

INTRODUCE

Well, good morning church! If I haven't met you yet, my name is Chris Martin, and I'm the Lead Pastor here. If you've got your Bibles, and I hope you do, please open them up to Matthew chapter 6.

INTRODUCTION: PREACHING ON MONEY

So, in my almost six years since we planted Fathom Church, I think I've only preached two money-specific sermons...just two!

- And today is our 308th sermon since this church started...
- and it's the third money-specific sermon.

Now, did you feel it just get weird in here? Did you feel it?

Man, nothing makes us freeze up quicker than when a pastor starts talking politics or money.

Now, I've mentioned money as a sub point a number of times, and frankly, I teach on it every single week when I talk about giving our tithes and offerings, which I'll do after this sermon. But today is the third full sermon I've done on money here.

Now, to put that into perspective:

- 1 out of every 10 verses in the New Testament deals with money.
- 16 of the 38 parables deal with money.
- And 25% of Jesus' teaching address finances.

Can you imagine if I started preaching a money sermon once-a-month?

RECAP DISCIPLINES

Now, today we are finishing up our series on the disciplines. We have been looking at habits, or practices, or what have been historically called Spiritual Disciplines.

And just by way of reminder, the disciplines are practices that we train ourselves in with the goal of going deeper in our relationship with Christ. Ok?

They are training methods to live in deeper union with Christ. And we said they are to be practiced in simplicity and consistency.

Small, simple practices over a long period of time are one of the keys to spiritual growth.

And today, our final discipline is generosity. Generosity.

DISCLAIMER

Now, before we get into this discipline, let me do my money sermon disclaimer:

- We aren't trying to raise money today. Ok?
- We aren't taking a special offering after I get done
 - cause we want a new building or something.

And hear me, I'm not saying special offerings or building campaigns are wrong. But that's just not today.

- Fathom Church is doing well financially. Ok?
- We're meeting, and actually exceeding our budget!
- You as a church are so unbelievably generous,
 - especially in these COVID days!

So, this isn't a *'we gotta make budget'* sermon.

- It's not a *"We're coming up to the end of the year*
- *and we're not sure if we're going to make it"* sermon.

No. I want to propose to you that **the discipline of generosity is essential to you going deeper with Jesus.**

DISCLAIMER 2

Now, one other disclaimer: I could go in so many directions with generosity. You may have heard preachers break it down as time, talent, and treasure. Right?

- Giving of your time...
- giving of your gifts and abilities...
- and giving of your finances.

And that is all good and right and true. But for the sake of time, I'm going to stick to money today.

- Plus, we just preached through 1 Corinthians,
- and 1 Corinthians 12 covers spiritual gifts
- and the body of Christ at length,
- so, you can go back and listen to those sermons.

In addition, just like in fasting where people are always trying to fast from everything except food...so too, **in being generous, often people are trying to give of everything...except their money.**

Like, ask me to serve or help out or whatever...but man, when it comes to my money...it just feels harder to part with it. I'll show you why.

TRANSITION

So, I'm talking just about generosity in terms of money today. Now, let's look at our text. Matthew 6 starting in verse 19.

MATTHEW 6:19

[19] "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal,

EXPLAIN: WHY?

So, Jesus warns: don't aim at earthly treasures. Why?

- Cause they'll break down.
- They'll be eaten away.
- They rust out.
- They can be stolen.

And a little further down, Jesus will say, **you cannot serve God and money.**

You see, what Jesus knows is that **there is something about finances, that we begin to put our trust in them.**

And so, we can be in a church service, and they can say, *"Follow Jesus!"*

- *"That means you've gotta surrender your life!"*
 - *"I'm in."*
- *"That means you've gotta surrender your dreams!"*
 - *"I'm in."*
- *"That means you've gotta trust God with your kids!"*
 - *"You can have my kids!"*

- *“That means you’ve gotta surrender your finances!”*
 - *“Wait! Hold up! What?!?”*

But I think Jesus knew

- that we have the propensity
- to turn money and possessions...
- into gods.

ILLUSTRATION: CANYON

Until a couple of years ago I drove a 2006 GMC Canyon.

- And the Canyon was a lemon.

Like, nothing worked correctly on the Canyon.

For example, just one day, opening my door stopped shutting off the power to the radio or the windshield wipers.

- And I realized this walking through a parking lot, thinking,
- *“what moron left his wipers going while he is in King Soopers?”*
 - Well, that moron was me.
- So, I started having to get out...
- open the back door...
- and then close my door...
- every time I get out of my truck
- to turn off the systems...
- or my battery would die.

People must have thought I had some sort of OCD, opening and shutting doors all the time.

And my heat and AC would only work on full blast or not at all.

- So, all the settings for a comfortable climate didn't work.
- And if you rode with me and were like, "Man is it hot in here?"
- I'd have to just blast you!
- I was always either roasting or freezing.

Well, a couple years ago, the Canyon finally broke to the point where it cost more than it was worth to fix it. So, we got rid of it.

Now, while driving the Canyon,

- I never really thought of its well-being...
- I never cared if it got dinged or scratched or whatever
- Really, I just prayed it would start...

Like, you ever go to the store, and see a spot, and think,

- *"Man, that's just a little tight..."*
- *I don't wanna get dinged or something."*
- Never thought that with the Canyon.

I thought,

- *"can we make it, can we make it, can we make it? Yes!"*
- *Alright, now, out the windows, everyone!"*

But when it died, I thought, *"alright, let's get a new car, we've never been able to afford a new car, but right now, we can, so let's do it."*

- So, we bought a 2019 Toyota Rav4.
- And man, it was legit.
- Heated seats.
- iPhone syncing with the stereo.
- Air that didn't make you feel like you were in a wind tunnel!

But man, I found myself parking a little farther away at the King Soopers.

- I found myself a bit more conscientious
- about the look of the cars I parked next to,
- “What is that? A 06 Canyon? Nope!
 - Take another lap!
 - Go find another spot.”

And I found myself, for the first time, worried about what moth and rust can destroy.

Now, that doesn't mean: don't have nice things...but it did reveal in me a potential idol...in my stuff.

TRANSITION

Jesus is issuing a warning here to be careful. **Because the stuff that you own, can very easily, start to own you.**

But Jesus offers us an antidote to this issue. To the warning NOT to store up treasures on earth, he says this in verse 20:

MATTHEW 6:20

[20] but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

YOU'RE GENEROUS

This is Jesus saying,

- *“If you don't want to focus all your energies*
- *on stuff that can be stolen or destroyed...*
- *the solution is to, instead,*
- *lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.”*

And the way we do this is through generosity.

Now hear me, everyone here is generous to something, ok? We're all generous to something...but that something just tends to be YOU.

- You're generous to you.
- You're generous to your house.
- You're generous to that new car.
- You're generous to your kid's education.
- You're generous to your hobby.
- You're generous to your vacation fund.
- You're generous to something.

But the Bible teaches that Jesus to be honored with our first and our best.

EXPLAIN: MELCHIZEDEK

Now what does that mean? How does that look? Well, this actually starts all the way back in the Old Testament in Genesis 14 with Abram and a guy named Melchizedek.

- Now, he's kinda a wacky ancient Hebrew mythical character
- who I do not have time to go into,
- but I preached on him in depth in Genesis 14 and in Hebrews 4,
- so, you can go back and listen to those sermons if you'd like.

But in Genesis 14,

- Abram wins a battle,
- comes back with a ton of spoils,
- and out of nowhere this guy Melchizedek shows up,
- and he blesses Abram.

Well, Abram responds to this blessing by giving a tenth of all his spoils to Melchizedek. He gave a tithe.

EXPLAIN: TITHE

And this is the first time we see the tithe. And the tithe simply meant: giving a tenth unto the Lord.

And the principle of the tithe

- will show up all through the Old Testament
- as kind of the baseline
- for how the people of God invested in,
- or **laid up for yourselves treasures in heaven.**

Now people want to argue all the time about how much they should give.

- Is it a percent?
- Is it a flat rate?
- *"Yeah, it's 10% here, but that's Old Testament."*
- *"Aren't we New Testament Christians?"*

So, what are we supposed to give?

Now, real quick, think about this really practically, ok? If you could learn to live on a tenth less than you make...there is a blessing right there.

Cause the reality is we all live on a percentage of our income. It's just that many people live on about 107% of what they make.

Ok, you might want to write this down...that's bad.

EXPLAIN: FIRST FRUITS

But what we teach at Fathom is not the principle of the tithe...but the principle of first fruits giving.

- Abram here gives his first fruits.
- His first and his best from the spoils.
- Before he does anything else,
- he gives a tithe to God.

The principle is this: **we give God our first and our best.**

- So, you take what God provides generously,
- and you respond with generosity.
- You give your first and your best.

So, we ask every Christian who calls Fathom their home church to give their first and their best.

- Now, if this isn't your church, then don't give here.
- And if you aren't a Christian, then we don't ask you to give.

ILLUSTRATION: US

So, Maryse and I practice this...ok, yes, I am the pastor here, but we are members here as well. So, we give our first and our best...

- So, when we were engaged to be married,
- and going through pre-marital counseling,
- one of the questions that was asked of us was of finances,
- and specifically giving.

Now, I wasn't raised in church, so I had no real idea of how or what to give.

- But Maryse was raised in a Christian home,
- and she said it was a non-negotiable for her
- that we give away 10% to our church.
 - And I thought, "10%?!? Yo, I'm making like 18k right now"

But we decided to use the tithe as the baseline for our giving.

Here's what that means:

- We give our first 10% back to Fathom.
 - I know that's weird, because I get paid here...
- but we bring back the first 10%.

Now, that's different from the last 10% percent, ok?

- This means that if we find ourselves in a pinch,
- Or something breaks and we need money to fix it...
- we have to find the money elsewhere.
- Never from our first fruits.

We don't give God whatever we have left over

- at the end of the month.
- **God doesn't do leftovers!**

So, we bring him our first and our best.

- And we did this when we were making 18k at my first job.
- And we did this when we weren't sure
 - how we were going to pay all our bills.
- And we do it today.

And listen, it's still really, really hard.

Here's how I know I am bent to worship my money:

- I've been faithfully giving 10% for almost 15 years...
- and I am STILL tempted
- with what I could do for myself with that money!

Do you know what I could do with the 10%? A ton!

- I could live in a bigger house.
- I could have nicer things!
- I'd have NEVER driven the GMC Canyon!

But we use the tithe as the baseline, and we give the first 10% back to our home church...to the place that is spiritually forming our family.

And then our family gives to other organizations and missionaries and such, but that's over and above the first tenth.

TRANSITION

So, Jesus warns about earthly treasure. He gives the antidote of heavenly treasure. And then the reason why. Verse 21:

MATTHEW 6:21

[21] For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

EXPLAIN: AFFECTIONS

So, why are we generous?

- Well, it's NOT JUST to invest in heavenly things.
- But Jesus just linked our affections to our wallets.

It's like Jesus just said,

- *"Hey, you say you love Jesus first...*
- *but you want to diagnose where your heart actually is?*
- *Check out your bank statement.*
- *Cause that's where you'll see what you actually love!"*

Your money will go in the direction of that which you worship. It's like I just said, everyone is generous to something.

Did you know that you all tithe? You do! You all do SOMETHING with your first tenth. But most use their first fruits on things that cannot do for them what only God can do!

- You realize that your house can't save you, don't you?
- Your kid's education cannot save you.
- Your hobbies, while legit, cannot give you what you need!
- Listen, your coffee habit...
 - and some of you are like, "Don't you dare!"
 - But listen...good coffee,
 - which is a gift from God on high...
 - is not what you should value first.

**SLIDE WHAT YOU DO WITH YOUR FIRST
EXPOSES WHAT'S FIRST IN YOUR HEART.**

- Now do you see why this is a discipline?
- Why this is necessary for spiritual maturity?
- Why this needs to be practiced?

APPLICATION

Now, let me give you a real practical application that I have taught here at Fathom a number of times, which I think is really helpful.

I want to challenge you to take a look at your finances this week.

- If you are married,
 - I'd challenge you to have that conversation as a couple.
- If you are unmarried,
 - I'd really encourage you to do this with a roommate or friend or family member.
- Don't do it alone, is all I'm saying.

And as you look ask yourself:

- what do I give my first and best to?
- What does this say about what I love most?

Hey, this might be a painful exercise!

But then I'd challenge you to make a plan for how you can start practicing first-fruits-giving.

Now, don't try to bite this whole thing off in one fail swoop. Ok? Just think in terms of taking one next step. Ok? So, here are some steps:

- STEP 1: If you're giving nothing...give something. Ok?
 - Go **SLIDE FROM NOTHING TO SOMETHING.**
 - This might be a first, and HUGE step for some of you, but I'm challenging you to engage the discipline of generosity.
- STEP 2: Go **SLIDE FROM SOMETHING TO A PERCENTAGE.**
 - Now, that doesn't necessarily mean
 - give a full 10% right away.
 - But move from that random amount, to a set percentage.
- STEP 3: Go **SLIDE FROM A PERCENTAGE TO A TITHE.**
 - We all give our first tenth to something.
 - Maybe your next step
 - is to give your first and best tenth to God.
- And STEP 4: Go **SLIDE FROM A TITHE TO SACRIFICIAL.**
 - Cause for some of you,
 - a tenth isn't enough to be a real sacrifice.
 - And you need to take the next step towards giving sacrificially.

BLANK SLIDE

So, nothing to something. Something to a percentage. A percentage to a tithe. And a tithe to sacrificial.

CONCLUSION

Now, let me end this sermon AND THIS SERIES by commending you, church, to continue these disciplines. I know I said to train in them during this series, but I want to encourage you to keep training.

And the reason I want to encourage you towards this is that like any type of training, **if you don't keep practicing, you'll lose the ability.**

- If you've ever worked out for a while,
- and then stopped,
- it's just unbelievable
- how quickly you atrophy,
- and lose all your fitness.

The same will happen with your discipleship. If you don't keep training yourself in these disciplines you will lose all that you gain.

ILLUSTRATION: BIPOLAR

This illustration has been in my head all series, and I've saved it for today: I know a number of friends who suffer with bipolar disorder.

- Bipolar is a mental condition
- that causes extreme mood swings
- from almost manic emotional highs,
- all the way down to deep, low depressions.

Now, some of my friends who suffer with this say it is very difficult to find the right combo of therapy and medication to help even a person out to curb the high highs and the low lows.

But as difficult as that is, they tell me that the real struggle is staying committed to the treatment plan.

- Because often when one is in a really dark and low depression,
- they find themselves seeking out treatment and medication,
- just to get them out of that place.
- But once they stabilize,
- it can be extremely difficult to convince oneself
- to keep on the treatment plan,
- because you don't feel like you need it!

And I have people close to me who lapse back into their disorder because they aren't able to stay on the plan that works.

ENDING

Church, this is what happens to us.

- We find ourselves in a bind,
- or in a mess,
- or stuck in sin,
- or even manic and excited...exuberant over God.

And we get some disciplines in our lives

- and they bring us up,
- or even us out,
- and grow us a bit.

You might feel this way right now because of this series!

- But then we start feeling good.
- We start feeling more mature.

- We start feeling like we're gaining a foothold in this faith stuff.
- Only to forget about the very disciplines that got us there.
- We think, *"I've got this!"*
- When in reality, *"we don't got this."*

Church, training in the disciplines in simplicity and consistency, over a long period of time, are one of the keys to spiritual growth.

So, let's keep at it. We've created a disciplines plan that you can download, and fill out, and use as a tool to keep training in this stuff.

SLIDE FATHOMCHURCH.ORG/DISCIPLINES

- Make a plan,
- ask someone close to you to hold you accountable to it...
- and then train...
- practice...
- stick with these disciplines.

Your D-Groups will be working on these in coming weeks, and we'll also circle back on this before the end of the year.

Let's pray together.

LYRICS SLIDE W/PADS

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give
- PRAYER - fathomchurch.org/prayer
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

RESOURCES USED:

- Calhoun, Adele Ahlberg. *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*.
- Chandler, Matt. *Hearts of Generosity*.
- Comer, John Mark. *Shotguns and Salutations*.
- Porter, Josh. *Your Treasure is Doomed*.
- Practicing the Way. <https://practicingtheway.org>