



JESUS SAID...

Jesus Said – God First

Date: Sunday 8th October 2017

Speakers: Andrew McNeil, Rosie McNeil

Key Verses: Luke 12:15-21, Luke 16:11, Matthew 23:23, Malachi 3:7-10

Summary

- Any money we have is a test of both our integrity and our faith. In Luke 16 Jesus said, *“whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?”*
- Jesus spoke more about money than he did about heaven, hell, and prayer combined. Was it because He was fixated on it? No, but He knew we could be.
- Our goals are that we:
 - Have a Christ centred financial mind-set shaped by His teaching, not our background, or baggage.
 - Have a spending plan that reflects biblical priorities.
 - Become generous people, responsive to the needs of others, and willing to share.
 - Become debt free.
 - Save and experience margin in our lives and budgets.
 - Become good stewards - investing our lives, gifts and resources to the glory of God.
 - Work hard, earn well and spend wisely.
- The biggest goal of it all is that we get to know God more, become like Him and see Him at work in the detail of our lives. We have to start with a clear understanding of God as our good Father who provides for our needs.
- A clear principle throughout the Bible is “God first”. One practical way to do that is the principle of tithing. Essentially it’s giving back to God our first 10% in recognition that all we have comes from Him. We are all invited to a life of trust and generosity and we’ve seen this as a really practical way to put God first. It’s not a requirement or command but a route into the adventure of putting God first and seeing him at work through our lives.

- “There is nothing that tests a person’s true view of the invisible realm more than taking ten percent of your income and laying it on the altar before God. It is illogical to give it away, but it is an act of faith that declares, “I believe in the Living God, and I sow my faith into His promise.” Jack Hayford - former President of the Foursquare Church denomination.
- When we choose to put God first it’s often a catalyst to put the whole of our finances under fresh scrutiny. A spending plan, dealing with debt, saving and long range planning. A review of our finances can cause a renewal in our relationship with God as we choose to honour and trust Him.
- The research evidence is that people who actually practice the principle of tithing are statically more stable financially than Christians who don’t tithe (from the same income bracket). The research used 9 key indicators as the basis for their comparison and found the results in the table below.
- John Ortberg - *“Jesus understood that when people give their treasure something happens to their hearts and they open themselves up to experiencing the reality of God in their lives like no way else.”*

Questions for small groups

- **What do we think?** What have been the primary influences on your financial values up to this point? Parents, peers or others?
- **What do we do?** Do we have debt we want to clear? Do we have a spending plan? How would you rate your money management? Is money a cause of anxiety or conflict?
- **What do we want?** Are we functioning with a spending plan that has been prayerfully reflected on? What are some short-term, mid-term and long-term goals? What are some hopes or aspirations you have in this area?
- Do you have a story of God’s faithfulness as you’ve put Him first?

Additional Resources for Reflection

- During this series we’re collating stories from people in our community who’ve stepped out financially and seen God provide for them. Head to birminghamvineyard.com/listen or our podcast to see them as they go up each week.
- A free online budgeting tool generated by stewardship - www.stewardship.org.uk/resources/budgetbuilder
- See this helpful clip from Rick Warren that was used during Sunday’s sermon - youtu.be/p3YV2On4m7Y
- [PDF from the research publication on giving.](#)
- [An excerpt from the full article.](#)