



CONTENT:

Weekly:

Sunday sermon Bible readings,
Worship song,
Reflection,
Small group questions,
Family time.

Daily:

Memory verse,
Prayer.

THE GIFT OF GIVING

There is good reason to believe that humans are “hardwired” for lives characterised by giving. We live with a strong sense and are even expected to live in the realm of giving. We give ourselves to development and growth. We give ourselves to education and work. We give ourselves to worthy causes. We give ourselves to intimate relationship. We give ourselves to family and friends. This sense and expectation of living “giving lives” is reinforced by society. To live in the realm of giving is society’s explicit message; the marketing and advertising industries willingly tap into this sense and expectation of living “giving lives”. Yet within this embracing of living lives in the realm of giving, economic concepts and

modes of thought begin to creep in and quietly influence and modify the realm of giving. Because of this, we find ourselves talking about giving and receiving; we speak about givers and takers and soon we are not able to think of giving without considering how that giving will benefit us. While this giving for self-gain is widely practiced, it is not openly owned. It is not expressly publicised or explicitly stated. It remains the silent and unspoken agenda behind so much of society’s giving. It begins to poison society. It stands to reason that while society’s unspoken practice is to give to self-benefit, it separates the intimate link between human society and the kingdom of God; between people and God; between the God who gives and the people who are made in the image of God to give. This divorce allows society to define giving in its own way without interference from God and His kingdom. **Over the month of October, we explore giving as God’s gift to humans and to society at large. May we be people who are known for giving the gift of our time, talent and treasure.**

WEEK 1: 2 OCT THE GOD WHO GIVES – Rev Kamogelo

Giving is God’s idea - God the Creator, God the Redeemer and Lord, God the Helper and Counsellor defines giving.

WEEK 2: 9 OCT ADDRESSING MONEY AS A RIVAL GOD - Khanyiso Njwabule

Money makes godly claims but only disappoints is a God rival.

WEEK 3: 16 OCT GIVING AS CHILDREN OF GOD (PART 1): SACRIFICIALLY, REGULARLY/FREELY AND GENEROUSLY – Rev Gavin

As God gives, so too do we – sacrificially, freely and generously.

WEEK 4: 23 OCT GIVING AS CHILDREN OF GOD (PART 2): GRATEFULLY AND OBEDIENTLY – Tony Matthee

Giving as a response of thanksgiving and obedience.

WEEK 5: 30 OCT A CHURCH KNOWN FOR ITS GIVING – Rev Boitumelo

As God is known as a Great Giver, so too should the church be known as such.

WEEK 2: 9 OCTOBER

ADDRESSING MONEY AS A RIVAL GOD

Money makes godly claims but only disappoints, it is a God rival.

BIBLE READINGS

Psalm 29
Matthew 6:19-24
Acts 5:1-5



WORSHIP SONG:



Trevor Pope, God or Mammon,
https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=2anx9WPO_0U&feature

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION WRITTEN BY:

Local Preacher – Khanyiso Njwabule

I was struck by a statement made in 2015 by the CEO of one of the richest companies in the world Alibaba, Jack Ma when he said, “**He was happier when wasn’t a billionaire**”. He goes on to explain that the money he now has is a heavy burden for him in that it is invested all over the world to diversify his portfolio and in cases when there is an instability in the country he has an investment in, he has to make a pragmatic decision to withdraw his investment in that country. His investment withdrawal decision can affect millions of people’s lives negatively as the affected people will lose their jobs, not be able to feed themselves and their children & possibly die of hunger. With this being part of his life, he struggles to keep a clear conscience, and this makes him unhappy. Yet we tend to spend a significant amount of our time looking to acquire more money in every way possible thinking that it is the key to unlocking our happiness, that at times we neglect our commitment to God. Jesus warns us of this in verses 19 & 20 of Matthew 6 that we need to be careful of where our priorities lie when it comes to spending our time and effort in accumulating riches from worldly materials because it does not last but our life purpose under His guidance lasts forever.

The warning we get from our Lord on our priorities reminds me of Abraham’s account in Genesis 22 where he is tested by God by being told to take Isaac the son he loves and sacrifice him as a burnt offering (Genesis 22:2 NIV). This is the son God had promised him and Abraham had waited years for this promise to manifest and now he has to give back this treasure of a gift from God as a burnt offering. This seems borderline sadistic from our creator God, but the key word here is love because the actual test for Abraham is whether he loves God or the gifts & blessings that God gives him. The reason love is significant here in this account of Abraham, is because chapter 22 is the first time the word love is mentioned in the bible, it therefore calls us to pay special attention to this word love. We can spend years of our lives being committed Christians, attending church services every Sunday, without showing much spiritual fruit (i.e. fruits of the spirit - Galatians 5:22-23) and without confronting this important question “Do I love God more than my own life itself?” or “Do I love the gifts and blessings from God more than the giver Himself?”. The answer to this love question addresses the ‘God priority’ issue that Jesus is warning us against in verses 19 & 20 because the answer is not a dual one but rather a singular one. Therefore, we have to choose out of our own free-will whether we love God or love money, and it cannot be both. We need to seek God earnestly in spirit and in truth and all these things will be added to us as Matthew 6 verse 33 states, because God knows exactly what we need - therefore our focus should remain on loving and seeking Him.

I am not saying that money is evil or shaming those who have it because we need money to buy the essential things that allow us to carry on with our day-to-day activities like food, shelter, motor vehicles etc. What I am saying is that it should not take first priority in our hearts & minds before God, because money is simply a tool we use to acquire the things we need to proceed with our lives therefore to me it comes secondary to our God who is the source of all we are, have and will need.

Life Application

If someone today had to offer you without any pre-conditions a choice between 10 million rand or the wisdom of God, reflect honestly on what your choice would be. Hold on to the choice you have made and read the account of Solomon's decision when God made a similar offer to him in **1 Kings 3:5-13**. After reading Solomon's account, are you staying with your choice or reconsidering?

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Have you thought about how your life would change if you had more money in your bank account, say over 10 million rand more? Share with your group on the changes you would make in your life using this money.
2. Are you willing to do whatever it takes to acquire more money to reach your dream life including spending less time building your relationship with God and close family & friends? Share with your group what things you are willing to do and where you draw the line in terms of acquiring more money.
3. Where do you stand on the God or money priority list? Is God first and money second or is it money first then God later when its convenient?



DAILY MEMORY VERSE AND PRAYER

DAY	VERSE	PRAYER
MONDAY	<i>"Ascribe to the Lord, you heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength."</i> (Psalm 29:1)	Heavenly father, may you grant me the strength to continue to praise and honor you in everything I do in my life on earth, even when I am disappointed and disillusioned by this fallen and broken world. In Jesus' name, Amen.
TUESDAY	<i>"Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."</i> (Matthew 6:20-21)	Heavenly father, may you search my heart and find out where my true treasure is. I desire to store my treasures in heaven, Lord help to clear out all the unnecessary rubble inside of my heart to create more space for the heavenly treasures. In Jesus' name. Amen.
WEDNESDAY	<i>"Ananias sold a piece of land, secretly kept part of the price for himself, and then brought the rest to the apostles and made an offering of it."</i> (Acts 5:2)	Loving father, may you strongly rebuke me if I am storing any deceitful thoughts in my heart when it comes to matters of managing worldly wealth and lead me toward a righteous path. In Jesus' name, Amen.
THURSDAY	<i>"Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendour of his holiness."</i> (Psalm 29:2)	Heavenly father, we worship you reverently and respectfully because you are holy, set apart from evil. May you continue to cleanse us by your holy blood of your Son Jesus so that we may be holy also. In Jesus' name, Amen.
FRIDAY	<i>"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."</i> (Matthew 6:24)	Heavenly father, I fully commit my life to you and give myself as a living sacrifice to you, so that your name may be glorified in this lifetime. In Jesus' name, Amen.
SATURDAY	<i>"The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace."</i> (Psalm 29:11)	Heavenly father, may you grant strength, blessings and peace to your children, to overcome the daily obstacles that become an impediment to the glorious and joyful life that you have set out for us who are called by your name. In Jesus' name, Amen.



BY JENNY BLAKE – CHILDREN'S PASTOR
jennyb@bmc.org.za

SCRIPTURE Matthew 6:19-24

What do you treasure most?

Which item would you be more upset about if it was lost?

- a) your bible
- b) your sweets
- c) your pocket money
- d) your favourite toy or game
- e) your TV/computer/phone

All of these items are material possessions. They all will fade, rust or be ruined over time. It does help us to see what we would be upset about losing, as it shows us what we value as important. IF something mattered to us losing it would make us upset, if it is really and truly important losing it would break our hearts. That's why Matthew says where your treasure is, that's where your heart is. Because what we hold dear, we hold close to our hearts.

What have you been storing up in your hearts?

How does it feel reading the scripture of Matthew 6:19-24?

Do you think what you are treasuring most are treasures of heaven or material treasures?

CLOSING PRAYER: Lord God, please help me to treasure what you treasure and mostly help me to treasure YOU. Amen