

Overcoming the Spirit of Mammon Part 2

Thesis: We are a people who overcome the spirit of mammon through faithful stewardship, generosity, and surrender to God and his ways.

Text: Luke 16:1-31

Last week we began to talk about *Overcoming the Spirit of Mammon*. Today is the second part of that message.

We are invited to live as people of the kingdom of God, rather than as people of this age who live according to the world's system, values, or mental models.

Let's face it: money talks. The love of money is the root of all sorts of evil (1 Timothy 6:10). Money can become a rival to God for the love, devotion, and control of our lives.

Jesus taught a lot about money. In Luke 16, Jesus talks about money once again. Jesus often talks about those things which vie for our loyalty or devotion; they want to control us. There are ways of this world which will mold us into the image of the values of this world. With God helping us, we have to make intentional, willful, even "violent" or aggressive decisions to live like God wants us to live.

MAMMON (מַמְוֹן, mamon). An Aramaic word that is transliterated into Greek in the New Testament, meaning "wealth," "money," "riches," or even "property." The word מַמְוֹן (mamon) occurs four times in the New Testament, all spoken by Jesus. It is sometimes transliterated in English translations as "mammon" but is also sometimes translated as "money." The first occurrence of מַמְוֹן (mamon) is part of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 6:24), and the other three are part of [Jesus' teaching in Luke 16, in which the underlying theme is to be faithful to God] (Luke 16:9, 11, 13). (John D. Barry et al., eds., "Mammon," The Lexham Bible Dictionary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

In Matthew 6:24 and Luke 16:13, "mammon" is personified as a rival to God for the loyalty of the disciple: To which master will obedience be given? In Luke 16:9, 11 the term designates material wealth or property. Mammon itself does not carry a negative value, as the parallel phrasing in Luke 16:11 makes clear: "If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will entrust to you the true riches?" (Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, "Mammon," Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988, p. 1384.)

Giving an overview of Luke 16:1-31

From a parable about money, Luke moves us to actual teaching about money; the chapter will end with another parable [The Rich Man and Lazarus] in which money is both part of the story and part of the point. This passage contains some of Jesus' strongest and most explicit warnings about the dangers of wealth, and experience suggests that neither the church nor the world has taken these warnings sufficiently to heart. Somewhere along the line serious repentance, and a renewed determination to hear and obey Jesus' clear teaching, seems called for.

The key to it all is in the opening verses [Luke 16:1-2]: it's about faithfulness. Money is not a possession, it's a trust: God entrusts property to people and expects it to be used to his glory and the welfare of his children, not for private glory or glamour. (NT Wright, *Luke for Everyone* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004), 196–197.)

Putting the passage together, we find the underlying challenge [is] to be faithful: faithful in our use of money, faithful to God rather than money, faithful in our hearts not just in our outward appearances, faithful to the kingdom which has now begun with Jesus, faithful to our marriages. As soon as we begin to think of money, or land, or other people, as commodities we might own or exploit, we take a step away from our vocation to be truly human beings, God's true children, and towards the other master, who is always ready to accept new servants. (NT Wright, *Luke for Everyone* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004), 198.)

Let's listen again to what Jesus says about money in Luke 16:10-14.

"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. 11 So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? 12 And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?"

13 "No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."

14 The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. 15 He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight" (Luke 16:10-15).

Points:

1. **We are a people who overcome the spirit of mammon through faithful stewardship, generosity, and surrender to God and his ways** (like tithing, giving, investing/ saving, sacrificing).
 - a. **Tithing** (Malachi 3:9-12): *[God says] you are robbing me [in tithes and offerings]. 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 you will not have room enough for it. 11 I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit,”* says the LORD Almighty. 12 *“Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,”* says the LORD Almighty.
 - b. **Giving** (Deuteronomy 5:10-11): *Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. 11 There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land.*
2. **What is our why?** Why do we surrender to the ways of the kingdom of God, like in tithing and giving?
 - a. **To please the Lord.**
 - i. *“The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him” (John 8:29).*
 - ii. *And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way... (Colossians 1:10).*
 - b. **To obey the Lord.**
 - i. *“If you love me, you will obey what I command” (John 14:15).*
 - ii. *Jesus gave them this answer: “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does” (John 5:19).*
 - c. **To acknowledge that everything we have belongs to the Lord. We are stewards.**
 - i. *The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it (Psalm 24:1).*
 - ii. *Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful (1 Corinthians 4:2).*
 - d. **To defeat the spirit of mammon and to say “no” to the god of materialism.**

- i. The god of materialism says, “we never have enough; we must have more.”
- ii. *I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength (Philippians 4:12–13).*
- iii. *Then Jesus said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” (Luke 12:15).*
- iv. *Then Jesus said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. 25 What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?” (Luke 9:23-26).*

There are three other applications I want to make.

When we surrender to the ways of the kingdom of God, like in faithful stewardship, generosity, and tithing and giving:

1. **We disempower the fear** of “I don't have enough or won't have enough.”
 - a. When we practice the Sabbath and other spiritual disciplines, we become aware of God’s presence, the God who is with us.
 - b. **Practicing the Sabbath says:**
 - i. “I am enough. I have enough. I have done enough.”
 - ii. Sabbath is not just a day but a principle and practice of slowing down, reflecting, and renewing so that we can acknowledge our dependence and reliance upon our faithful God.
 - c. **The practice of giving thanks:**
 - i. Giving thanks raises our awareness of what God is doing in our lives, acknowledges God in our lives, and admits God is actively providing for us.
 - ii. When we give thanks, we defeat discouragement, undermine depression, disempower anxiety, and fuel joy.
 - iii. Next week I will talk about more wielding the weapon of thanksgiving.
2. **We express and embrace the nature of our God who is generous.**
 - a. *But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in*

this grace of giving. 8 I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:7-9).

3. **We care for the least, the last, and the lost whom Jesus loves** (Matthew 25:31-40).
 - a. One way to do that is to sow into [missions and ministries](#) in general, and to sow specifically into Myanmar.
 - b. *“The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me’” (Matthew 25:40).*
 - c. **Application:**
 - i. **In this holiday season, I want to remind you about the opportunity to support [Calvary missionaries](#).**
 1. We have missionaries that have gone out from Calvary throughout the years who are serving locally, nationally, and globally.
 2. And, we have built relationships with ministries that we believe God wants us to support.
 3. Here is a link to our [Calvary Missions Supporter Response Card](#).
 4. You can give online at <https://calvaryhouston.com/give>.
 - ii. **In this season of thinking about others, I want to share about the opportunity to meet some desperate needs in Myanmar.**
 1. **Pastor John and the ICC Missionaries.**
 - a. There is a need for monthly support and ongoing emergency needs.
 - b. Our faith goal for monthly support is \$150/month per missionary, pastor, church planter and their families.
 - c. Our current reality is that we are still giving \$100/month, which is huge.
 - d. We received a \$15,000 gift in September and other gifts totaling \$3,225 for September - October. That is amazing. Thanks so much.
 - e. So, we need \$11,000 to meet the monthly support needs for December 2022 – December 2023.
 2. **Pastor David, the orphanage, and the Bible School.**
 - a. Cost of providing education for the children.
 - b. The education system in Myanmar is a mess with the government and war. So, Pastor

David's ministry has hired teachers to come and work with the orphans.

- c. There is a need of \$1,200/month for teacher salaries. Calvary Missions helped with the costs of starting the school and for providing teachers' salaries for August and September. The remaining need for October - December 2022 is \$3,600.

- d. Calvary, thank you for your generosity to Calvary missions, ministries, and missionaries around the world.

Summary:

With God helping us, we are a people who overcome the spirit of mammon through faithful stewardship, generosity, and surrender to God and his ways.

Ministry Time: