

DECEMBER 4 & 5, 2021 **MARK 12:41-13:2 NIV**

SHOW ME THE MONEY

A SERMON BY

REV. DR. HOWARD-JOHN WESLEY @PASTORHJW



Sunday,

Preacher:

Sermon:

December 4, 2021

Rev. Dr. Howard-John Wesley

Show Me the Money



VILLAGE

@ASBC

MOVING FROM CROWD TO COMMUNITY

CURRICULUM GUIDE



Sermon Summary

The story of the widow who gave her last to the Temple is well known. Recorded in both Luke 21 and Mark 12, the story of the woman and her two copper coins is often preached as an exemplar of Christian stewardship. Pastor Wesley notes that while Jesus commends the woman for her sacrifice, there is more going on in this text than the generous habits of one woman.

Throughout the Gospel of Mark, Jesus debates the religious leaders, pointing out how their application of religious law places heavy burdens on the people. In fact, in Mark, every interaction between Jesus and the Pharisees is meant to highlight their hypocrisy and shed light on how their lack of accountability to the law diminishes the Kingdom of God.

In particular, Jesus invites his disciples to see the hypocrisy of a religious system that exacts a poor person's every penny and, in opposition to an authentic reading of the law, leaves that same poor person without support or access to a means of survival. Perhaps, this is why Jesus says the magnificent stones of the Temple will fall to ruin, for what occurs within the Temple does not honor God.

Alfred Street's annual Show Me the Money practice is an opportunity for the church leadership to show the community how your gifts are used to live out the mandate of Christ, to further the Kingdom of God and to honor God.

Key Points

1. The Christian Church, ancient or modern, has not always gone about stewardship in a transparent or accountable manner. As Jesus first observes the contributions to the Temple treasury, he sees the difference in what people give. Pastor Wesley suggests this leaves a bad taste in Jesus' mouth.
2. Jesus reiterates the importance of giving and instructs us on how the funds of the Temple are to be used to fulfil God's word and work. Though he does not quote this text, Jesus might be thinking of Deuteronomy 27:10, which says, 'Cursed is anyone who withholds justice from the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow.' Then all the people shall say, 'Amen!' "
3. Pastor Wesley demands that churches be accountable for how the money is utilized to fulfil God's word.
4. Every church member should ask, "how is our money fulfilling the word of God?"
5. "What is Alfred Street doing with its money?" This is the question that underlies and prompts the practice of Show Me the Money.

Getting To Know You Questions:

1. *Pastor Wesley says everybody who woke up in the home of Rev. Dr. Alvin Wesley and Sister Helene Wesley on Sunday morning was going to church. What were the Sunday morning rituals of your childhood? What do you miss? What don't you miss?*
2. *In his opening prayer, Pastor Wesley said, 'You've kept us through a year Lord, where a lot of things came our way that we never anticipated.' 2021 has been a year unlike any other. Please share one unanticipated, joyful thing that happened to you in 2021.*

Into The Bible Questions:

1. Pastor listed several scriptures used to “encourage” folk to give. What are your experiences of these verses? Have they been used for good or ill in your church life?
 - a. Malachi 3:8-10: 8 “Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. “But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’ “In tithes and offerings. 9 You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. 10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.
 - b. Luke 6:38: Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.
2. Another scripture referenced in the sermon is the story of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5). Please read Acts 5:1-11. Is this story about money? Is it about something else? What do you take from this story?





Life Application Questions:

1. A person's relationship with money begins early in life. What were you taught about money? How does this impact your giving to your church?
 - a. In some churches, "offering time" is thought of as a pause in worship, a moment we take outside of the task of worship. If the Greek word for worship *proskyneō* (pros-koo-neh'-o) means to bow down in complete reverence to, is offering time apart from worship or a part of worship?
 - b. If "offering time" is a part of worship, how does your offering afford you the opportunity to worship God?
2. One of the scriptures noted in the sermon is II Corinthians 9:7. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. Other than the church, to which organizations do you give cheerfully and why? What do you accomplish by your giving to these organizations?
3. How does this compare with what you accomplish when you give to the church?

"Can I Push It?"

1. Some churches are so busy taking care of their buildings, ministries, ministers and endowments that they forget the business of the church (i.e., running the small 'c' church) and the business of the Kingdom (i.e., where all of creation coheres with and receives the blessings promised in the ministry of Jesus, the Christ) **are not the same!**
 - a. How can a church determine if they are properly balancing their investment in the business of the Kingdom and the business of the individual church?
2. Other than housing, if we were to look at your bank account, what would we learn about your spending, saving, and investing habits? What are the top five areas that receive your non-housing money? Is church one of them? Should it be? Might you want to shift the places where your money goes in 2022?
3. Money comes up in our relationships in many different ways. How do traditional ideas of masculinity and femininity influence your current financial practices, and self-concept as a provider?

Activity:

1. Imagine your tithe (your time, talent, and treasure) is like a seed. What seeds have you planted in the last month or so? Spend some time this week listing out and praying over the seeds you have planted using your time, talent and treasure. Asterisk anything on the list that required sacrifice on your part . Ask God to help you to see the harvest of your planting and, especially your sacrifice.
 - a. If you haven't planted a seed, ask God to show you how you may do so using your finances, time, attention, and presence.



Spirit Work:

1. Pastor begins the sermon by saying he was raised going to church e'ery Sunday. The pandemic has changed the way we attend church, take communion, and in many ways, how we worship. What have you learned about your daily and weekly practices of worship during the pandemic?
 - a. Are there ways you have benefited from changes in ritual and worship during this time?
 - b. Has your understanding of your stewardship of your tithe (time, talents, treasure) shifted?

Additional Questions for Married Couples:

1. The Pastor talks about transparency and good stewardship as hallmarks of good leadership. Are you and your partner transparent about your use of money? Have you had conversations about what good stewardship means in your relationship?
2. The sermon points out that the religious rulers were not taking care of the marginalized in their community. If you and your partner are Christian, or engage in a faith tradition that encourages care of those beyond your household, how does your household work to support those who are on the margins?
3. If you and your partner find yourself on the margins, are you willing to ask for help?
 - a. What does your background teach you about asking for help?
 - b. What does your faith teach you about asking for help?
 - c. Are you willing to ask your church for help? (Please see additional resources.)

Additional Questions for Young Adults:

1. "Show me the money" is a line taken from the movie Jerry Maguire. Essentially, this is a movie about the power of relationship above money. Have you had an experience where money impacted a relationship positively or negatively?
 - a. What did you learn from that experience?
 - b. What might you choose to do differently if you encountered a similar situation in the future?
2. As young adults seek to gain financial stability, some use a 50/30/10/10 rule to guide their use of money. Under this rule 50% of your funds are directed toward your needs, 30% your wants, 10% savings and 10% investments. What are the guidelines you use for your finances? How does your contribution to church fit into these guidelines?

Additional Questions for Parents:

1. Young children often have little relationship to money. What were the most important lessons about money you learned as a child?
 - a. What are some of the lessons that you want to share with your children?
 - b. How are the lessons you want to share with your children different from, or similar to, the ones you learned from your parents?
2. Work life begins for many humans during their teenage years. What conversations have you had with your teen regarding their earnings, financial habits, and charitable contributions, including church?
 - a. If you have had, or wish to have these conversations, what do you hope they will accomplish?
 - b. What resources do you need to have a financial conversation with your teens?

Additional Questions for Women:

1. Many women come of age believing that it is a woman's role to sacrifice for the community, family, church, etc. This point of view can shape the way women receive the story of the widow in Mark 12. How do you "hear" her story? What emotions does this story call up in you?
 - a. How do you understand a woman's role as it relates to sacrifice?
 - b. What do you want to teach the younger women in your life about sacrifice?
2. While the widow in this week's text teaches us about sacrificial giving, the Bible includes women who were financially successful. Martha owned her own home (Luke 10:38), Dorcas was a community activist (Acts 9:36), and Lydia was a business owner (Acts 16:14). How does your view of women's agency shift when you read about or hear preached women like these latter three?

Additional Questions for Men:

1. Who taught you about money and stewardship of your resources (time, energy, attention)? Was he or she an effective teacher?
 - a. What more do you need to know about stewardship in order to feel more secure?
 - b. Where can you obtain that information?
 - c. Have your investigated resources available through Alfred Street?
2. Money is a challenging subject. Are there things that scare you or make you uneasy about the topic of money? Do you have advisors with whom you can talk about these subjects?
 - a. If not, do you believe it would help your concerns about money?

This Week's Additional Resources

1. Alfred Street supports those who seek assistance in learning how to be financially free of debt. If you are interested in learning how to reduce your debt, please contact the Financial Freedom Ministry at, financialfreedom@alfredstreet.org.
2. Alfred Street also supports those who are in need of other types of assistance because of extenuating circumstances. If you are in need, please contact the deacon who leads your Discipleship Group.

This Weeks' Scriptural References

Scriptures about Giving

Exodus 36: 1-6

Malachi 3: 8-10

Luke 6:38

Acts 5:1-11

Acts 20:35

II Corinthians 9:6-7