

The Crown of the Wise Is Their Wealth

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Preacher: Colin Horne

[0 : 00] This is Proverbs chapter 4. Hear, O sons of Father's instruction, and be attentive that you may gain insight.

! For I give you good precepts. Do not forsake my teaching. When I was a son with my father, tender, the only one in the sight of my mother, he taught me and said to me, Let your heart hold fast my words, keep my commandments, and live.

Get wisdom, get insight, do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her, and she will keep you. Love her, and she will guard you.

The beginning of wisdom is this, get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight. Prize her highly, and she will exalt you. She will honor you if you embrace her.

She will place on your head a graceful garland. She will bestow on you a beautiful crown. We're returning to the house of lady wisdom this morning, and what a feast we've already had in the last two weeks in her home.

[1 : 14] We've seen that Proverbs is all about the daily realities of life. Proverbs is an incredibly practical book. It gives wisdom for situations that we truly do encounter on a daily basis.

How to navigate life in a way that honors God. So last week, we considered the topic of the tongue. How to apply wisdom to the words that we say.

And we say a lot of words every day. And now maybe you thought last week, we could spend several weeks talking about the topic of the tongue. What a 30,000-foot overview we had of that. Well, if you felt that last week, you probably will feel that even more this week. And so it is an overview this morning of another topic found in the book of Proverbs. And this topic, like the tongue, is very relevant to our everyday lives.

Money. Proverbs has a lot to say about money. Life costs money. Now that's just a reality. This is a lesson that in our home, we're teaching our children even, especially some of the younger ones.

[2 : 27] We can't just get more of something when we run out of it just because. We can't just make that appear in our home. We can't just go to the store and take whatever we would like.

It costs money. And no, that little rectangular card isn't just magic. There's a transaction that's taking place. Money must pay for what we bring home from the store.

And our kids have been learning that money goes quickly. We got them piggy banks for Christmas. And each of their piggy banks has a divider in it. It's got the spend money and the save money and the give money slot.

The money in that spend category goes really fast. And that money in the save category, it takes a long time to build that up. Life costs money.

I was reminded of this even this week. One of my kids brought me lunch into my office. And I said, wow, what service? And my child responded, that'll be \$25.

[3 : 27] So turnabout's fair play. I guess they've learned the lesson and they're trying to teach me it as well. So much of our lives involves money.

We spend a lot of time earning it. We think about it. We sometimes worry about it. We talk about it with our spouse. We teach about it with our children. Money is a significant part of our lives.

And so no surprise, money is a significant topic in the book of Proverbs. Now we have six points this morning as it relates to money. And I want to begin on a positive note with what Proverbs teaches us about the goodness of wealth.

That's point number one, the goodness of wealth. So here we are laying this foundation first and seeing this biblical perspective on the goodness of money.

Now, of course, we live in a world that is obsessed with money. That says money is good and then goes way beyond that and crosses the line.

[4 : 38] The world is greedy for money. The world is in love with money and wants what money can buy. It's a status symbol. The more you have, the more power and influence you gain.

So yes, the world says money is good, but it takes a good thing and it greatly distorts it. Now, so much so that we as Christians can begin to think that money is bad.

That it's wrong to build wealth. That it's sinful. Now, some of that is probably also fueled in response to the heresy of the prosperity gospel. That's one extreme that we absolutely must avoid.

Where there's too great of an emphasis put on financial blessing. Where the gospel is twisted and distorted and minimized and God does become like a genie in the bottle.

We're just trying to get out of him whatever we can. That is a huge problem. But there's also a problem to the other extreme. Where any kind of financial blessing, where any kind of wealth is viewed negatively.

[5 : 41] How often is Paul misquoted as saying that money is the root of all evil. Not the love of money and not a root of all evil.

So there's sometimes confusion even among us as Christians. How should we view money? Well, what does wisdom say? The wisdom of God's word. What does wisdom say about the topic of money and building wealth and stewarding wealth?

Well, more good things than we might naturally expect. Wisdom does not condone loving money. No, it very much condemns that.

It condemns greed. But wisdom helps us to see the goodness of money when we live wisely with it. So let's look at some Proverbs. And more specifically, some lists that we find in Proverbs.

Things that are lumped together. They are a package deal. Any time I think of package deals in God's word, I think of elementary school playing pickup basketball. And we're picking teams.

[6 : 47] And always with the best friends saying, we're a package. If you take one of us, you take both of us. Well, that's how Proverbs is with some lists. Where you get one, you get the others.

So turn with me or listen to Proverbs chapter 3. Proverbs chapter 3, verse 16 describes to us wisdom. And like Proverbs often does, wisdom is personified as a woman.

And she is speaking to us. So she is directly saying this. And she sounds very much like a human who has hands. Proverbs says, chapter 3, verse 16.

Long life is in her right hand. In her left hand are riches and honor. So what's the package of blessings?

Well, it's long life. It's riches. And it's honor. Is long life good? Yes. Is honor good? Yes.

[7 : 49] Are riches good? Yes. Listen to another proverb where we have this kind of threefold blessing. Proverbs 22, 4. The reward for humility and fear of the Lord is riches and honor and life.

There they are again. A package deal. With wisdom, those who live with humility and the fear of the Lord, that is capturing wisdom for us.

What do we find? Find riches, honor, and life. Consider also the very author of so many Proverbs, Solomon himself.

What did he ask for from God? Well, he asked for wisdom from him. What did God give to him?

Well, we say wisdom is what he gave to him. But do we know that God also gave him more than wisdom?

He gave the wisdom that Solomon asked for. He gave it to him like a bowl of ice cream. And then he added the whipped cream and the cherry on top that Solomon hadn't asked for.

[8 : 55] And we see this in 2 Chronicles 1, beginning in verse 11. God answered Solomon. Solomon. So it's not just in Proverbs that we find those blessings together.

We find them in the life of the author of Proverbs himself. Solomon. God gave to Solomon the wisdom he asked for and so much more. Here's the bonus.

He gave riches, possessions, and honor. All good things given to Solomon by God himself. Let's consider also expanding out from Proverbs to the entirety of Scripture.

The one true story of Scripture. Looking at redemptive history. We begin in Genesis. What do we find in Genesis as God is describing Eden and the garden in it?

Well, we find this description also of the land of Havilah. And what do we find in this land in chapter 2, verse 12? Gold. And the gold of that land is good.

[10 : 30] And other precious stones are also there. Bdelium and onyx. We find wealth as Eden is described to us in the very beginning of God's Word. The very beginning of redemptive history.

And how about at the end of it? What do we find there in Revelation 21? The new Jerusalem described to us in the new heavens and the new earth. With streets of gold and all kinds of jewels used in the construction of that city.

Again, there's wealth. Now, in between Eden and the new Jerusalem. In the temple that God had Solomon build. The place where God came to dwell.

Reminding us of what life in Eden had been like and should have continued like. And pointing us forward to the very end. Reminding us of what it will be like in the new heavens and new earth. What is the temple described like? What do we find in there? Gold is everywhere. The walls, the beams, the thresholds, the doors, the furnishings.

[11 : 33] It's just a golden building. A golden masterpiece of architecture. Those privileged to enter into the temple would have been struck with a picture of great wealth.

So money. Building wealth. Being financially prosperous. All of this is good. The good life presented to us in God's word includes the blessing of wealth, riches, and prosperity.

And there's no shame in that, according to Proverbs. In fact, it's the opposite. There's honor.

Proverbs 14.24 says, The crown of the wise is their wealth.

But the folly of fools brings folly. Now, a crown is a symbol of honor. It's a visible symbol of honor and respect that a king would wear.

What is the crown of the wise? What is the visible symbol of their honor? It's their wealth. Now, of course, the wise are godly. The wise possess humility.

[12 : 43] They aren't flaunting their wealth. They're good stewards of it. We're going to see all of that soon enough in Proverbs this morning. But the wise should not be ashamed of wealth.

Generally speaking, Proverbs teaches us that it's a symbol of honor. Proverbs has a lot of good to say about the goodness of wealth.

And let's consider our second point then together now. The gain of wealth. How is it that we come by it? How is it that we build wealth?

Well, Proverbs gives us many good answers. Proverbs instructs us. And we can go back to Proverbs chapter 3 to see this. To see that wealth is gained by wisdom.

As a general rule, those who live wisely will prosper. So Proverbs 3 and backing up a little bit from verse 16. I'll begin in verse 13.

[13 : 42] Blessed is the one who finds wisdom. And the one who gets understanding. For the gain from her is better than gain from silver. And her profit better than gold.

She is more precious than jewels. And nothing you desire can compare with her. Long life is in her right hand. In her left hand are riches and honor.

So you see, this proverb is very helpful to us. This proverb helps us to keep our proper focus. To have the proper perspective. What is it that we should pursue?

What is it that we should seek after? What is it that we should make our aim to gain? It's not wealth. It's wisdom. It's not blessed is the one who finds wealth.

But blessed is the one who finds wisdom. In fact, wisdom is compared to wealth. And again, it's shown to be superior. Greater.

[14 : 44] Better. Better. Now again, here's the general rule. The one who seeks wisdom will gain wealth as a result. As a blessing.

Indeed, when Solomon says in verse 13, Blessed is the one who finds wisdom. Well, riches are a part of that blessing. So too is long life.

So too is honor. Solomon would know from experience. He sought wisdom. That's what he asked of God. Not riches. Not long life. Not honor.

Those things weren't the focus for him. In humility, he said, God, give me wisdom so I can govern your people. Not even give me wisdom so I can outsmart everybody. But give me wisdom so I can serve you.

So the riches, the long life, the honor, those things weren't the focus for him. And they shouldn't be the focus for us either.

[15 : 41] Seek wisdom. Wisdom is better than wealth. Wisdom is the priority over wealth. And it is by wisdom that any wealth is gained.

In Proverbs 8, 18, wisdom speaks. And she says, Riches and honor are with me. Enduring wealth and righteousness.

The blessing of wealth. Wisdom says, found with me. Or how about Proverbs 24? In Proverbs 24, we learn how to build a house.

Verse 3 says, By wisdom a house is built. And by understanding it is established. By knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.

So the house of wisdom is built by wisdom. And that house is then filled with all precious and pleasant riches.

[16:42] So by wisdom, wealth is gained. Living wisely is how wealth is built God's way. Now that's the general principle. We can actually drill down some and get even more specific about how to live wisely according to the wisdom of Proverbs.

And we see here in Proverbs that the wise work hard. So yes, it is by wisdom that wealth is gained. But even more specifically, it is by work that wealth is gained.

The wise work. Hard work leads to financial prosperity. That's the principle that we find over and over in Proverbs.

The entire book of Proverbs is filled with principles that are generally true. But not always. These are not guarantees. That's one of the great problems of things like the prosperity gospel.

Takes general principles and makes them promised guarantees. We should not read Proverbs as promises. Not every believer is financially well off.

[17:53] Some of God's people are actually incredibly poor. Because of great hardship in their life. Even as they themselves live wisely. Even as they themselves are hard workers.

We could look at many examples from God's word. Here's just two. First, think of Ruth in the Old Testament. She and her mother, mother-in-law Naomi. They endured great trials.

They were financially destitute. But Ruth was a hard worker. She was out gleaning in the fields to try to provide for Naomi and herself. She was living wisely as she cared for her mother-in-law.

That was living in obedience to God. And it was through this, gleaning in the fields, that Ruth met Boaz. Ruth wasn't poor as some kind of punishment from God.

She wasn't poor because God was disciplining her. We see that God was sovereignly using her poverty to introduce her to Boaz. Who she then would marry. And from their marriage, generations later, would come Christ, our Savior.

[18:57] So we must always remember that Proverbs teaches general principles. But there are exceptions to those principles. We see this in the book of Job.

Think of Job. His friends were quick to conclude, Job, there must be some sin in your life because you are suffering in this great trial.

You are suffering in even the stripping of your wealth from you. We are going to see Proverbs that speak of wealth being stripped from the foolish, from those who are not living God's way. So they were taking the wisdom of Proverbs and saying, Job, this must be true of you.

But that wasn't the case. Job wasn't being disciplined for sin in his life. He was being tested to demonstrate his faithfulness. So yes, there are Christians who are financially poor, but it should not be due to foolishness.

It should not be due to laziness. When we can work, we should. If I am able to work, if I have the freedom to work, then I should work.

[20:07] And hard work pays off. That's the general principle of Proverbs. With hard work comes financial gain. Proverbs 14, 23 says, In all toil there is profit, but mere talk tends only to poverty.

That proverb really connects back to last week's sermon as well. Those of us who like to talk need to be careful because mere talk tends only to poverty. In all toil, though, there is profit.

We've been working on a bit of a kitchen remodel in our home lately. And if you know Casey and I, you know who is more skillful in the realm of building projects.

It's not me. And my wife will be busily working on the kitchen, and I'll come in to see what's being done, and I'll start talking, making lots of observations about good things that's been happening or the things I've been writing about in my sermon that I really want her to hear about.

And again, before I know it, I get the look that says, I'm working. There's profit in toil, not in the mere talk that I'm doing. Work has stopped while I am talking to her.

[21:24] In all toil, there is profit. The hard working person will be prosperous. Wealth is gained by working and working hard. That's what wisdom tells us.

Who are we supposed to take a cue from? The ant, right? Proverbs 6. Go to the ant, O sluggard. Consider her ways and be wise.

Without any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest. How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber. We already have ants in our house this week.

Like, winter just ended, and the ants are already busily at work. We've got food to get off the ground. These kids drop lots of food in the Horn household at every meal. We need to eat. [22 : 26] The ants are busy. Aren't they supposed to still be like hibernating, hatching? I don't know where they go in the winter, but they're working hard already. Take a hint from the ant.

Work and wealth, they are found together. And so too, laziness and poverty. Proverbs doesn't really give us that neutral zone.

Proverbs is saying, you are to be a hard worker, and by that, you will prosper. But if you are a lazy person, and if you are lazy, you will suffer in poverty.

Proverbs 12, 27 makes this point. Whoever is slothful will not roast his game, but the diligent man will get precious wealth.

Kids, do you like eating chicken? Chicken strips, chicken nuggets, roasted chicken, grilled chicken, fried chicken.

[23 : 29] What if you sat down to dinner, kids, and instead of chicken nuggets, it was just a dead chicken with its feathers still on it, sitting on the table? That is gross.

Well, that's what you get if you're lazy. Whoever is slothful will not roast his game. That means that you eat a terrible meal, but the diligent.

What will the diligent person get? Not just a decently roasted chicken, which is good. We want that roasted chicken, but precious wealth. The wise work, and the wise gain wealth.

So we've seen the goodness of wealth. We've seen the gain of wealth. Let's now turn our attention to the grip of wealth. There are many Proverbs that teach us about the dangerous grip that wealth can have on our hearts.

So the wise do gain wealth, but the wise don't have their hearts captured by wealth. Money is not the master of the wise. Proverbs 23, 4 warns us, do not toil to acquire wealth.

[24 : 43] In other words, don't make money what you seek after. What does the proverb tell us instead to do over and over? Not wealth. We seek wisdom.

Not riches. We seek righteousness. And for those who seek wisdom and righteousness, so often riches in some way is a reward.

It's the result of living wisely. It's the result of living righteously. But don't get the order wrong. The order is so very important.

What our heart is seeking after is so very important. How quickly the blessing of wealth can turn into the sinful desire for wealth.

There are many Proverbs that teach us not to be greedy for gain. Proverbs 28, 25 says, A greedy man stirs up strife, but the one who trusts in the Lord will be enriched.

[25 : 45] So take notice. If you set your heart on getting rich, you will only make trouble for yourself. A greedy man stirs up strife. But if you set your heart not on getting rich, but on trusting God, what's the result?

The Proverbs says, you'll be enriched. You'll experience something of what Solomon did. He asked for wisdom, not for riches, but God ended up giving him riches because in his request, his heart was in the right place.

So where's your heart? What has gripped your heart? Proverbs warns us of ruin that comes to those whose hearts are set on money. Consider Proverbs 1.

Solomon is warning his son against going along with the evil plans of sinners. And here's the plan that these sinners have presented trying to entice Solomon's son with.

They say, Come with us. Let us lie and wait for blood. Let us ambush the innocent without reason. Like Sheol, let us swallow them alive and whole like those who go down to the pit.

[26 : 52] We shall find all precious goods. We shall fill our houses with plunder. Throw in your lot among us. We will all have one purse.

See, they want to fill their house with riches. But they're fools because of the means by which they want to do that. Wisdom, a house is built by wisdom.

By wisdom, a house is filled with riches, Proverbs says, but not in this way. Not in the way that these sinners are trying to entice. Not with this plan to rob somebody. To lie in wait.

To overtake someone as they come along the road. To steal from them and then to split that pot among the thieves. Solomon is warning his son, don't go along with that plan. Don't be enticed by them. Now, why not? What's the motivation that Solomon gives? What's wrong with that plan? Perhaps his son might have been thinking. How often, dads, do we find that with our kids?

[27 : 50] We give them something not to do, a command, and they're like, but why? I think it still sounds pretty good. And sometimes, the reason is what motivates.

Well, here's the reason. Verse 18. These men lie in wait for their own blood. They set an ambush for their own lives. Such are the ways of everyone who is greedy for unjust gain. It takes away the life of its possessors. So if you desire to be rich, if money has a hold of your heart, if you are greedy for unjust gain, well, great suffering actually awaits you. Proverbs 11.28, whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf. So Proverbs makes it clear.

There is great danger in the grip of wealth. We see this not just in the Old Testament. We see it in the New Testament as well. Paul speaks of this great danger in 1 Timothy 6.

[28 : 58] You can turn over with me there. We'll read a couple different sections of 1 Timothy 6. Beginning in verse 9.

Paul says, Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many trap, with many pangs.

So you see, the love of money, what a danger that is. It will plunge you into ruin and destruction.

When we love money, when we desire to be rich, when we crave that, we will suffer.

Just as Proverbs 11, 28 says, whoever trusts in his riches will fall. Paul echoes this proverb just a little bit later in 1 Timothy 6, verse 17, when he says, Do not set your hope on the uncertainty of riches.

[30 : 20] Don't put your trust there. Don't set your hope in that. Don't let your heart be gripped by the uncertainty of riches. It's a trap with devastating consequences.

He says, Some have even wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. They have suffered self-inflicted wounds of the soul.

They've abandoned their faith. They've made shipwreck of it, all because they loved money, because their desire was to be rich. Now, Paul here in 1 Timothy 6, 17 calls riches uncertain.

By that, he means, well, the riches that you have today could be gone tomorrow. I think we've all seen how the stock market can change even just this week. Riches can't be trusted.

Riches are uncertain in that way. But there is something certain about money that we do need to recognize. And that's the fourth point this morning. the guarantee of wealth.

[31 : 28] The guarantee of wealth, which is this. It will not last forever. Earthly riches are uncertain to last, even in this life, as Paul teaches in 1 Timothy.

But what is certain is this. You will not have your earthly riches in the life to come. They will fade. They will not endure.

Your life is but a vapor. Your wealth is but a vapor. We were warned earlier in Proverbs 23, 4, do not toil to acquire wealth.

Now, why did Solomon say this? Well, the next verse explains, when your eyes light on it, it is gone. For suddenly, it sprouts wings flying like an eagle toward heaven.

Wealth is fleeting. You can never have enough, and what you get won't last into eternity. Proverbs 27, 24 makes that point very plainly.

[32 : 30] For riches do not last forever, and does a crown endure to all generations? That makes me think of the pyramids in Egypt where pharaohs would be buried and in their tombs they would put all sorts of earthly possessions because they believed that we can take these possessions into the afterlife.

If I'm buried with it, I'll have it for all of eternity. So, go get the pet cat. Put the cat in the tomb with me. Proverbs says no. The true wisdom of God tells us you can't take it with you.

That's what Paul says in 1 Timothy 6. We brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. So, here's the guarantee. Our wealth from this life will not go with us.

So, it should not have a grip on us. It shouldn't have a grip on our hearts. And what do we have awaiting us in heaven? Oh, we have greater wealth that awaits.

Riches far beyond anything in this life. We have a heavenly inheritance. We have riches that are imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.

[33 : 46] Set your hope on things above. Seek the things that are above where Christ is. Seek first the kingdom of God, and all of these things will be added to you.

The drumbeat of Scripture, the drumbeat of Proverbs, is to seek God and His kingdom, and whatever riches in this life will then follow. But keep your focus on the things above.

And keep your perspective oriented towards eternity, because earthly riches will not profit you in eternity. You can't take it with you. Do you remember the proverb that Jesus told in Luke chapter 11, chapter 12, about the rich man who had put his trust in his riches.

He went to all this work to tear down his old barns, to build newer, bigger ones, to store all of his grain and goods, and here's the problem. He was putting his hope in that.

It's not wrong to tear down barns and build new ones, but his soul was seeking satisfaction in that wealth. And what did God say to him? Fool, this night your soul is required of you and the things you have prepared.

[35 : 01] Whose will they be? In other words, you can't take it with you. That man spent all of his time wrapped up in his riches, consumed by them, and then he died, and his wealth, it did him no good in the life to come.

That is a sobering thought. The moral of that parable from Luke 12 is captured in Proverbs 11.4. Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.

The ultimate day of wrath. Riches do not profit. In life, money can buy you a lot. Money can go a long way. In fact, Solomon says in Ecclesiastes 10.19 that money answers everything.

Money can go a long way. In this present life, it can do a lot. If you have a problem, money can be very useful to you. Money can do a lot for you in this life, but not in the next life.

Money can't do anything for you in the day of wrath, the ultimate day of wrath. When you stand before God's throne, if you go to pull out your wallet, you'll be told, your money is no good here.

[36 : 19] You won't be able to buy your way into eternal life. In fact, the water of life that Jesus offers, it has no price tag for us.

It's free. Take without price, Jesus says. Because as we saw last week, He paid the price for all those who drink the water of life.

Your money is no good here. Your money won't profit you in the day of wrath. No cash accepted here when you stand before God. Not just credit cards denied. Not just checks denied.

Not even cash. Cold, hard cash. No good here. Only those covered in the blood of Christ. Only those trusting in Jesus for salvation. Only those saying, Jesus died on the cross for my sins, that I would not be punished, but that I would be forgiven.

So where is your hope? Is it wrapped up in your earthly riches? Or is it wrapped up in the riches that are found only in Christ? The riches of eternal life in Him.

[37 : 24] Proverbs teaches us that the blessing of earthly riches is good, but it's certainly not everything. And the riches that are found in Christ are far, far better.

Our contentment not found in riches. Our contentment found in Christ. That is where we set our hope. Because the guarantee of wealth is that it won't last forever.

That's point number four. Now let's consider point number five. The giving of wealth. There's a command in Proverbs chapter 3. Verse 9 says, Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce.

So God tells us, God commands us to give. We're to honor Him with our wealth. That's a crucial component of being a good steward of what God has given to us.

Because of course, it is true. God has given it to us. God owns the cattle on a thousand hills, the earth, and all its fullness. So whatever money we have, whatever riches we may possess, they belong to God.

[38 : 37] They're His. He's given them to us. We're to steward them well. And part of that stewardship is to give back to God. That's what this proverb is talking about with the firstfruits.

That was the Old Testament tithe. They were to give to God of the firstfruits of their harvest. Well, the principle still applies to us. We're to give to God from the firstfruits of our earnings.

So honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your produce. So that's what verse 9 says. That's the command in verse 9.

Now verse 10. Here's the result. Then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine. So what a wonderful general truth.

God blesses us as we give, and of course as He blesses us, we can give all the more. We should be glad to do that. We should be glad to give to God. We can do great good with our money.

[39 : 39] If we build wealth wisely, we can give it away well. We can use it for God's glory. The church in Philippi in the New Testament is a wonderful example of this.

Paul wrote a letter to that church while he was imprisoned in Rome under house arrest, and he was writing to them because they had been generous towards him.

It was something of a thank you card. They had sent a financial gift to him to help him, and Paul was thanking them for sending that to them. The church in Philippi used their earthly riches to serve eternal purposes.

Paul there was laboring even as he was imprisoned in Rome. So he was writing letters to encourage the saints. He was proclaiming the gospel to even those who were guarding him, proclaiming it to the officials that he had interactions with, people that Paul probably would have never rubbed shoulders with if not for being under house arrest.

And even they are being saved by the mercy of God. And all of this was a reminder to the Philippians as they learned of it, that your money went to good use.

[41 : 01] With your minds set on heavenly things, you used your earthly resources well. Paul's letter to them was almost like a receipt detailing to them just how far their dollars had gone in Paul's ministry.

Look at the advancement of the gospel. Look at the advancement of God's kingdom. All through your partnership partnership with me in the gospel, Paul says. Wealth did not have a tight grip on the Philippians and they didn't have a tight grip on their wealth.

They were ready to give. They were glad to give. And Paul reminded them. What did he say at the end of the letter? Oh, he gave them this wonderful, wonderful word. God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

You've supplied me well. God will supply you well also. You've honored the Lord with your riches and God will richly care for you.

So we too should be ready to give. Ready to give because whatever money we have doesn't have a tight grip on our hearts. And so we don't have a tight grip on our money.

[42 : 13] Proverbs 11, 24 talks about the one who gives freely. That should be our posture. Not giving begrudgingly and not withholding greedily but giving freely.

Glad to give to bless others and to do good and to glorify God. Now that doesn't mean that we give foolishly. That doesn't mean that we give frivolously without any thought.

We saw last week there's wisdom in not being rash with the tongue. There's wisdom in not being rash with our money. We need to exercise discernment in our giving.

In our generosity towards others. If I were to meet a need a very significant need of someone now well what will I have to give to my children and to their children years later?

I need to consider that because Proverbs 13, 22 says a good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children. So one who gives freely now also needs to consider well how have I saved for the future for my children and for my grandchildren even as well.

[43 : 23] So we have to hold that all in balance using wisdom. Wisdom in our giving. It's part of being a good steward. But the posture of our hearts well that posture should be one of eagerness.

It should be one of readiness to give freely as good opportunity arises. Or as Paul says in 2 Corinthians 8 we should be cheerful givers.

So if wealth doesn't have a grip on us then we don't have a grip on our wealth either. We're ready to give as we're able and we're happy to do it. So we've seen the goodness of wealth.

We've seen the gain of wealth. The grip of wealth. The guarantee of wealth. The giving of wealth.

And now finally our last point. Have you been trying to guess what it is?

Know it's a G. What is this last? The God of wealth who became poor. The God of wealth who became poor.

[44 : 23] God who is robed in majesty. Who is worthy to receive all wealth and glory and honor. The God who wraps himself in light.

Who dwells in perfect splendor in heaven with all the angels and all of the saints singing his praises continuously. Falling at his feet.

Putting their crowns at his feet. This God came down. He took on flesh. He became a man. He dwelt among us with no place to lay his head.

And as a man he had none of the riches of heaven. He had none of the unending worship of the angels. Instead he lived in this sinful world. He lived among sinful men just like you and me and was despised by them.

We did not sing like the angels in praise of him when he came to earth. No, we scorned his name. Isaiah 53 says he had no form or majesty that we should look at him and no beauty that we should desire him.

[45 : 33] He was despised and rejected by men. A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised and we esteemed him not.

How poor Jesus Christ became for us. Now what would move him to do that? What would move him to come from heaven?

To veil his glory? To make himself nothing? To take on the form of a servant? To be born in the likeness of men and to become obedient to the point of death?

Even death on a cross? Why would he who was so rich become poor? So very poor? that was because love.

Love for his father. In obedience to his father. And love for us. Those that he has saved by his grace. For our sake he became poor.

[46 : 32] That through him we might become rich. Rich with salvation and all of the benefits that flow from it. Redeemed from our sins. Forgiven and cleansed and restored to right relationship with God.

Clothed in the righteousness of Christ. The father now looks upon us those bought with the blood of his son and he sees us clothed in garments of white.

Beautiful. Splendid. Radiant. Pure. Clean. The son became poor so that God being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead in our trespasses made us alive together with Christ.

By grace you have been saved and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus so that in the coming ages he might show what?

The immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. The son became poor so the riches of God's grace might be lavished upon us.

[47 : 48] The son went to the cross he bore the wrath of God in our place so that God's great kindness and mercy and forgiveness might be shown to us.

He became so very poor as he hung upon that cross but he who died has risen from the grave and he ascended into heaven and where did he go?

He sat down at the right hand of the majesty superior to the angels his name more excellent than theirs he is king he is the king of kings and one day the king will return and we will see him and Isaiah 33 17 tells us our eyes will behold the king in his beauty we will see the king of kings in all of his royal splendor and majesty we will behold the king of glory and we will join the heavenly chorus who sings out worthy is the lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing indeed whatever riches we have in glory we will gladly cast them at his feet because he alone is worthy whatever crowns we may receive whatever wealth we may be given whatever jewels we may have we will gladly give it to him because he is our greatest treasure

Isaiah 28 5 tells us this it tells us the lord will be a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty to us he will be that to us whatever crown we have give to him we say you're the greatest crown that I could ever have you're the greatest jewel that I could ever have you're the riches that I could have they're wrapped up all in you how rich we are what a treasure he is so how rich we are in him this very day and how rich we will forever be when we are with him for all of eternity let's pray together our heavenly father we do thank you that you have given us the wisdom of proverbs to guide us in our lives that you speak to the everyday realities even down to how we spend our money how we save our money how we give our money we thank you for the truth of your word that you give us we thank you that we are to be ones who seek after wisdom seeking to live wisely we thank you that you richly bless that you give good gifts and we thank you for the greatest of gifts that you have given to us in Jesus

Christ we thank you for all of the spiritual blessings that flow from him how rich we are in Christ every one of us who knows him father we pray this morning that you would do a work in the hearts of the lost draw them to yourself open their eyes to also see the riches that are found in him how poor we were outside of him but how abundantly blessed we are in him thank you for him thank you for your word we pray that you would make it to sink deeply into our hearts that we would treasure what you have said to us and we pray all this in Christ's name amen amen