As if that was the only reason. If only the government. Would get it right on this. Well that will raise.

The level of poverty. Well no it won't. But wise people. Don't deny that connection. Either. And they seem to do. Something about it. Once again.

[18 : 33] We see problems. So balanced. So let's move on. Move on to a very important theme. In Proverbs. And that is. Point three. Wealth and poverty. Are both dangerous.

They are both dangerous. Chapter 10. Verse 15. A rich man's wealth. Is his strong city. The poverty of the poor.

Is their ruin. In other words. Wealth for rich people. Is the equivalent. Is living in a city. With high walls around it. Or bandits. And robbers. Can't get it. It provides security.

Against threat. And the implication. Of the second half verse. Of the verse. Is this. If you don't have that. What you do have.

Gets ruined. So how does this apply. Right. Try to think about. How it applies. Try to think about. Your life. A computer seizes.

[19 : 34] And then crashes. A water pipe. Burst. In your home. Your bike is stolen. And you lose your job.

If you're wealthy. You've got some money. If you're wealthy. You probably pay for insurance. And that will pay up too. And so those sorts of things.

They are a nuisance. Aren't they? They are a pain in the neck. But you can cope. You can get by. Wealth provides protection. Doesn't it there?

But if you're poor. Your life is very precarious. So the bursting of one water pipe.

Can ruin your life. You lose your job. And this may be you. You can pay your rent. For maybe one. Or two months. But then you can't.

[20 : 34] Poverty. You see. Can be ruinous for life. Can it? It can ruin lives. There's an inherent. Vulnerability. About being poor. And I think it's very hard.

For me to project myself. Into that kind of mindset. I struggle with that. It's 20 years. Isn't it? This weekend. Since Britpop. So.

Joe Wynand. Steve the Mac. Terry. I've got three heads. Joe Wynand. Steve the Mac. I've got a special program. I've got a radio. There you go. And Britpop. Have you been in Pulp? Pulp are kind of heroes.

Of life. In the mid-1990s. Jarvis Cocker. So I'll have a touch. Well. Jarvis Cocker. Regis music. It's very. Very interesting. And it's most famous song. It's the song. Common People. You would know it if you heard it. And it tells you. In imaginary situations. A situation.

[21 : 30] Where somebody from a poor background. Meets. As a student. Somebody from a wealthy background. They meet in university. And the wealthy girl. Wants to come and live.

With the poor student. She wants to live. As common people. It is very. Very. Patriotizing. The song is. And it says. What it is. To experience life like that.

What it means. To be common. Common people. Listen. The Jarvis Cocker. I took her to a supermarket. I don't know why. But I had to start it somewhere. So it started here.

I said. Pretend you've got no money. But she just laughed. And said. Oh. You're so funny. I said. Yeah. But I can't see anyone else smiling here. And then he addresses her.

You will never understand. How it feels to live your life. With no meaning. Or control. And with nowhere else to go. And then he imagines. The wealthy student.

[22 : 27] Playing. At being poor. And he says this. Rent a flat. Above a shop. Cut your hair. And get a job. Smoke some fags. And play some pool.

Pretend you never went to school. But still. You'll never get it right. Because when you're laid. In bed at night. Watching roaches. Climb the wall. If you called your dad.

He could stop it all. Yeah. You'll never live. Like common people. You'll never do. What common people. Do. You'll never fail. Like common people. You'll never watch your life. Slide out of view. It is a savage. Piece of observation. And criticism. Poverty. Sees the ruin. Of the poor. And I don't think. I realize. How vulnerable.

These people are. One celebrity. Said. This. They say money. Can't bring you happiness. But I've been poor. And I've been rich. And rich is better. Now I think. The bottom of the problem.

[23 : 23] Is that agree with that. But it's also. Very very keen. For you and I. To see. That there is a danger. In the cushion of riches. That fortified city.

Can become the thing. You trust in. And it can make you feel. Secure. And it can give you. A sense of control. Controlling life. Control. Which on the one hand. Is illusory.

In the end. Is real. But on the other hand. It displaces God. It's very interesting. Compare in 1015. You see that 1015. With 1811.

1015. And 1811. The first one says this. A rich man's wealth. Is his strong city. The poverty of the poor.

Is their ruin. Chapter 18. In verse 11. A rich man's wealth. Is his strong city. Exactly the same. Is it? And like a high wall.

[24 : 24] In his imagination. Note the difference. What is 1811 saying? It is saying.

That they think. They are more secure. Than they are. They think. The walls. That they've created. For themselves. Are impregnable. That their riches. Will have insulated them.

From all the possible. Disasters of life. And actually. Actually. The book of Proverbs. Says. There are no. Unscalable walls. There are no. Unscalable walls. In money.

There are no. Unscalable walls. In investments. Chapter 11. Verse 28. Whoever trusts. In his riches. Will fall. But the righteous.

Will flourish. Like a green leaf. Whoever trusts. In his riches. Will fall. For fall. There is left.

Unscalable. But it is real. Sometimes.

[25 : 22] The housing market. Turns against someone. Sometimes. The stock market. Turns against someone. Huge wealth. Huge wealth. Can turn into a very small amount.

In six months. Can't it? Isn't it amazing? Which we thought was going to hit. The financial crisis. Banks falling.

And like. Here we are again. Where are we? Six years old. And it's boom time again. Again. Huge wealth. Can turn into a very small amount.

In six months. In all sorts of ways. Not just financially. Whoever trusts. In his riches. Will fall. There are social falls as well. Aren't there? So those people.

Who love money. So much. Who discover. That other people. Don't love them anymore. And they become isolated. And lost. I remember hearing.

[26 : 21] The story of a man. He's a student. In a university. At town. And a very well known university. He went to church. He's a Christian lad. And in his second year. He inherited.

An enormous. Legacy. And the person. Was telling me. He's told me. That suddenly. He became very. Very attractive. To the girls. In the church. That's a massive problem.

Is it? The girls weren't interested. In him. For the first year and a half. He isn't the best looking girl. By any means. But suddenly. The girls became interested.

Well. Who do you trust? And we certainly know. So many people. Don't we. Who loved money. And then they discover. That other people. Don't love them anymore.

They become isolated. And lost. In their wealth. Their humanity. Degrades. And deteriorates. You see. Riches are not absolute. Look at chapter 16. Even in verse 16. How much better.

[27 : 16] How much better. To get wisdom. Than gold. How much better. To get understanding. Glad is to be chosen. Rather than silver. It's one of those. Better proverbs.

The better proverbs. Gold. In and of itself. Is no bad thing. God put it in the ground. But to use it. Silver is a good thing. But how much better.

Is it. Than to accumulate. Vast waters. Of possessions. How much better. It is. Just to be wise. Instead. Just to be wise. Wisdom. Is understanding.

Who God is. And how life works. And that. That draws us. Into this great theme. Is it. That you see. Again and again. In the proverbs. That knowing God. Is far better. Than having all the money.

In the world. Chapter 15. Verse 16. Better is little. The fear of the Lord. Than great treasure. And trouble with it. How often.

[28 : 11] Great wealth. Brings turmoil. To people. Sir Fred Catherwood. He's a member.

Of the European. Parlor. Dr. Joseph. He wrote this. He wrote that he was. In the Ritz. One day. Having tea. And he noticed. On the next table. Was the oil billionaire. John Paul Getty.

And he wrote. I have never seen. Anyone who looked. So unhappy. His face. Etched in misery. It doesn't necessarily happen. But it happens a lot. Great wealth.

But turmoil. How much better. To be in a relationship. With the living God. And fear him. To know the maker.

Of the universe. To know him. As the one. Who blesses you. And loves you. And charities you. And draws you to himself. And to have someone. That you can totally rely on. The walls.

[29 : 07] That God puts around us. Are unscathed. And they can be trusted completely. And those who trust in him. This chapter 11.

This is for the age. Flourish like a green leaf. And that theme. Of the fear of the Lord. Being the best place to be. Is developed even further. When we come to the New Testament. 2 Corinthians 8 and 9.

For you know the grace. Of our Lord Jesus Christ. That though. He was rich. Yet for your sake. He became poor. So that you. By his poverty. Might become rich.

Our problem is not money. Our problem is not this world. Our problem is not this life. Our problem is not. That we haven't realised. All the potential. That is in us.

And in others. Our problem is. That we look at money. And we look at life. And we look at this world. And we look at our potential. And we look at others potential. And we think this.

[30 : 08] We think this. And these things. Are how I stop feeling. Empty. And insecure. And so what I do. Is I take all these things. And I'll make money.

And I'll get lots of possessions. And I bring my sadness. And my insecurity. To this world. And I say. You are my happiness. And in doing so.

I become spiritually desolated. And in spiritual rags. And we become spiritually bankrupt. And overdrawn. Because God gave you money.

And he gave us possessions. And he gave us potential. To draw our hearts to him. Because he is the giver. He is the blesser. So that we can thank him.

And we can put him. In his rightful place. But when we focus. Our hearts on it. We risk. And drink it to the team. To rags.

[31 : 06] And yet. In his grace. God sent his son. Who was rich. Beyond all splendor. To become spiritually poor. In our place. And he took upon himself.

The guilt of our greed. Do you know. Every single greedy thought. Every act. You've ever had. All the guilt. And the insult to God.

That that represents. All the tight fistedness. Towards other people. That that represents. The deprivation. To them. Of what you could have done. But you kept it to yourself.

That's a lot of guilt for me. But it has all been lifted off my shoulders. I've transferred it. To the Lord Jesus. For your sake. He became poor.

It was all laid on him. He has paid our spiritual debts. Forever and ever. So that we. Through his poverty. Might become rich. Rich in God.

[32 : 00] Rich in his righteousness. Rich forever. Through Jesus. And then there's a result of that. What does the fear. Of the Lord actually mean. That's point four. Knowing Jesus.

Frees you from tight fistedness. And from our fears. And from our self-indulgence. And it frees us up. From a life of. Moderation.

A bit dumb there. Moderation. It's a wonderful. Wonderful word. If we can understand. As a judge family. Moderation. It will change you. A lot of generosity.

Look at chapter 30. Verses 8. Well as far as I can stand. This is the only prayer. In Proverbs. Remove.

Far from me. Falsehood. And lying. Give me neither poverty. Nor riches. Feed me with the food. That is needful for me.

[33 : 02] It's very sensible. It's very balanced. It's very moderate. He doesn't want the falsehood. And the lies. He doesn't want the illusions.

And the false dreams. And that's particularly relevant. With money. Is it a dream? Oh. This. If I get this. If I get promotion. If I get this money. If I win the lottery. If I don't want that. And that distorts people's fear of money.

He just wants it to be real. And he just wants enough. And it's very hard to see it that way. Is it? But surely this is something. That we should all embrace.

The light of having a sense of being saved. From our sin. That Jesus makes this real in our lives. A life of moderation. Which we're content. We're content to be somewhere between.

Poverty and riches. We don't have too much. And deviate away from God. Or we don't have too little. And be tempted. To do sinful things to remedy.

[34 : 03] Will you pray this prayer with me? Will you surrender your life. Without conspicuous consumption. Without multiplying luxuries.

That probably will lag behind. Won't it? The other families that you know. It will lag behind. Your non-Christian friends.

Materially speaking at least. Will you pray this prayer? And then. Will you allow the generosity. Of God. To impel you. To be generous dwellers.

Look at chapter 19. And verse 18. Whoever is. Whoever is generous to the poor. Lends to the Lord. And he will repay him for his deed. Proverbs is very very big.

On generosity. Generosity to the Lord's work. But to the poor in particular. And it really sees this as a duty. Something that is expected. Of those who have much.

[34 : 59] It also sees that God. Is no man's debtor. And you cannot. You cannot. Out give God. Do all. This is going to really sacrifice.

If I give this. But you cannot out give God. Can you? And we know. From the rest of the teaching of the Bible. That giving is actually a means. It's actually a way of receiving. Far more. As Jesus said. It's far more blessed. To give than to receive. Because of what. What you receive. Not in a material way. Necessarily. But in terms of growth.

In a relationship with God. And a joy of seeing. Many. Put to good work. You may know of people. And you think. Actually. I know these people.

And I know they need help. And I know actually. Financially. It would do them good. I don't think that's always the case. But. You will know people. When you think. Actually.

[35 : 54] I want to give. Don't let your right hand. Know what your left hand is doing. But when you see it. When you do that. Lend it to the Lord. As well as giving to them. Chapter 11.

Verses 24 and 25. One gives freely. Yet grows all the richer. Another withholds what he should give. And only suffers one. Isn't that wonderful? Whoever brings blessing.

Will be rich. And none who waters. Will himself be waters. There is a gain in generous giving. There really is that. God loves the generous giving.

That word is hilarious. Doesn't necessarily need more money. Well the sort of person. Who organises his finances well.

Cuts out unnecessary waste. And expenditure. And luxury. Plug for the crap course. Does tend to be defined. There is a little bit more left over. Isn't there? When you manage your money well.

[36 : 53] Especially when you are giving on topic. If you think actually. One fruit of this sermon. Is I know my finances are in a mess. We'll speak to Nikki about that. That's right. But there is spiritual gain.

There is a growth. An expansion of soul. There is a joy that comes to the generous giving. How much better that is. Than holding on to it. Than having a shrinking of your soul.

That happens when you are tight fisted. And then there is of course eternal gain. A treasure in heaven. Which Jesus promises. You cannot out give God. So let's go back to tithing for a minute. Nobody can afford tithing. When you think of it as the last tenth. In other words. Do all your. You do all your expenditure. And then you wonder. How on earth can I give after this?

But how many believers in this room. Have been amazed. We've been amazed. At the provision of God. When you give first. Make it the first standing order. Each month. That first bit.

[37 : 52] That is set aside. On the weekday pay packet. These principles. These principles. They shape nations. And civilizations. They were rediscovered. In the Protestant Reformation. They spread throughout northern Europe.

They changed the world. Principles of the importance. And value. Of work. And of being honest. I would argue.

The big thing. That the Reformation did. Is it gave us a doctrine. Of vocation. Of being honest. Of being thrifty.

Of being frugal. To self. A generous church. To mission to the poor. Not everyone got it right. Perfectly all the time. Of course not. But they transformed. And they created a civilization.

And we have some of the fruits of that today. We do. But it's chipped away. It's been chipped away. By the currents. And distorted. And secularized. By greed. And laziness. That has returned to different ways.

[38 : 49] We need a new Reformation. We need a Reformation. In our thinking about money. And our thinking about work. Not just as individuals. But as a church.

And as a culture too. Let me round it up. Are you being wise. In your thinking about money. And your practice. Are you wise.

In your vulnerable points. Are you alive to its dangers. Are you trusting it too much. Are you proud of it. Are you getting anxious about it. Is the issue. About refusing to see.

The dignity of work. Something you need to work on. And pray about. Are you closing your heart. To the needs of disadvantaged people. And let me come back. And drag you back.

To Jesus. To come to the cross. And to see him becoming poor. That you might become rich. And to respond. To what he's done.

[39 : 44] In generosity. And in love. So thinking about. Our church budget. I want to say this. If you do give regularly. I want to thank you. I don't think I've said that.

And I don't think we have said that enough. I want to thank you very very much indeed. I mean that. I don't say that enough. You are very generous. As a church family. In my 10 and a half years.

I don't think. We've ever not made. The church budget. And each year. We've planned increases. Sometimes we've got none. That we're planning increases. But we've done that. And that is a wonderful thing. And I don't want to say thank you. But I wonder whether I could ask you though. Would you review your giving to the church? Would you give generously? Would you consider adopting some missionaries. That are working amongst the disadvantaged. And that are working amongst the poor. And they are gospel-centered. Would you root out. What is a good missionary society?

[40 : 46] We as elders can help you with that if you want. Remember where we started. So remember my speech. It was Saturday and about now. The farmyard manure. Think for a moment. If the manure had been left there. It would have stank. Think of the unpopularity. Think of the way it would have affected the neighbours. Think of the way it would have cut them off. Think of how it would have made them miserable. If they would have had this pile of manure. And they were just sitting there. But for months on end. If you are not wise about money. It will do that to you. And if you are wise about it. And you use it well. And you invest it. And you spread it around. You will have vegetables to share. Roses to enjoy. Green beans. Strawberries. And you will grow closer to God. That's fine. Thank you.