Luke 12 (Part 1): 1-34 • Jesus on Hypocrisy and Worry

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Luke chapter 12 here on Sunday morning. We are in the Psalms on Wednesday night. It seems like we've been in the Psalms for about 15 years, but we're there, and we're making progress, but we're here in the 12th chapter of Luke. A chapter that's full of all kinds of conviction. So if you're there, let's pray first as we get into these first few verses okay.

Heavenly Father, open our hearts to the ministry of Your Word and fill us with understanding so that we can lay hold of your Word and really embrace it, and apply it to our lives. Lord, we confess that it is through Your Holy Spirit that the Word is made alive to our hearts. You illuminate us, You give us understanding and Lord, we just want to receive that today. We want to hear from You. We want to hear Your voice. You, Lord God, are the teacher. So teach us, Father. In Jesus' name we pray, amen. Amen. Amen.

You guys remember in the previous chapter Jesus was speaking pretty forcefully about various things, particularly addressing Himself to the Pharisees and religious leaders. And, of course, they're getting pretty angry and upset. And we ended the last chapter, the end of chapter 11 said that the Pharisees started to really dog Him after that. They were chasing after Him like a little puppy nipping at His heels, constantly trying to get Him to say something that they could use to condemn Him. And so, there's all this going on, and whenever that happens that's always going to attract a crowd. And so, we're told here in verse one of Luke chapter 12, that,

"In the meantime, when so many thousands of the people had gathered together (to the point, Luke tells us) *that they were* (actually) *trampling one another,* (Jesus) *he began to say to his disciples first,* (And He said this) *"Beware of the leaven* (and that's the same as yeast) *of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." (ESV)*

Yeast or leaven is a common biblical picture for the pervasiveness of sin. And so, Jesus begins by giving a word about the danger of hypocrisy. I think we all know what hypocrisy is. It's essentially believing in and espousing certain moral values that we ourselves don't live up to or I don't know if we have any desire to do it or not but hypocrisy is basically saying that I believe in something and this

is the way it ought to be. And then my life contradicts that. And we all know hypocrisy is a very serious thing. And people have probably looked at Christians, maybe they've even looked at you and said something like, well, I'd go to church, but all those Christians are hypocrites anyway. And they're not completely wrong to be completely honest with you.

I mean, we've had our share of hypocrisy in the body of Christ, let's just face facts. Now if we're going to be really honest. Then you've got to remember too, that if people who said that hung around long enough in the body of Christ they'd begin to realize that there's something else going on here. Even though we believe in biblical moral values, we freely admit that we don't attain to them in any sort of a perfect way. We freely admit that without the power of God, the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, there's no way we can live up to those moral values.

In other words, we see, we know, we understand that we've fallen short of those things. And when you understand that you've fallen short, and when you admit that you've fallen short, that's not hypocrisy. That's reality. And let's understand what true hypocrisy is. We've seen hypocrisy. I've lived long enough and been in the body of Christ long enough to remember back in the mid-eighties when one particular well known televangelist wrote a book, right around 1985 or so, condemning the sins of this nation, talking about pornography, and sexual sin, and prostitution, and so forth, and so on. And then, a couple of years later, he himself was arrested for being with a prostitute.

And even though he made a very painful and very tearful appeal for forgiveness and so forth, a few years later, he was caught again. And it was all very embarrassing and sad. And of course, the secular media got a hold of it and loved it. But that's hypocrisy. We know what hypocrisy is. We know how the enemy uses it. We know how unbelievers long to use it to justify the fact that they don't want anything to do with Christians or Christianity.

And there are some people who actually go to the extreme of saying the only way to avoid hypocrisy is to not to have moral values, which is, a little like throwing the baby out with the bathwater as far as I'm concerned, but I understand that because we all know that it's a bad thing. Jesus says that we are to avoid hypocrisy. In fact, then He goes on to speak about hypocrisy in verses 2 and 3. Look what He says here. He says,

"Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed or hidden that will not be made known. (And his response here, his note here is) *[3] Therefore whatever you have*

said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops."

That's a word to hypocrites. By the way, that's not a word to like husbands and wives, that every word that you've ever spoken in the privacy of your bedroom is going to be exclaimed on a housetop. That's not what He's saying. You have to understand that hypocrites long for concealment.

A hypocrite doesn't want people to know what's really going on inside. They want to perpetuate an external facade, right? But beneath all of that, there's just all this sin going on. And Jesus is saying in these verses, 2 and 3, listen, whatever has been concealed in the past is going to ultimately be revealed.

And like I said, with the case of like certain televangelists we've seen it happen in technicolor, worldwide, for everybody to see and so forth. And God is gracious enough sometimes, to pull back the covers on hypocritical living. I say gracious enough, although it's, I'm sure it's very, very painful for the people that go through it. I've had it happen in my own life. Perhaps you have too, where there's just been something in your life that you just weren't willing to deal with, and it was all going on under the surface, and you are all satisfied because nobody knew it's okay. Don't worry about it, no big deal.

And then God goes, yeah, it's a big deal to Me, and He has this sort of a deal going on where He is willing to expose those things for the sake of the individual for whom they are exposed, that those things might be brought out into the light. It's a little like lansing a boil. It's a pretty ugly situation, but many times it's necessary if there's going to be any healing or whatever. And sometimes there isn't. Sometimes there isn't. It doesn't really matter, but God is basically telling us here through the words of Jesus, that God sees all. He knows all and what was previously concealed will be uncovered.

It will be exposed and sure it's going to happen at judgment day, but God may not wait. He may not wait. And frankly, I think this is, this ought to be probably one of the biggest deterrents to sin in our lives. I mean, we understand the consequences of sin as it relates to all the negative junk that comes from our sinful bad choices. But frankly, one of the biggest deterrents to us sin is the fact that God's going to reveal. God's going to expose things ultimately. And that ought to be a pretty sobering thought, frankly. We've seen it happen in other people's lives, and to think that it can't happen in my life is ridiculous.

Anyway, Jesus is going to go on here in verses 4 and following. He's going to talk a little bit about all this opposition that's been building up to His ministry

because He knows that that same thing awaits the disciples. And He says in verse 4, this is a very interesting sort of a verse. He says,

"I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. [5] But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him!"

By the way, there are different words in the Greek that we translate hell. One of them is Hades but this is not that word. This is the Greek word Gehenna. And this is the word that describes the ultimate hell. This is the word that describes what the Bible calls that second death. It's the worst of the hells, if you will, from the standpoint of the eternal aspect of hell.

And Jesus says, if you're going to fear anybody, fear Him. Now what He's doing here in these couple of verses is He's giving you and I a mental adjustment because we tend to think of physical death as the ultimate loss. Oh man, he died. Ah, it's terrible. And Jesus tells us here that physical death is not the ultimate loss. Spiritual death is the ultimate loss.

And that's why He says here, don't fear those who can kill the body when that's all they can kill because there's nothing more they can do after that, and frankly, that's not the end. And essentially what he's saying is, I'm going to warn you here about whom you should fear. Fear Him who after He has killed the body can also go on and cast the individual into hell.

And I need to tell you here that that reference here is not meant to be a threat. In other words, Jesus isn't giving you this information so that you would be terrified of the possibility that somewhere down the line, after you've loved Him and served Him and whatever else, He's going to cast you into hell.

People, please understand, for every born-again Christian, and I'm talking about somebody who's putting their faith and hope in the finished work of Jesus on the cross, hell is a past destiny. It is something that is in your past, it is no longer a part of your present or your future.

Why? Because your sins have been paid for at the cross, and hell is no longer an issue that you need to deal with because your sins have been paid for. Jesus is simply making the point here that eternity is the more important of the two between physical death and spiritual death, and He's reminding us here that one of these things deserves our focus, and its eternity. That's what deserves our focus.

And basically, that means that anyone or anything whose power over you is limited to this life really doesn't deserve your time and attention. Which really sounds weird to our ears because that just doesn't line up. We think of the things that could potentially take our lives and we have great fear of those things, whether it's illness or accident or whatever it may be. And many people go through their entire lives absolutely petrified about the potential of those sorts of things happening to them.

And Jesus is making the point here, that is not the ultimate loss in your life, and that really doesn't deserve your ultimate attention. He's telling you and I that really there's only one person that has authority over our eternity and that's God. So don't be afraid of people that can only kill your body. It's like, big deal and we're like, really? Seriously? It's no big deal? Yeah, no big deal. All they can, it's like, wouldn't you, when they, I mean, imagine somebody walking up to you going, hey, don't worry, all they can do is kill you.

Or if you get sick, and somebody says, hey, I heard you got sick, don't worry about it, all they can do is kill you. Don't worry about it. No big deal. And listen, again, and it comes as a shocking sort of a thing for us to hear, but Jesus, this is the adjustment that Jesus wants us to make as it relates to eternal things versus these temporal bumps in the road that you and I think are everything. We're going to, let me tell you something.

We are going to look back on the things that we dealt with in this life one day when we're standing in the never removed presence of God, and we're going to look at some of those things and we're going to say, yeah, those were bumps in the road. I thought it was an absolute mountain and it was a speed bump. So these kinds of adjustments are good for us.

Verse 6, look what He goes on to say. He says,

"Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. 7 Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows."

Now Jesus is turning to comparison to help us illustrate and understand this whole idea of how much God cares for our lives. Apparently back then, people actually bought and ate sparrows. Very, very, very poor people actually bought sparrows. I don't think you could convince anyone to pay anything for one today, and so we consider them a fairly worthless, sort of a bird. They just make a mess and whatever all else. And Jesus tells us, yet even not one single sparrow is forgotten by God.

Just let that wash over your heart for a second. Not one sparrow, not one, is forgotten by God. Now what He wants you to do is He wants you to begin to take that understanding by way of comparison and think about it as it relates to your life.

And He goes on to say here, *"you are of far greater worth than many sparrow,"* to the point, He says, where even the very number of hairs on your head are known. And don't let that weird you out if you don't happen to have any hair, because frankly, it's not really meant to be taken literally that way.

It's just really a figurative sort of way of saying that God knows you intimately, even to the most minute of details related to your life. He knows everything. He knows everything. He knows everything going on in your life. Every thought. He knows a word before it's on your tongue.

He knows, He knows, He knows all right? He's got you. He's got you. You are on His radar. Listen, if a sparrow is on His radar imagine the blip you take up. You're important to Him. He cares about you, even to the smallest details you're worth more than many sparrows. Verse 8,

"And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God, ⁹ but the one who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God."

It's amazing to me how many people read a verse like this, and they think back on some particular time in their life. It's like, I think I remember one time when I was 14, and I think I said something where I denied God cause I was embarrassed and I don't know. Then they start to worry that God is going to do the same to them. And I want you to understand that this is not about some random sort of, listen, Peter denied he knew Jesus 3 times and he lived to be a pillar of the church, so just let that one sink into your heart.

We're not talking about a random reckless statement that you made when you were 13 or 14, or something like that, where you said something stupid and now God's going to hold it against you for the rest of eternity. Listen, denying the Lord is a heart issue. And I think people wonder what it looks like. What does it mean to deny the Lord? And so, I got to thinking about it, and I thought, well, I think we deny Jesus when we secretly hope that no one's going to know that we're a Christian or when we choose not to be counted along with those who stand up for the things that are biblically right and the things that are biblically wrong, but when we're rather ashamed to say, no, I think that's wrong.

I mean, I think that's a way of denying Him. I think when we refuse to tell other people that we know Jesus and how they can know Him because we're afraid of how that's going to make us appear in their eyes. I think that's a kind of denial. And I think that when we blend in with the values and beliefs of this world, so as not to invite any persecution or ill will from other people in the world, it's another form of denial. It's a lifestyle, you see. It's not a reckless word that came out of your mouth when you were a teenager or when you got angry one time or you're going through a time of discouragement or whatever.

It's far more than that. It's in the heart. And by the same token, I think acknowledging and confessing Jesus is living the kind of a life that we know that He would want us to live regardless of what other people think about it. It's like living your life out loud. It's about being willing to share my faith with anybody and in front of anybody. And I don't care what you think of me or Christians or the Gospel or whatever, here it is. And I'm not ashamed of the cross of Christ.

I think it's standing and taking a stand when the world says this is right and you come back and you go, no, that's wrong according to God's Word. I think that's part of what it means to acknowledge, and so forth. I think it's just; I think it's living our lives to please Him and not to please ourselves. We acknowledge our connection with Him. In verse 10 he goes on, He says,

"And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

This is one of those verses that, it's in the Gospels, and it really causes people a lot of consternation, frankly. It is a very common question that I get from people. They, I get, in fact I got so many notes from people to help define blasphemy against Holy Spirit, I finally wrote a blog post on it so I could just, tell them well, here, go read this because you get tired of explaining it over and over again. But I've learned over the years that when somebody is worried about having committed blasphemy of the Holy Spirit they'll couch it in just like terms like, so can you explain this more to me?

And I used to just go ahead and just start explaining, but now I come back and I go, are you worried you did this? And they go, yeah. In fact, usually they're convinced. Some people aren't worried, they're convinced that they committed blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. I know, I know I did it. I just know. And I know that I'm forever condemned because Jesus said, there's no forgiveness and so forth. And I got to tell you something, people, some people just absolutely go

through life just tormented by the idea that they have somehow some way committed blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

And they're not really, they don't know exactly when it happened, but I'm just sure it did. Maybe I can help shed some light on this a little bit for you here today because you see, one of the fundamental roles of the Holy Spirit in our lives is to bring a testimony of who Jesus is. That is His role. That is what Jesus told us is one of his fundamental roles. Let me show you where He said that in the Gospel of John chapter 15. He said,

John 15:26 (ESL)

But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.

*But when the Helper comes, (*and he's referring there to the Holy Spirit) *whom I will send to you from the Father,* (and then he refers to Him again here by another name) *the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father,* (Look what he says the Spirit will do) *he will bear witness about me.*

That is a primary ministry of the Holy Spirit. To testify about the person of Jesus, but He testifies about our whole relationship with Jesus. He talks to us about how Jesus is a Savior. He talks to us about how we're sinners, right? He brings that conviction. He says, you're a sinner. Jesus is a Savior. You need a Savior, right? And then He tells you, He just, He brings testimony about who Jesus is. But when we come to the place in our lives, and I trust no one in this room has come to that place or ever will, where we finally reject that testimony.

We have essentially blasphemed the Holy Spirit because at that point, at that point of our rejection, we refer to Him or we call Him a liar. We call Him a liar because He has testified to us of our need of a Savior. He has testified to us of Jesus, who is the Savior, and we have rejected that testimony, and we've said, I want none of it. I want no part of it. And so, in that sense, we basically reject His testimony and say, it's not true. And that's what the religious leaders did.

Do you remember when Jesus first talked about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit? It was when they were telling people that He had a demon, and that He was working in cahoots with the devil, and that's how He was able to cast out demons. Remember that?

So, what's going on here? Jesus, through the power of the Spirit, is doing these miracles. They're seeing this testimony of the Spirit through the power that Jesus is utilizing. They're hearing the testimony of the Spirit through all the

things that Jesus is saying, the incredible things He's saying, and they're witnessing these miracles right in front of them and what do they say? Oh, He's doing that by the power of Satan. Easy. Well, what have they done? They've rejected the testimony of the Spirit right in front of them, but they've rejected it and they're explaining it away. That's blasphemy. Why?

You're calling the Holy Spirit a liar. You're essentially saying that that testimony is untrue. And so, Jesus goes on to speak about the fact that can't be forgiven, but it can't be for it. Listen, it's not that it's too big to be forgiven. It doesn't want to be forgiven. That's the point. That attitude doesn't care if it's forgiven. And that's why when people write me or call or talk to me about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and they're all concerned that they've done it, I like to ask them. So do you care if you're forgiven? Well, of course. I mean, you'd never, right? I mean, you believe that you're a sinner, right? Yeah.

You believe Jesus came to die for sinners, right? Yes. Well, you haven't rejected the testimony of the Spirit. You've embraced it. You're not calling the Holy Spirit a liar. You're saying He's truthful in the things that He has testified and revealed to you about your need, right? Well, yeah. That's not blasphemy. Once again, just like what we talked about before, blasphemy against the Spirit is not, again, some random series of words that we spoke in a drunken stupor or in a fit of anger or frustration or darkness, which is what people usually think.

I think I blasphemed the Spirit. I was really angry and just things came out of my mouth and I just, it was terrible and I'm pretty sure I blasphemed the Holy Spirit. No, that's not what blasphemy is. You can be forgiven for stupid statements. We all are, all the time. And so, if you've accepted the testimony of the Holy Spirit as to who Jesus is and what He did for you on the cross, you've done the opposite. Jesus goes on, verse 11,

"And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, [12] for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."

This is a promise that Jesus is going to repeat later on here in the Gospel of Luke and it's a wonderful promise. He's basically saying that when you are brought before authorities, you're going to be given the Word. And we have all kinds of examples of it in the book of Acts where people were given the words and it usually begins like this*, "and Peter filled with the Holy Spirit replied saying,"* or, *"and Paul filled with the Holy Spirit said,"* right? That was that

next part comes right from Him. And that's a promise that God gives us, that He's going to give us the right words.

Please understand, it doesn't mean people are going to fall down on their face every single time and go, you're right. Absolutely. I repent. Because Paul did that. The apostles spoke in front of the Sanhedrin through the power of the Holy Spirit and they didn't repent. It just, it's the promises you're going to be given the words to speak so don't worry about it. Verses 13 through 34 are all about possessions and money and not worrying.

And so, I'm going to read through this whole section and then we'll talk about it just for a bit. So while I read this, and I'm going to talk specifically to you, worriers, would you just let these words wash over your heart? These are the words of Jesus and they're authoritative because like He's God, okay? So, just let these words fill you. Verse 13,

"Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." [14] But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?" [15] And he said to them, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." [16] And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, [17] and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?'

[18] And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. [19] And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry."' [20] But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' [21] So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

[22] And he said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. [23] For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. [24] Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! [25] And which of *you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?*

[26] If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? [27] Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. [28] But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and

tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! [29] And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried.

[30] For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. [31] Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you. [32] "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. [33] Sell your possessions and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. [34] For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Stop there, if you would, please. I find it interesting that this section of Scripture, where Jesus talks about wealth and possessions, and the worry and the time that we spend worrying over this stuff, it all begins with two guys who are arguing over an inheritance, and this guy speaks up, and says, Jesus, tell my brother here to stop being such an idiot. Tell him to help him, tell him to divide the inheritance fair and square and all this sort of stuff. He wants Jesus to get involved in this thing. And Jesus says, it's not what I came to do. But I'll tell you one thing that is important.

Watch out, watch out for covetousness. And basically covetousness is a desire for possessions that I don't have, that perhaps maybe you do. and it is the opposite of a quiet contentment. Covetousness is that gnawing desire for more. I want that. And sometimes, sometimes God will give you what you want and so you can see what a drag it is.

Have you ever had that happen in your life? I told you guys before that when I was like 18, 19 years old, I wanted a car. I mean, I had a car, What I had was a 1966 Ford Fairlane, which was not a big chick magnet. Let me just tell you right now. Of course, I was not a big chick magnet. I wasn't even a little chick magnet, but we're not going to go there. But the point is my car was a duds-ville car, and I wanted a 1969 Plymouth Roadrunner, because I figured if I had that, I was going to be top guy. You know what I mean? And I had this friend who had one, and he kept making noise like he was going to sell it. So I talked to him really often about it and he never did. So finally I'm looking through the newspaper one day and I saw an advertisement for a 1969 Plymouth Roadrunner.

You guys who are into muscle cars and know what they're worth today, you're going to scream, but they wanted 1,100 dollars, and I bought it. I didn't really have the money but I did it anyway, because I wanted it. And this was this was

my desire. I mean, I coveted this car, big, and I wanted it for different reasons which I won't get all into, but one of them, one of them I will tell you about is that Sue had a boyfriend at the time. We went to high school together and she had a boyfriend with a 69 road runner and I decided if I had one, I would be able to beat him and I'd win the girl. Is that about the dumbest thing you've ever heard in your life?

Anyway, I got the car and I never had more gas bill, higher insurance costs and more speeding tickets than when I had that 69 Road Runner. It was the bane of my existence, and it never ran right. It just, it never ran right. And so it was one of those experiences where God let me have the desire of my heart only to show me what an idiot I am for desiring things like that, and so, when we put our focus on things like that it can be very, very unhealthy.

And so Jesus says here in verse 31, if you're going to desire anything, if you're going to run after anything with all of your heart, run after the kingdom of God. That's what He says in verse 31.

Look what He says. *"Instead, seek His Kingdom."* And then all these other things, they'll show up. I'm not saying you'll get a 69 Roadrunner. I'm just saying that what He's saying is that all the other things that people worry about and fuss over, God's going to take care of you as you focus your attention on the kingdom of God. And so to illustrate it, He tells this parable about this man who he's a rich man, but he's about to get much more wealthy because he has this bumper crop one season and he looks at all this grain coming in out of his fields and he thinks good grief I have nowhere to put all this stuff.

My barns aren't nearly big enough. So I know what I'm going to do. I'm going to tear down my old barns. I'm going to build new barns. I'm going to have plenty of space to pack all this stuff in along with all my possessions that I'm going to buy with this money, and then I'm going to sit back and I'm going to say to my soul, I don't know if anybody talks that way, but soul, we're doing good. So he says, I'm going to say, you've laid up many good things for yourself so let's just, from now on, we're going to relax and eat, drink, and be merry. As if that's what people like that do. Cause they don't.

Cause when people run after wealth, they keep running after wealth. And even if they get what they feel like they want, there's always something more that they want. Notice how God responds.

Verse 20*, "but God said to him, fool, this very night, your soul is required of you,"* which means you're going to die this very night. You've got all these

plans and yet you're going to die tonight, and then who's going to take or have all the stuff that you're leaving behind?

But He says in verse 21, and this is the summary statement by Jesus. *"So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God. "So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."*

In other words, the habit of laying up treasure on earth becomes what we're all about, and pretty soon we care nothing about being rich before God. So, what's the answer? What will break the hold of wealth and the desire for it over my life? Jesus, you know by the way when we're talking about breaking habits, usually the word is pretty harsh.

Look at verse 33. It's easy to sell your possessions, give to the needy. Yeah. All right. Now, Jesus isn't telling you to sell everything you own and go sit out in the corner by Walmart with a cardboard sign. What He's telling you to do is to be free of the control of your money by being generous with it.

In so doing, invest in the kingdom where your investments are sure. I'm willing to bet some of you probably invest some of your earthly wealth. Some of you might even have investment counselors and we talk to them about, Hey, where can I invest my money for retirement, or whatever like that? And they tell you, well, you can put your money over here. You can put your money in this thing and whatever all else. And when you're putting your money in the stock market, I mean, what a crazy thought. Have you ever thought about if the stock market was a person, what kind of a person would they be. If the stock market was a physical person, they would be neurotic, wouldn't they?

They'd be just, they'd be constantly, I think we're going to die. I think, I don't know. Cause the stock market's always going up and down. You know people like that. Up one minute, down the next. That's the stock market, right? And yet we're walking up to the stock market and going, here, take my money and make it big. And Jesus says, no, invest in the Kingdom, and He actually uses this interesting phraseology about having a purse or a bag that isn't going to leak, isn't going to spring a leak, and your money isn't going to be lost. In other words, when you invest in the Kingdom and you invest in the things of the Kingdom through generosity, there's going to be an absolute return on your investment.

No questions asked. It is as sure as the day is long. And then Jesus ends with this sobering reminder in verse 34 where He says, *"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."* And He's simply saying that wherever your focus

is, if your focus is on material possessions and what you can have, then that's where your heart is.

For that period of time where I was focusing on a 69 Roadrunner, that's where my heart was. It was, I was all there. And there was no room for anything else to go on in my heart at that time. I want to end with a couple reminders here from God's Word. It wasn't that long ago we went through the Proverbs this summer and we went through this passage not that long ago, but Proverbs chapter 23, check this out. I love this out of the NIV. It says,

Proverbs 23:4-5 (NIV)

Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint. Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings *and fly off to the sky like an eagle.*

Do not wear yourself out to get rich; (I love that) *have the wisdom to show restraint.* (Why?) *Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.*

And everybody who went through 2009 said, Amen, right? Yeah, I mean, we saw a lot of people lose a lot of money. We saw a lot of jobs come to an end when we went through that time of recession right around 2009. Not that many of us had much to lose, but you know. And then 1 Timothy chapter 6. I love what Paul writes to Timothy in this passage when he says,

1 Timothy 6:6-10 (NIV)

...godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

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And so, the warning is given for you and I. And these are such amazing passages. We have every reason in the world not to focus on earthly wealth, because we have a Heavenly Father who has promised to take care of us. Promised. And we've been given ample warning that to run after wealth is to endanger our very lives.

And so, you put those things together. Wow a faithful Father and real serious, true warnings about the dangers of running after wealth. Good grief. Every single person in this room should say, I don't want anything to do with worldly wealth. And yet what do we do? Often, we follow the ways of the world and we do think a lot about wealth and we think about possessions and so forth.

And when we're convicted, when we read chapters like this in the Bible, it's important just to come before the Father and say, Lord, this is me. And yeah, I see that I haven't walked as I should. I see that I haven't focused my attention on the things that I should have. I've been focused on the wrong things. And I ask you to forgive me.

And the most wonderful, glorious thing about the God that you and I serve is that He is a forgiving God, and He will forgive us and He will cleanse us of all unrighteousness, and we can start over again. Lord, need an adjustment today. Spiritual chiropractor, get me back in, get me back in line because things are out of whack in my thinking.