

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

Thomas West

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The Good Life

PART

7

TITLE

Giving Freely

SCRIPTURE

Proverbs 3:9-10; 11:24-26; 14:21; Luke 12:15-21



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Good morning, again. It's good to see you this morning. If we don't know each other yet, my name is Thomas, and I serve as one of the pastors here at Providence. So glad to see each of you this morning, thanks for being here. Worshiping with us is always a special welcome to anyone joining us. [inaudible 00:01:20], the live stream or in some other fashion. We're glad to have you with us as well. This morning, we're continuing the teaching series in the Book of Proverbs, so if you have a bible I invite you to find it and meet me in the Book of Proverbs. We're going to start in Chapter 3. We're also going to make our way over to Chapter 11 and to Chapter 14 as well.

If you made your way in here this morning without a bible, you should be able to locate one underneath one of the seats in front of you. If you don't have a bible to call your own, then we hear at Providence want to give you that one today. Would you take that one home and enjoy it. We are working through this teaching series called The Good Life, where we've worked through several ideas related to what it means to have a good life or to have a full life. The first couple chapters of Proverbs talks about what wisdom is and how to pursue wisdom, and how essential wisdom is for the good life. Then we've considered topics so far in the last couple of weeks such as community, and friendships, relationships, last week work.

Now, this morning, we're going to talk about money and giving. I know, aren't you so glad that you came, right? Don't worry, if this is your first time here just come back next week, and we'll [inaudible 00:02:30] back, but I do think this will be really encouraging for all of us, because this might sound like a sermon on giving, on financial wealth, and generosity, but it's actually not. This is a sermon about our hearts. Jesus knew that our hearts, they tend to lock on to different things to be our savior, to be our keeper, and our provider. That's why Jesus talked about money more than anyone else in the bible.

I mean, yeah, we're talking about money. We're talking about generosity. We're talking about wealth. We're talking about what we do with the things that God entrusts to us, but ultimately this is a conversation about our hearts. This is the conversation about the things that we trust in, and we look to. Being our creator, God knows us incredibly well. He knows that for us to live a good life in his world, then we have to not only talk about, but we need to continually talk about and think about what we do with what God entrust to us, namely money.

Now, this isn't simply a sermon about financial resources, this is actually a sermon about all the resources that God has entrusted to each and every one of us. This is not just simply about our financial treasure, this is also a message about our time, how we spend it, where we serve, how much we spend of our time on ourselves, our resource of time on ourselves, and how much we spend on other people and other things. This is a sermon about our talents. Are we generous with the gifts that God has entrusted to each of us or not? This is ultimately a message about our testimony as well, our opportunity to tell other people about who God is and what God has done in our lives. You're going to have an opportunity to do that just one week from now, we're actually having this baptisms gathering at New Life Camp. There are many people in here, maybe this morning, that haven't been baptized yet.

[inaudible 00:04:28] that you can steward the testimony that God has given you by going out and being baptized just next Sunday night. Let the rest of the faith family celebrate with you. Maybe you know someone else who needs to. We can all celebrate this together. Let's ease into it. We're going to start in Proverbs, Chapter 3, and then we're going to flip around and take a look at some different Proverbs. We're going to read some Proverbs, and I'm going to try to show you how these things are actually worked out and played out in our lives and in the world. But let's just ask God to help us into all of this with a word of prayer.

Loving Father, we need you. We pray that You would speak to us this morning as we study your word. We pray You would be so kind to ultimately reveal Jesus to us and show us the wisest person whoever lived, and the most generous person whoever lived. God, we pray that your spirit be so kind to come into our hearts to help us to release the grip that we have on our time, our treasure, our abilities, and how we choose to live our lives. Father, before we get started as a faith family into this year ahead, we pray that You would come now and You would prepare us all to be able to serve and to do our part in accomplishing the mission that You've given us. We ask for it together in Jesus' name, Amen.

Look at Proverbs, Chapter 3, and let's look at verse 9 together. Proverbs, Chapter 3, verse 9. It says, "Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the first fruits of all your produce. Then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine." This section of Proverbs focuses on true piety before God, worshiping with the whole heart. Part of this piety, you're a part of this posture before God, it's about the submission of material wealth to God's good rule. This Proverb teaches us about an invitation for a believer to demonstrate confidence in God over confidence in money. The motive for the action in verse 9 is actually anchored in this motivation in verse 10, God will add to His people, as they are generous. A general life rule that God has built into the fabric of the universe as His people choose to give, God generally chooses to bless them in different ways. Primarily spiritual blessings, sometimes physical, material blessings as well.

Turn the page, let's look at Proverbs, Chapter 11, verse 26. Proverbs, Chapter 11, verse 26. Flip over with me. Proverbs, Chapter 11, let's start in verse 24. Proverbs, Chapter 11, we're going to look at verse 26, but we need to see where we're coming from right here in verse 24. "One gives freely, yet grows all the richer. Another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered. The people curse him who holds back grain, but a blessing is on the head of him who sells it."

Consider verse 24, "One gives freely yet grows all the richer. Another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want." This Proverb contrasts two things. The giver with the getter. Or the greedy with the generous. Mr. Scrooge and all the hoarders of the world are traditionally despised throughout Western literature and film. Generous people are always loved and respected. Here's the truth, in God's economy, the greedy person loses and the generous person thrives. I know it's paradoxical, but this is part of the nature of the kingdom that Jesus brought into the world. It's an upside down kingdom. The way that feels like you're going up is often to go down. And the way down is to often try to go up.

Jesus talked about this principle himself when he said, “You reap what you sow.” Simply, we will receive into our lives according to our behavior in the world. Last one, flip over to Proverbs, Chapter 14, let’s look at verse 21. Proverbs 14, verse 21. This Proverb says, “Whoever despises his neighbor is a sinner, but blessed is he who is generous to the poor.” This section of Proverbs talks about the righteous being crowned with wisdom, and how fools will ultimately end up bowing down to them. If you look at the context, verse 20 and verse 23, they’re talking about wealth and poverty, and those who are kind, and those who plot evil.

Right here, this verse 21 is almost the linchpin for this section of scripture, but the whole section is dealing with ethical dimensions of how to love your neighbor, and this Proverb comes along and talks about one who despises his neighbor being a sinner, and one who blesses the poor as being a generous person. What’s going on here? Let me illustrate it like this. The Proverbs are like the old testament Twitter account. After a few introductory chapters explaining the beauty of wisdom, we encounter hundreds of tweets, hundreds of short, pithy memorable statements. These observations communicate the most profound theological truths.

All of this, it doesn’t come to us out of nowhere. All of this actually rises up out of the old testament law, specifically the 10 commandments. Think about how the Proverbs are many real life applications, they’re these vivid little pictures of what it means for someone to live out everything that God has for us in the 10 commandments. The Proverbs illustrate and apply what the law clearly says over and over and over again. If you’re reading the old testament law, or if it’s ever been January, or February and you’ve been trying to make your way out of the old testament, “Let me get out of the law in a bible reading plan.” You’re wondering, “What in the world would this look like?”

We come over to the book of Proverbs, and we open it up, and we see real life example after real life example after real life example of what it means to live according to God’s law. Proverbs [inaudible 00:10:54] where the law comes to life and we get to see disobedience in action. Think about it. If the 10 commandments are 10 blinding spotlights on the sin of humanity. Proverbs then becomes hundreds of stinging lasers point out the different ways that we fall short. They point out the life that we should be living, they point out principles of how God’s built this world. They examine the fabric of God’s creation. But just like when you read the 10 commandments, and sometimes it feels like you’re just staring into a spotlight getting found out, so the Proverbs have a way of coming along like hundreds of stinging lasers and pinpointing different issues in a believer’s life.

The point is to remind us that we are sinners in need of a savior. See, the point of coming into Proverbs and the 10 commandments in general isn’t to lead us to be a bunch of do-gooders, that just come in here and just like, “Man, we ought to be about that, we just turn ourselves up and we run back out of here, and we try to live these things into our lives.” A great point of the Proverbs is to get us to the end of ourselves. They point us to a good life that can be found living God’s way and God’s world, but they also have a way of getting us to the end of ourselves where we have to admit before God and one another, “I just don’t have what it takes.”

We read this Proverbs and it's like, "I'm guilty." Read another one, it's like, "Yeah, I fall short of that one too." The Proverbs are intended to get our I's, [inaudible 00:12:33] off of ourselves and to God, and once they're on God, then we can live God's good life. Here's what we're going to do for a few minutes, we're going to look back into God's righteous law, in the wisdom of the Proverbs. We're going to look ahead to the teaching of Jesus and life of the church, we're going to meditate on what God has done for us in order to make us a giving people. If you wanted a banner to hang over this, it would be this, three things that God has done to help us give to others, or three ways that God has given to us to make us a giving people.

The first thing I need to show you is this, first thing that God gives us to make us a giving people is God gives us untakeable treasure. He does. That's what's happening right here in the Proverbs. This is the point that Proverbs is leading to. Untakeable treasure. Yeah, it's unshakable treasure as well, but most important for us in the context of this topic this morning, God gives us untakeable treasure. He gives us Himself and no one can take Him from us. God makes us a giving and generous people by first exposing our greed and by giving us treasure. The bible talks about God being our greatest treasure, it's hard to read a book or a chapter and not find something close to this theme.

When we get God in our hands, we tend to let go of what we were holding, and start holding on to Him. We need to be reminded of this, because so many times we have this default tendency because of our sin that we want to log back into [greed 00:13:58], to being greedy, and coveting. Jesus comes along in Luke, Chapter 12, verse 15, and Jesus said, "Look out, watch out, be on the lookout for all types of greed." Paul, in his teaching, as he was planting churches and sharing the gospel, and seeking the kingdom growth through the ancient world, Paul would repeatedly come through and he would talk about when he needed to encourage the church to be generous, he would point to his own life example.

Acts 20, verse 33, Paul says, "Remember, when I lived among you, I wasn't covetous." As a way of remembering that he had true treasure in God, that affected how he lived. Why do we need to be told this? Because there's often a blind spot. Jesus and Paul, they would tell the church repeatedly to watch out for different types of covetousness and greed that can creep up in our hearts. Oftentimes, greed is a sin that we don't know we have when we have it. I spend a lot of time on the college campus meeting with a bunch of people talking about a whole bunch of different type of stuff.

I'll sit down with guys, and guys will say, "Look man, I'm dealing with lust. I know I got it, I know what's going on, this is what's happening." We'll enter into it, and we'll talk about it. It's one of those sins you kind of know when you're committing it. Almost like the sin of adultery. You know when you're committing the sin of adultery, it's kind of hard to miss it when it's happening, it's right there before you. It's like, "This person isn't my wife." You know when you're committing the sin of adultery. The problem with the sin of greed is oftentimes we're committing it, you're looking right at it, and you don't know you're committing it.

We often don't know when we're being greedy. Sometimes, it feels like we're just being stingy or we're just being true, or we're just being prudent, but greed is a hard issue. Listen, not I or not any other person can honestly look at you and say, "Oh, for you this is greed." That's not the point. The point is to get the attention on where God calls the attention, and the issues where God calls the issues. Jesus warns about Greed 10 to 20 times more than any other sin. That is amazing. On the basis of Jesus' warning, we can assume that it's probably a problem for us as well. We ought to assume that we might be more greedy and more covetous than we readily realize.

Let's go back to the proverb. Proverbs 11:24, "One gives freely, yet grows all the richer. Another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want." Again, notice the contrast. Notice the picture. Getters lose in the end, givers win in the end. Let me illustrate with an idea. Has anyone in here ever seen that TV Show Hoarders, raise your hand. Hoarders. I honestly can't do it. Listen, if this is actually an issue for somebody here today, man, we all got them, I just can't.

When you think about it, basically it's a show about people who have such an attachment to their stuff, that they can't let go. We come into this show, and a different episode takes you to a different home, and it shows you all the things that someone just can't let go of. Everything from butter tubs, to magazines, to newspapers, to old kitty-cat kitty litter boxes, that we just can't throw away, we got to keep those too. It's just thing, after thing, after thing. The result of this is not a life that is fuller and richer, but a life that is more crowded, more unclear, and sad. Here's the idea, one gives freely yet grows all the richer, another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want.

See, each of us, in our own lives, we have different ways that we know we ought to step out, we ought to bless somebody else, and we choose to hold on, but if we're all honest, somehow we don't feel the joy we thought we would in having instead of letting someone else have. Whenever a good thing becomes an ultimate thing, that thing becomes an idol. All of us find it easy to spend our money on something be it clothes, cars, homes, investments, children, anti-aging solutions, on, and on, and on. These things are fine in and of themselves. But whenever one of these things becomes the ultimate thing for our life, and we start to find our identity in it, and being known and attached to it becomes the real treasure that we hold on to, that becomes a problem.

Jesus says, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Someone might say, "Well, I don't invest much treasure into those things, I just save." Everyone might see you as prosperous because you save so much, but think about it, why do some people even save so much? Because they feel like they're in control. It's not just a message about saving versus spending, this is a message about trusting God with our resources and using our resources to bless people in God's world, or for trying to control our world and make ourselves safe. Think about it, money can be a control idol. You can save it to be in control. Money can be a power idol. You can spend it to put people in your debt. Money can be an identity idol, you can use it to shape your image. All of us are guilty of this in some way, aren't we?

If you rest your identity in security and anything other than God, then giving is hard. The first thing that God does here in order to make us a free and a giving people is the first thing God does, is God gives to us. God gives us untakeable treasure, the gift of Himself, and the joy of a relationship with Him. That is the only thing that can come into our hearts and teach us to let go. When we realize who God is and everything that we have in Him, that is the thing that will help our hearts start to release.

The second thing is this, not only does God gives us untakeable treasure, then God comes in and God gives us eternal perspective. Eternal perspective. See, this greed that we're talking about, it starts to erode in the logic of God's economy. Randy Alcorn is a fantastic writer in the area of things that we're talking about this morning. He's written a fantastic book called the Treasure Principle. The big idea of the book, if you just wanted me to give the summary for you right here, it says, "You can't take it with you, but you can send it on ahead." When you think about it, you've never seen a hearse pulling a U-Haul. You can't take it with you to the grave, but you can send it on ahead of you into eternity.

Here's the second thing God does for us in helping us to be a generous people, the first thing, He gives us the gift of Himself, He gives us the relationship, He gives us promises that we have a spiritual inheritance that can far outrun any earthly inheritance we could ever have. He sets promises before us then, that the way we spend this earthly inheritance has a way of shaping the spiritual inheritance that's to come. That blessing people in this life is inextricably tied to blessings that believers will receive in the kingdom to come. Go read the two letter to the Corinthians, full of this kind of teaching.

It rubs right up against the American dream. This idea that we will get all we can, can all we get, and sit on our cans. The idea that we're going to get, get, get throughout our lives. God is so good to come to us and to say, "Listen, there is a horizon broader than death that you can live for. You can actually live for all of eternity." Giving starts to take place when we start to find ourselves in the midst of this eternal perspective as well. Let me show you this logic from the Proverbs, look at Proverbs, Chapter 3, verse 9 and 10. Proverbs 3, verses 9 and 10.

"Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the first fruits of your produce, then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine." Think about it. This section is about how to honor God with our money. It's an invitation for the believer in God to demonstrate confidence in God over confidence in cash. The motive is that God will generally add to his people as they choose to be generous in God's world. Jesus came along and illustrated on the same thing in Luke, Chapter 16. He told a parable about a seemingly unethical person who was shrewd in his life and his investments. People read this and we often freak out, we're like, "Whoa, Jesus just commended an unjust man."

But here's what this means. Even though the man was seemingly corrupt, there was a sense that he knew life was short, and that he only had a little time to make the most of his master's resources. This man is thinking more about where he's going rather than how to use his money. Here's the point, if you know that time is short, then why not leverage the resources we have in this amount of time for all of eternity and time to come. If we find ourselves within this eternal perspective, we realize that the horizon of death isn't the last horizon. But there is a life beyond death. If time is short and these earthly resources we have, they are all going to be incredibly devalued upon death, why not we make the most of what we've been given now in all of our resources, to make the most of life to come?

This is not just about our financial treasure. This is also about our time. Imagine the ways that we could be involved in transforming the heart of Providence and transforming the city of Raleigh about how we spend our time. Think about our incredible children's ministry here at Providence. Here at Providence, we have such an incredible team of people that get together to look after and steward our children here at Providence. And the next generation, and the next generation, and the next generation of our leaders. I often think about the most formative experiences I've had in my growth with God, yeah, seminary classes were good, the guy who discipled me in college, Patrick [inaudible 00:24:11] made a difference in my life.

But I honestly don't know where I would be, and honestly don't know how indebted I am to the teaching of the old testament without Sunday school teacher after Sunday school teacher, after Sunday school teacher, who got with me week after week, after week, prayed for me, loved me, read scripture to me, told me story after story, after story. Honestly don't know who I would be today if it weren't for all of them. In Providence, you have an opportunity to say, "Man, yeah, Sunday mornings can be restful, but look, you're going to have a lot of rest in eternity to come, maybe in the year ahead I would to get involved in our children's ministry."

God has done an incredible work right now, our elementary ministry is completely stocked, but we actually need seven new classes in the pre-school area, 9:30, and 11:00. All opportunities for us to get involved, especially for you, since you're worshipping here at this hour. Different ways we can be involved. You won't give to that, you won't give time, you won't do it if Sunday morning rest is your treasure. You won't. You won't give time to it if we see this life, these minutes, as this is it. But we will give to it if we see that I've been given an incredible treasure in my relationship with God, that has a way of helping us let go. Then we see these minutes, these are sacred minutes right here, because these are the only minutes we get to live apart from the joy of our Father.

So we're going to get in here, we're going to serve. We're going to email [Gretchen 00:25:54] and the whole team this afternoon. We're going to tell everybody. "Sing me up." Right? Because I want to be involved. I want my life to count. When you think about it, earth's currency will become useless when Christ returns, financial currency, our time, all of it, devalues upon the return of Christ.



Think about this, financial planners tell us, when it comes to your money, don't just think three months or three years ahead. Think 30 years ahead. Then Christ, the ultimate investment counselor takes this even further. He says, "Don't ask how your investment will be paying off in just 30 years. Ask how it'll be paying off in 30 million years." Here's this thought tip for Sunday morning. Invest in the kingdom. The rewards will outlast this lifetime and the riches will last for all of eternity. All of this, this is about perspective. Where are we investing? What are we investing in? Loads of future women counselors, men pastors, church planters, elders, deacons, businessmen, all waiting to be disciplined in our children's ministry. All waiting on you. What are we going to invest in?

Matthew 6:19 through 20, Jesus said, "Don't lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, where thieves do not break in and steal." You can't take it with you, but you can send it on ahead. We can invest in the next generation. We can give our [inaudible 00:27:31] and our offerings to be a part of something where any of us in here, the little bit that we often come in with and drop in, it's unto the Lord, but imagine the multiplication effect when all of us come together and we pull all of our resources.

All the churches we could plant, the nations we can reach, the scripture that we can translate here in our city, the needs we can meet, the children that we can feed, the people that we can bring in to tutoring, to mentoring relationships, the gospel that we can share with people, schools that can be cleaned up, organizations that can be partnered with. People that can be trained. When times are hard [inaudible 00:28:10] sickness come. A way we can be there for one another in the hospital, a way we can walk with each other and literally do life with each other. God comes along, and God gives us this eternal perspective. He makes giving possible.

He gives us untakeable treasure, he gives us eternal perspective, and the third thing, and the most important one is that He gives us gospel power. See, the Proverbs are intended to point us to Jesus, the old testament believers, they read their bibles in order to find out about their savior. Think about what would've happened, imagine reading scripture without the gospel's acts and on and on. Imagine what this would've been like. You have come to the scriptures and would've read it, you would've been thinking, "Okay, I know the savior is coming, what's that guy like?" Think about it.

When they read the old testament, they expected different things. They expected a creator from Genesis, they would've expected an emancipator, a freedom fighter from Exodus, they would've expected a priest and a sacrifice from Leviticus, they would've expected a guy to come along from the Book of Numbers, a covenant maker and keeper from Deuteronomy, a captain to lead their lives and their wars in Joshua. A judge from Judges, imagine that. A redeemer from Ruth. A king from Samuel, Kings and Chronicles. A re-builder from Ezra-Nehemiah. An innocent sufferer from Job. A worship leader from Psalms. And a wise leader and a generous man from Proverbs.

The old testament leaves us looking for this wise one who will come along to fulfill all the law, and come along to fulfill all the prophets. No surprise that Jesus fits the profile. Jesus is the wise man, and the wisdom of God. In his first sermon, Jesus, in the sermon on the mount, he alluded to the Proverbs many times and used them for sermon illustrations. Jesus is the true and greater [inaudible 00:30:05], he's greater in holiness, greater in power, greater in wisdom, and greater yes in wealth. He shows us what it means to give, and he demonstrates it through his own life as he gives us his grace. There are different ways to try to motivate someone to give.

We can motivate someone to be generous, you can choose to load up on the will, you can say, "Give or God will get you." I don't know if that verse is actually in the bible, but you can try that, you can just guilt people into this stuff. You can load up on the emotions. I could just roll out picture after picture, after picture of things that rally, and things in the world that need the resources that all of us have this morning, and say, "Look at all of these things that need you." You can load up on the mind, you can say, "This is the best bang for your buck. This is going to be the best return on your investment. You ought to be involved in this. This just makes the most sense."

But where is the actual power to help a person give? It's in the gospel of grace. Grace, God's riches at Christ expense. God's riches at Christ expense. All treasures, except Jesus, will enslave you. Anything that you treasure more than Jesus in your life will enslave you. When you don't have it, or when it looks like it's slipping away, you'll panic. And you'll commit a number of sins, and you'll break all the commandments in order to chase down and get these other things. But Jesus is the only savior who gave his life for you.

Grace is the only thing that can ultimately change our hearts, friends. Jesus was full of grace and truth. Jesus is the only treasure who gave himself for us. Think about it, your career won't die for your sins, but Jesus did. Think about it, your looks won't die for your sins, but Jesus did. Treasures of greed that we worship as an idol demand that we give everything we have in order to have them, and Jesus is the only one who has ever come along, and he has given all that he had in order to have us.

Look at the proverb, Proverbs, Chapter 14, verse 21. "Whoever despises his neighbor is a sinner, but blessed is he who is generous to the poor." This is about Jesus. Jesus was a neighbor to sinners, Jesus was generous to the poor. Remember, the Proverbs are not simply principles about life, but these are the words of Jesus, these are the wisdom of Christ. Proverbs are [inaudible 00:32:38] and pointers to a person. Jesus shows us how to live a truly, generous life by going on ahead and living that generous life for us. Then as we put our faith in him, that generous life gets credited to us.

Then, as God chooses to give to us still, He gives time, talent, treasure, resources, all across this room, we have the identity of being a generous giver before God. It only then makes sense that we in this gospel power of grace would go out and choose to give as well. I'll leave you with this. Why would Jesus come to earth at all? Why? Think about it. In heaven, he was rich. Not like you rich, like him rich. Like really, really rich. In heaven, he had honor. In heaven, he had power. In heaven, he had glory. And in heaven, he had wealth that made all the wealth in this room look like chump change in the end.

Why come? Didn't he had everything? He didn't. He didn't have us. Think about this, if Jesus stayed in heaven, and kept his riches, we would be lost. This means that you Christian are most precious to God than the entire universe. What can help our scared and greedy hearts to just trust him, just to relax, and just to give? It's Jesus. First Peter 2, 9 through 10 says, "We are His treasured possession, and when we get to see Him leaving his treasure in order to come, and get [greedy-grubby 00:34:21] little us," that is what makes me want to leave all my treasure. That is what makes me want to pack my family up and to go to a place that doesn't have Jesus, and doesn't have any other people, or any other things leading people and pointing people to Jesus as well.

When we see God leaving his treasure for us, it is the only thing that can make us let go of the treasure in our hearts, claim God as our treasure, and serve him with our very lives. When Jesus is the treasure of our hearts, we'll start to spend our earthly treasures on helping other people to know him and to love him. When Jesus is our true spiritual inheritance, then we will look at our earthly inheritance in an entirely different way. Church, we are part of the reason why Jesus chose to become poor. Now, may that motivate us to not necessarily choose to become poor each and every one of us, but may that motivate us to give and to give freely. Let us pray.

Loving Father, You are so good. We love You. You have demonstrated what it means to have a relationship with You by sending Jesus to be our savior. God, You have given us everything we need in order to live a life that draws people to You. You've given us everything we need to live a life that participates in your mission. God, this morning we can't help but see from your word, and from your law and the Proverbs the many ways that we fall short, the many ways that we are tempted to trust in our stuff in order to be our savior and not You. So God, we pray Your spirit would continue to move in this room, to continue to move in an already, very generous people here at this church, to help us to excel still more.

God, would you be so kind? As we get to sit in this moment and reflect right now, God, we pray that you would continue to give to us wisdom and perspective for our lives. God, as we give a chance actually to give, to reach into our pockets and to put into a bucket resources that you've already given to us and to proclaim our trust in You. God, we pray that You'd help us to do that with a full heart, because we know You love a cheerful giver. Father, we pray that You would continue to speak to us, work among us this morning, we ask in Jesus name, Amen.



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