



## November Sermon Series: Live to Give

### Message #2: How to Be Rich

#### Getting the Nod:

Opening Video: **Rich Man**

**Many of you recognize that clip from the movie “Courageous.”** Javier struggles with making enough money to provide for his family... and never quite felt adequate. He definitely didn't feel rich. But his wife reminded him... being rich isn't about numbers on a ledger or possessions around us... being rich is much more.

Every one of us has wished or thought "If I just made a little more," or "If I was just worth a little more," or maybe you came today and you're feeling a little bit financially stressed or you're struggling. There are a lot of pressures in our world and you feel like you could just use a little more; you need a little more. Well, you're in the right place today to hear from the Lord and His Word about what He thinks is the GOOD LIFE.

**We learn through Christ the real definition of wealth and being rich...** and how important generosity is to that definition. Because Jesus gave so that we may live, we now give to Him and others. As Jesus followers, and as His church, we are to live in the same manner as our savior—a life of irrational generosity.

**Transitional Statement:** We learned last week about the world's path to the Good Life... happiness through accumulation; popularity with people; excitement by any means; and being better off than other people. But as we found... the GOOD LIFE is directly attached to generosity. **Today's lesson is called, “How to Be Rich”.**

#### Connecting Us:

If you have your Bibles close by or want to use the screens to follow along... today let's turn to the New Testament book of 1 Timothy.

It's a letter written by the apostle Paul to this young leader he was developing, teaching, training to be a leader in the church, a young man named Timothy. Paul gave Timothy a variety of instructions on all sorts of things, including very specific instructions for rich people. Let's read it...

NIV84 | 1 Timothy 6:17-19 **Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. 18 Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 19 In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.**

#### The Truth About Being Rich:

##### 1. **Some rich people aren't very good at being rich.**

- Some had attitudes of superiority and they looked down at other people.
- Others overindulged while ignoring the needs right around them.

- Some made very poor personal decisions because they believed they were somehow above the rules, that the rules didn't apply to them.
- Can you even imagine people living this way? **But for Paul, the problem wasn't that rich people existed; it was that they didn't know how to be rich**
- Look at Paul's words, **Command those who are rich...**
- Now here's our question...Who's he talking to? Well, most of us, if you're like me, would answer, "Well gosh, somebody else. More specifically, someone who has way more than I do, who's way wealthier than I am, who has way more resources available than I do." **But realistically... Paul was talking about us. You see...**

## 2. Being rich is illusive.

- There was actually an article in the New York Times not long ago talking about how the meaning of the word rich changes based on your income. There's actually data around this.
- A survey was done asking people, "How much money would it take for you to be rich?" Look at these numbers and watch what happens:
  - In households making under \$25,000 a year, the average response for what it would take to be rich was \$293,000.
  - In households earning between \$30,000 and \$60,000 a year, that number went up to \$394,000.
  - In households earning between \$60,000 and \$120,000 a year, that number went up to \$426,000 a year.
  - And for the top 15 percent, for those earning over \$120,000 a year, that number went up to over \$500,000. Does anyone see a pattern happening here?
  - **Here's another set of numbers to reinforce the point...**
  - If your total household income was more than \$1,500 a year, you were in the top 25 percent of the wage earners in the world.
  - If your total household income was more than \$25,000 a year, you were in the top 10 percent of wage earners in the world.
  - If your total household income was more than \$50,000 a year, you're in the top 1 percent of wage earners in the world.
  - **What does this mean?**
  - I'll start with me. What this means for me is that I'm rich. We don't like that word. That's an uncomfortable word.
  - What this means for many of you, I imagine, if you're honest, if you just look at the numbers, is that you're rich.
  - So, we have to conclude...

## 3. There's a big gap between being rich and feeling rich.

- **My first Job:** My first job was at a fine dining restaurant called L & K Restaurant. That was the first place I worked. I will never forget the feeling I had when I got my first paycheck. It wasn't even close to \$100, but I felt like I had won the lottery. I felt like the richest person in the world.
- Here's what's so ironic about that. Even though I have been able to make more money than that, I have continually felt less rich. Why?

- Well, it's not because I have less; it's because I've become more and more aware of people who have more than me. Even though I am making much more than my first job... I feel I like I make less. I am told by the enemy that I need more because I see what I don't have.
- Even if you don't think this applies to you, the truth is you can be controlled by money. Your life can be directed and controlled by money, even if you don't have a lot of it.

#### 4. **No matter how much you have, we can be controlled by money.**

- Regardless of where you are financially or how you feel financially, just for this hour when we're together, let's listen in as if Paul is talking to each of us.
- What does he tell Timothy? He says first, "**Command those who are rich not to be arrogant.**"
- Notice here what he doesn't say. He doesn't say you should feel guilty about having money. He doesn't say you should think money is bad or evil or sinful. He doesn't say, "Don't ever be concerned about your financial life." Anyone here ever concerned about their financial life? I am. We should be.

Paul says, "**Command those who are rich not to be arrogant.**" Why? Because one of the first things having money and then having more money does is that it starts to tempt you to believe things about yourself that aren't entirely true.

- You start to believe you're smarter than other people.
- You might start to believe you're more entitled than other people.
- You start to believe your comfort is more important, more valuable, than other people's.
- Have you ever seen money change people? One of the greatest men I ever knew once told me that a little bit of extra money can turn people into "WANNA BES".

**Illustration of Playing Monopoly:** Have you ever seen someone change while playing monopoly? I have seen some get aggressive and excited about bankrupting someone... or about paying rent?

It's just a small thing, but why is it sometimes like that? **You see, when you don't know how to be rich, money starts to change you. It goes to your head.** It creates that sense of entitlement, that sense that you deserve it, that sense that you're even better than other people. So, Paul starts right where he should. "Command those who are rich not to be arrogant."

**Transitional Statement:** There's something about money that leads us to believe that our lives are going to be safer, more secure, that we're going to be happier, more content.

But I love how the writer of Proverbs puts it. He writes, "**The wealth of the rich is their fortified city; they imagine it a wall too high to scale.**" In other words, Solomon says the rich come up with this imagined idea. It's in their heads, this imaginary idea that money is going to make them safer, that money is going to make them secure. But let's take a closer look at what God says about being rich...

#### **God's Take on Generosity:**

#### **God's Secret to Being Rich:**

##### 1. **It is connected to what we believe about money.**

- It's the way we count on it. Cling to it. What we think it will bring to us down the road.
- Paul says, **Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain...**
- I have visited many church friends who were nearing the end of their lives... and I never once heard someone say, "You know, I wish I'd put more trust in my money." I never once heard someone say, "I wish I'd put more of my life into accruing or hoarding or storing up for myself. I wish I had bought more, spent more, had more."
- Something else Paul would have us know about being rich is this...

## 2. **It is connected to what we truly believe about God.**

- Regardless of what you tell yourself about how you believe about God, it's what you actually believe about God that matters.
- It's that maybe deep down, where you wouldn't want to admit it, you don't think he cares. Maybe deep down (and you wouldn't want to admit it), you don't believe he's reliable when it comes to the practical things in life.
- **Let me put it this way. See if this helps. On a scale of zero to ten, how much does your money care about you?** Whether you think you have a lot or a little, how much does your money care about you? How many of you answered, "Zero"? Okay, most of you.
- **On a scale of zero to ten, your money cares about you zero.** It doesn't care about you at all. It has no preference for your life. It's not sad when you're sad. It's not weeping when you're weeping. It doesn't care if there's a lot or a little in your bank account. It doesn't even care if it's in your bank account or someone else's bank account. It does not care.
- **Now on a scale of zero to ten, how much does God care about you?** The answer is a ten. But let me say this. Even if your answer is a one or a two or a three, even if you have doubts, even if you're struggling, even if you're not sure he cares, even if you're not sure he's going to provide, even if you're wrestling with this, wouldn't you still be better off trusting someone who cares a little?

## 3. **It is connected to choosing who or what you will trust.**

- Paul is not telling us to choose less security. He's inviting us to choose more of it, the kind of security that that's eternal, the kind of security that gives satisfaction and contentment and joy at that level of your soul that no amount of money could ever do.
- But you still have to choose! And you can only choose one.
- Jesus said it best, NLT | **Mt 6:24 "No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.**

## 4. **It is not connected to what we can buy, but what we can give.**

- 1 Timothy 6:18-19 **Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 19 In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.**
- Paul says about being rich, "This is how to take hold of it. This is how to have it. This is how to be secure in it." Do you want to know how to be rich? Do you want to know how to be satisfied? Do you want that un-scalable wall of security? Build on a

foundation not just for the next 5 years or 10 years or even 50 years; build a foundation that is eternal.

**Transitional Statement:** How? Trust God, do good, be rich in good deeds. I have one last verse to share with you...

### Our Response to God's Word:

NKJV | Lk 6:38 **Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."**

**Transitional Statement:** What is Luke telling us? Generosity always has a return. And that return is more than you gave. It will give us such a reward that we will see it as running over!

### Drawing the Net:

**Illustration of George White:** Anne Keegan's article "Blue Christmas" was a collection of Christmas stories told by Chicago police officers. One was the story of George White.

George lived in a rented room at the YMCA. He had one set of clothes, shoes wrapped with rubber bands to keep the soles from flopping, and a threadbare black overcoat. He spent his mornings napping in an old metal chair by the heater in the back of the 18th District office.

Two officers, Kitowski and Mitch, took an interest in the old man, occasionally slipping him a few bucks. They found out that Billy the Greek over at the G&W grill gave him a hot breakfast every morning, no charge.

The two policemen and their families decided to have George as their guest for Christmas dinner. They gave him presents, which he unwrapped carefully.

As they drove him back to the Y, George asked, "Are these presents really mine to keep?" They assured him they were. "Then we must stop at the G&W before I go home," he said. With that, George began rewrapping his presents.

When they walked into the restaurant, Billy the Greek was there as always. "You been good to me, Billy," said George. "Now I can be good to you. Merry Christmas." George gave all his presents away on the spot. **Generosity is always more believable when it is a lifestyle.**

### My Challenge for this week is:

**Be generous with someone who has been generous to you. You might be God's way of reward.**