**THE HU$TLE IS OVER**

**Part 1 of 6**

**He Owns It, We Use It**

**Luke 12:13-21**

Let’s open our Bibles to the Gospel of Luke – the third book in the NT. And let’s turn to chapter 12…and I invite you to follow along as I read a few verses, beginning in verse 13… This is Jesus’ famous “Parable of the Rich Fool.”

**Luke 12:13-21 13 Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” 14 Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?” 15 Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.” 16 And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. 17 He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ 18 “Then he said, ‘This is what I will do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. 19 And I will say to myself, “You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”’ 20 “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’ 21 “This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”**

You’re probably familiar with the shell game. You know, the one where a con artist on the street cheats you out of your money by moving the shells around while you’re trying to keep track of which shell has the ball under it. You think you have it figured out, but when the shell is lifted up, the ball is gone—AND SO IS YOUR MONEY!

Sometimes dealing with personal finances feels like that. We feel hustled—by trying to keep up with bills, expenses, taxes, even the Joneses! And it seems like the more we hustle to try to keep up, the more we get hustled! But there’s good news, God has a plan for your financial freedom! The hustle is over!

Grace will take you places hustling can’t!

Right off the bat, let me just acknowledge that I know what some of you might be thinking….

“Oh, great…I brought my friend to church today and of ALL weekends…Pastor Ben’s going to talk about money!”

Or…maybe if you’re newer to Calvary…you’ve got a bad taste in your mouth about this subject because you’re of the opinion that MONEY’s the only thing churches care about…they’re ALWAYS beggin’ for money!”

Well…if you’ve been a part of Calvary for a while…you know that’s NOT the case with us. And in fact, if anything, this topic might be an area where I’ve failed you a little bit as your pastor.

Because talking about money is like talking about sex. It’s very personal…and it can feel awkward…and yet, to NOT talk about money would be to ignore an awful lot of the Bible!

In fact, did you realize that…

* More is said in the NT about money than Heaven and Hell combined?
* The Bible says 5X more about money and possessions than it does about prayer?
* 16 of the 38 parables of Jesus all deal with money?
* Of the 31,000 verses in the Bible…about 2000 of them deal with handling money and material possessions?

That’s about 1 out of every 15 verses! So, it’s something we HAVE to talk about from time to time, and I’m almost embarrassed to say that in my 12+ years of serving at this church, I haven’t talked about it enough.

So, we’re going to talk about money. We’re going to talk ‘biblical principles for financial freedom.’ But let me assure you…in case you’re a little nervous…let me put you at ease. This isn’t going to be a guilt-ridden, manipulative, heavy-handed experience. Because ultimately, this series isn’t about money…but rather, it’s about our entire world view. And money’s just a topic we’re going to use to talk about our world view…

Did you realize that you and I don’t actually have any money or possessions we can call our own? Everything we have in our possession is actually on loan from God as something He gives us the responsibility and opportunity to steward…or manage…or administrate.

So…out of habit…you may hear me say things like “my money” or “your money” or “our money,” but in reality, it’s all God’s money. It all comes from Him…and He’s chosen to bless us with the management of some of HIS stuff!

In fact, in **1 Chronicles 29:11-12** King David wrote this: **11** **Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, LORD is the kingdom; you are exalted as head overall. 12 Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things...**

So, God owns it all. To use the famous Biblical expression from Psalm 50…He owns “the cattle on a thousand hills.” James chapter 1 says that “Every good and perfect gift comes flowing down from the Father of heavenly lights.”

That’s why I’ve titled today’s talk, “He Owns It…We Use It.” Say that with me please. We’re simply stewards – managers – administrators – of God’s stuff. Even our ability to earn a living and make money is a gift from Him. And if this is true, then it begs the question…

* Where are we investing God’s money? All 100% of it? Where’s it all going? How much are we keeping and how much are we using as a blessing for others, investing in God’s kingdom?

And listen, I realize there are some of you who are in a season where you’re really struggling to make ends meet right now. Maybe you’ve lost a job…taken a pay-cut…been forced to adjust and scale way back.

And for others…God’s given you a gift for making money. For whatever reason, He’s blessed you with that ability. And money’s never been in short supply for you. And if that’s you, what a blessing to be in that place.

And then there are a bunch of us who are probably somewhere in the middle of all that, right? We may wish we were wiser or more savvy at making money, but at least we’ve got a job, we’re paying the bills, and we’re not tossing and turning about it at night.

But no matter where we find ourselves on that spectrum, God has some important things to say to us about the place of money in our lives…

I love “the parable of the rich fool” because it reveals five practical ways that we can steward or manage or administrate God’s stuff in such a way that money won’t take the wrong place in our lives.

Remember…money is a good thing. It’s a tool that God gives us. It’s a blessing from God. But just like many other blessings...food, sex, authority, relationships, you name it… there are many things that can hustle people if they’re handled foolishly. So, let’s see what we can learn from Jesus’ parable….

**Five Ways to Keep Money From Hustling You…**

1. **Don’t let your world shrink to the size of your latest MONEY problem.**

* Let’s look at verse 13 again: 13 Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”
* 2 Corinthians 8:9 says, “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.”

1. **Have a wartime MENTALITY about greed and envy.**

* In verse 15, Jesus says, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”

1. **Allow wiser people to MENTOR us concerning money.**

* Look at Verse 17: 17 He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do….?”

1. **Remember the MOST important money principle.**

* Look at verse 20: 20 “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’
* 21 “This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”

1. **MAKE richness toward God your life’s priority.**

* 1 Timothy 6:6 says that “Godliness with contentment is the greatest possible thing we can gain in this life.”