

On the Move: Kingdom Investors, Message #5 Luke 21:1-4 Hearts On the Move, 11/17/24

Coming out of Kids/Students commitment: they lead the way, we are going to be making our commitments at the end of the service.

When it comes to parenting- punishment is easy, discipline can be exhausting. Punishment is about transaction, discipline is about transformation, it's about our kid's heart. And that takes sweat equity. When our boys were little, occasionally they would fight with each other as siblings do. So we would put them both in timeout separately, and then after a few minutes I would go talk to each of them about what they did and why that was wrong and get them to calm down and agree. And then when they were ready, we would always make them reconcile. They would have to get eyeball to eyeball and say they are sorry, and hug it out. And most often they weren't really quite ready to do that...and so the first version was, "Sorry." (quick side hug). And we would say, "Nooo...do it like you mean it." And they would do a big sigh and then finally they would do a genuine sorry, hug it out, and everything went on like it never happened. That whole process sometimes would take 30-1hr, after you just want to melt into the couch. And as exhausting as it was at times, most of the time we were committed to it because we weren't after transactional obedience, we were after the transformation process of their hearts. We want that because God wants that. God is always after our hearts. **1 Samuel 16:7 People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.**

2 Chronicles 16:9 The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.

And certainly God is not transactional when it comes to our money, he's all about the heart. **2 Corinthians 9:7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.**

That's what today is about: getting our hearts aligned with God's heart for our money through a living parable. What I mean is that everything Jesus has taught us about money in these 4 parables we've studied is lived out in this one real life example in Luke 21.

As we encounter Jesus in Luke 21, he is in his final days before his arrest and crucifixion. He's in Jerusalem at the temple in an area that was called the Court of the Women, and this was where God's people would come to make their financial gifts to God to support the ministry of the temple. And we know from history and archaeology that they would make their contributions into one of a dozen or so of these boxes that were shaped kind of like trumpets. And so Jesus and his disciples are sitting near one of these boxes in the temple courtyard. **Verse 1 As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. 2 He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins.**

Now, widows had a tough life in the ancient Near East. They've had a tough life all the time, everywhere. My mother-in-law is a widow, and it's hard, it can be hard financially, but it's especially hard emotionally. There's loneliness, there's a lot of pain, they can struggle with a

lack of feeling secure. Many of you know that experience personally. And in the ancient Near East, it was even harder for these widows, there was no Social Security, there were no survivor benefits or life insurance. Many widows who didn't have a family to care for them would possibly turn to indentured service to survive. Well the Bible says this was a poor widow, likely living hand-to-mouth, and she does something unexpected. She comes quietly, humbly and puts in two little copper coins worth less than a quarter of a penny in today's value.

Now it was somewhat common in Jesus' day when a big donor or VIP religious person came to make a contribution, it was scheduled...it was announced in advance, and there was fanfare, a trumpet player...and everyone would "ooh and ahh" and clap when they made their donation. Jesus warned against this very practice in Matthew 6. Well, let's just say, no one was making an announcement before this woman gave, no one was blowing the trumpets as she made her walk to the offering box. No one probably even noticed this woman at all...Except Jesus.

I can imagine Jesus calling his disciples over to him, "Peter, John, Andrew, James, come here, come here, come here, I've got something really important to tell you." "What is it? Is the high priest coming? A VIP donor coming? I wonder how much they are going to give!" "No, no, no, look, see that woman over there who dropped in her two copper coins?" **v.3 "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others."** You can imagine the disciples looking at him like, "Seriously? Um...Jesus, I know you are well educated in theology, but did you skip math class?"

"No, no." **4 "All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."** Now this is revolutionary, this was truly new math. What Jesus is telling us is that heavenly math works completely different from earthly math. He's got a totally different system. All these other people gave out of their wealth, Jesus says. Certainly their gifts were much bigger. Maybe 100, 1000, 10,000x what she gave. And Jesus isn't saying that those gifts weren't important, but in contrast to all those others who gave out of their wealth, this poor widow gave everything she had. Maybe everything she had that day or week to live on. She might very well go without dinner that night because of what she put in. And from Jesus' point of view, that means she put in more than all those other people. It didn't matter what the actual amounts were, Jesus said, she gave more. Do you see what Jesus is teaching us?

One of the most important truths about God that we need to know is that God measures things very differently than we do. We measure portion, we are impressed by big numbers, God is most impressed with proportion. **Proportion > Portion**. Because portion is about a transaction, it's about a number, that's relatively easy. Proportion is about transformation, it's about developing a heart of worship to God, that's harder.

Worship is ascribing great worth to God. Another words, it means **making God truly #1 in your life**. That's what worship is. Now, how can we worship God? Well, we can worship God through singing, we can worship God through living obedient lives, we can worship God through serving him, we can worship God through the use of our time, we also can worship God through the use of our money. And when we worship God with our money, what we're really showing God is,

“God, you are number one in my life, and you're more important to me than even money itself.” Now, for giving to become worship from the heart, it's got to cost you something, it's got to be demonstrated. This is true in relationships. Guys, if you're here and you have found the woman and you're sure she is the one, and you tell that woman, “You are number one in my life. I love you so much, you are the number one most important thing in my whole life other than God.” Is that going to cost you something, guys? You better believe that's going to cost you something. That is going to cost you a whole bunch. A whole bunch of your time, affection, independence, commitments, your money. And vice versa. But if you have the right man or woman, it's worth it!

Friends, if you want to truly worship God, to show him he is number one in your finances, it's going to cost you something. The woman who gave what she had, even though the portion was insignificant, the proportion was extravagant. And Jesus said, “Now that's worship.” I'm saying that when you evaluate how God is looking at your giving, the way to evaluate it is not amount as much as it is sacrifice. I have people ask, how much should I give? Should I give 10 percent? Should I give 15 percent? Should I give 6 percent? Should I give 20 percent?

I can't answer that question for you, I don't know your finances and situation and commitments, but let me make Jesus' point practical for you. Let's do a little mental exercise. Draw a box in your mind. Now ask this question, what is it that I could buy with the money I'm giving God that I'm foregoing, that I'm not buying, that I'm not spending on myself? Or what do I have currently that I can give away? And friends, if you can't put some real tangible things in that box, then I'd like to suggest to you, you may be more like those other givers who may have given greater portions, but gave transactionally, gave out of their wealth.

For me, I was thinking, what are some tangible things in my box. There's some retirement nest egg money in that box, there's a winter wardrobe update in that box, a trip we really would love to go on with my brother's family in that box, there's a car in that box...we have 2.5 cars... What's in your box?

In John 12, Mary, the sister of Martha, put something tangible in that box, her expensive perfume. Scholars tell us that her perfume may have been a family heirloom that secured her future. But Mary put it in her box, and poured it out onto Jesus' feet. It cost her something tangible, and it was worship.

In 1 Chronicles 29 King David, put his entire fortune in that box. David wanted to build a house of worship to God that would lead people to encounter God for generations to come, listen, even though he knew he wouldn't even be around to experience it himself. And so he led a Commitment Sunday as it were. He brought together hundreds of people- leaders, families of households together, and into his box he essentially put his entire fortune. David's personal contribution was in the billions in modern day. And then he said to all the households, “OK now who is with me?” And there was an enormous outpouring of generosity like we have never seen before or since in the Bible. All these people put their treasures, gold, jewelry, silver into that box..Amazing.

Whether a little or a lot, extravagant or simple, God is most interested in a heart of worship. What is in your box?

Now you say, "Pastor Nate, I get it, I have some things in mind that I think should go in that box, but it's just that I have so many what ifs that hold me back. What if I lose my job, I can't make ends meet? What if my car breaks down? Can't get the house I want? What if I'm not happy and filled with anxiety...what do I do about that?" Great questions.

Many of us have probably helped our kids, or grandkids or niece or nephew learn how to jump into the pool for the first time. Many kids are really hesitant. And what do we all say, "Trust me, I will catch you!" Now we know as adults that they are going to be fine, in fact they will start to jump without you, and go off the diving board in the deep end doing cannonballs one day. But that's not the logic of a 3 year old with floaties. They are struggling with doubt, fear, uncertainty... with all the what ifs, what if I drown, don't come back up, what if you don't catch me? And we say, "Trust me, I will catch you! I won't let you drown. You are going to love it!" Friends, Jesus is saying the same thing to us about the stuff in our box. We can't always see his logic, but he says, "Trust me with your finances, I will catch you, I will not let you drown. In fact, I will bless you beyond what you can imagine. Trust me." And why can we trust Jesus? Because Jesus never asks us to do something he hasn't already done. That's the gospel. He gave everything he had for us, he jumped into the deep end of our sin and the evil of this world. He died for us personally, Jesus put his entire life in that box. And because of his death for our sin we can live eternally with Him. This is the Jesus who says, "Trust me!"

Listen, regardless of whether you give to our church or don't, or you give to the ON THE MOVE campaign or don't or whatever non-profits or places you give...this is what I want for you, it's what Jesus wants for you to experience.

Now, as most of you know, today is our Commitment Sunday as a church where in just a few moments I am going to invite you to come forward and make your commitment using the commitment cards you received when you came in or you brought with you. But before I do that, we did our version of David and the leadership in 1 Chronicles 29 and had our advanced commitment night on Nov. 3rd with about 100 or so of our leadership and those who felt called to lead out financially. It was such a special and beautiful night in our church. Let me show you just a little recap of that Advanced Commitment Night.

Video

A heart of generosity was on display that night. From a group of about 10% of our givers at Brandywine, they have already committed to over half of our 5.5M goal! And now, like David did, we are putting that challenge to you. Now, if you are here and you are just checking out church, and you aren't sure whether you are ready to commit to calling Brandywine your church home, I want to invite you just to watch and observe today, you are our guest.

Let me walk through the commitment card with you for a moment.

- On the front, fill out your contact information.
- This commitment is for 36 months above and beyond your regular giving to our budget. We aren't looking to rob Peter to pay Paul. The General fund operates everything that happens in our church, critical.
- Why a three year commitment? Why can't I just give? Well you can, but it's important for us so that we can plan our construction and timeline accordingly based on what we expect to receive.
- The commitment that you make is not a legal contract with the church, so don't stress about that, but it is a commitment before the Lord to do your best to fulfill.
- On the back, you will see different frequencies you can make the commitment, as well as methods. Some of you may have appreciated stock, the market has been up and that might be one of the ways you want to give, you can indicate that, or through a donor advised fund, or company matching, or an asset of some kind. If you indicate anything like that our office will contact you to discuss the process or you can call the office.
- Most importantly is filling out the bottom box of the total of the commitment.
- There are those who need to make a SAFE choice and commitment. You may be in massive debt or perhaps you just lost your job.... we understand and we want you to know that we are here as a Church to pray for you and walk with you through this season of your lives.
- Second group of people that are here are those who can make a COURAGEOUS choice today. God has provided for you. God has even blessed you. And it's time to step up and step out in faith. Make a courageous choice today. Remember it's not about equal amount, it's about sacrifice out of a heart of worship.
- One last thing BEFORE I release you to pray, think, talk, and fill out your commitment cards this morning. You may be thinking...I feel nervous, or I feel pressure.... I need you to know AS YOUR Pastor, that I'm not putting ANY pressure on you this morning. Period! My CALLING is to preach and teach the Bible and lead this Church where God is leading up to go. BUT what I know is a PART of that calling is to teach you to give and to challenge you to give. So that feeling you have today...that feeling of pressure might be God saying to you to step up and step out and trust ME! MOST of the time when I have taken a step of faith, I have felt at best, nervous and sometimes, flat our SCARED out of my mind, BUT God came through.
- Take time now and I want you to talk with your spouse, or family, or just to the Lord about your commitment and then fill out your card and in a couple minutes I will come back up. If you have already made your commitment at ADN, we want you to come forward again as a symbol of leading first and our unity together.

3 min or so

Invite people to come make their commitments.

After commitments

1 Chronicles 29: 10 David praised the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly, saying, "Praise be to you, LORD, the God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. 11 Yours, LORD, is the

*greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. **12** Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. **13** Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name. **14** "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. **16** LORD our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you.*

Let's praise God together!

At End:

Initial Investment Dec. 8 when we will share what the Lord has provided for ON THE MOVE and call us to make initial investments.