

CONNECT 101 – Five Gospel Fruits

Lesson 5 – Jesus and Generosity

Questions to Consider:

1. What is the basis for Christian generosity?
2. What might we expect from our generosity?
3. How might we measure generosity?

Theme: God's generous gift of Jesus flows in and through His people enabling them to live generously to those around them.

Introduction:

It is perhaps surprising to realize how much Jesus spoke of money in the Gospel of Luke. We will begin with the obvious passages and then work our way through the indirect statements concerning finances/resources.

There are three large ideas or principles controlling Luke's thoughts. We will consider each within this study.

In looking at the idea of money and Jesus, our intent is to hear the text. One might expect us to touch on personal, regular, local church-driven giving. This, however, is not the intent so our study might not encompass our presuppositions concerning money and giving.

We will endeavor to hear what Luke says Jesus said concerning money and our stewarding of it.

THE BIG PICTURE:

Because we have already jumped into the deep end of the pool as it relates to our thinking on Christian Disciplines, now would be a good time to see where we are in our progress. Our focus will only be in the area of generosity.

- First, our stewarding of our finances will not fix what is broken in our relationship with God. Only Jesus can fix what is broken in our relationship with God and this He did at the cross.
- Second, no amount of money can change our relationship with God as if our relationship with God exists because of what we do and not on what Jesus did. Yet, the intent of stewarding our finances enable us to understand just how blessed we are in Jesus.
- Third, if the first two thoughts do not control our approach, then we will make our stewarding of finances man-centered, not God-centered. We cannot afford to teach them

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as if they are activities we do for God. The emphasis is not on what we do for God, but on what He does for us. Moreover, we do not believe anything we do merits favor from God. In addition, we also do not believe anything is essential in our relationship to God. The only thing we need is Jesus. Friend, this is hard to grasp.

- Fourth, if the stewardship is in any way horizontal, then it relate to our relationship with “one another.” It is what we do as community. That is not to say we do not do such activities individually or in isolation, but their design is for community. Many of us know people who are exceptional in their generosity, but have no alignment with a local church. The design of our stewardship is for community. How do I know this? Because the New Testament is a Book of Community.
- Fifth, our stewardship is not meritorious. No amount of generosity on our part can merit His favor and blessing, and no amount of stinginess causes Him to withhold His favor or blessing. All we have from Him is because of Jesus.
- Sixth, God invites us to steward our finances because He establishes the activity for our joy and His glory. The gospel fruit of generosity comes from the Jesus Seed.

We “ought” to be generous for joy. It is only as we fixate on the lavish nature of God’s gifting that we become gracious in our generosity. The stewarding of our finances do not make us Christian. No amount of money can forgive sin or open the doors of heaven. Nothing we do or not do makes us any more or less Christian. However, the stewarding of our finances are there for our joy/life by increasing our understanding of God’s unconditional love for us.

Without further explanation, let us consider Jesus and generosity in the Gospel of Luke.

I. Jesus speaks of God as generous and Himself as the embodiment of God’s generosity (Luke 15:11-32)

Throughout Luke’s account, Jesus speaks of God being generous and He Himself as the embodiment of God’s generosity. Five ideas support this statement.

A. The Good Samaritan is a picture of God (Luke 10:25-37).

We will not study this text in detail, but will make two observations. First, Jesus is the unexpected hero in the story of the Good Samaritan. It is a twist in the story that the reader would not naturally expect. Second, we cannot outspend God (Luke 10:35).

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B. The inclusive nature of God’s invitation (Luke 14:12-24).

Those invited are the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind (v. 13). This is in keeping with the target group within Luke. Verse 21 suggests these were not the first ones invited. Do not worry about compensation. It will happen at the resurrection of the just (v. 14).

Verse 16 suggests it is a parable. The intended guests offered three excuses.

¹⁷ and at the dinner hour he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, “Come; for everything is ready now.” (cf. “come” 12:37, 43) ¹⁸ But they all alike began to make excuses. (Luke 14:17, 18)

Notice the parallelism between Luke 9 and Luke 14.

Luke 9:57-62	Luke 14:18-20
⁵⁷ As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, “I will follow You wherever You go.” ⁵⁸ And Jesus said to him, “The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”	¹⁸ The first one said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.'
⁵⁹ And He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.” ⁶⁰ But He said to him, “Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.”	¹⁹ Another one said, “I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.”
⁶¹ Another also said, “I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home.” ⁶² But Jesus said to him, “No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”	²⁰ Another one said, “I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.”

Because the Jew rejects the gospel, God invites the Gentile. Although the Jew did not receive Jesus, they criticized His activity among sinners [e.g. Gentiles, Luke 15:1, 2]. Merit is not to drive our generosity. We are to be generous because God is generous.

Jesus illustrates and explains God’s generous behavior in three parables demonstrating God’s generosity.

C. The Parable of the prodigal God (Luke 15:20-32).

The story of the prodigals finds itself surrounded by several stories.

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- 15:1-7 the lost sheep
- 15:8-10 the lost coin
- 15:11-32 the lost sons
- 16:1-13 the wasteful manager
- 16:14-18 lovers of money
- 16:19-31 the rich man and Lazarus

The first three parables in Luke 15 speak to the character and activity of God. God pursues His people for their joy. We note this same principle in Luke 14:21-23. He seeks the lost (Luke 19:10) and joys at their return. Like the Father in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan is lavish in his gifting (Luke 10:35). The Father and the Good Samaritan are the same. Each speaks of God's gracious generosity toward sinners.

D. The offering of the Widow (Luke 21:1-4).

A fourth idea revealing the generosity of God occurs in the offering of the widow (Luke 21:1-4).

- ¹ And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury. ² And He saw a poor widow putting in two small copper coins. ³ And He said, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them; ⁴ for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on." (Luke 21:1-4)

Is Jesus commenting on the gift of the rich or simply noting the offering of the poor widow? Both gave. His comment is on the nature of the widow's offering. Is He suggesting we should do the same? On the other hand, is He simply commenting by comparing the two? He is not suggesting the rich were to give up everything they possessed. He is suggesting that in comparison to their "great" gift, the widow gave more.

Let us note the fifth and final idea of God's generosity and how Jesus is the embodiment of God's generosity.

E. The death of Jesus on the cross of Calvary (Luke 23:46).

God's generosity is seen in His greatest gift (Luke 23:34, 43, 46). The last act of giving noted in Luke's Gospel is the cross (Luke 23:34, 43, 46).

- But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves. (Luke 23:34)
- And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43)

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- And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, “Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT.” Having said this, He breathed His last. (Luke 23:46)

There is no greater or selfless act of generosity than that portrayed at the cross. “For God so loved that He gave His only begotten Son” (John 3:16). Paul notes how God gave selflessly and sacrificially at the cross for sinners who fought against Him (Rom. 5:1-10). Paul notes in Romans 8:32, “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?”

Grace makes us the children of God. God freely gives us all things. Because of who He is and what He has done and does, we are conduits through which the wealth of God reaches into the world of God.

For His people who live the gospel, stewarding His wealth is for His glory and the advancement of His Garden in and through the world. This has been his plan ever since the Garden of Eden.

In giving humanity His Son as a sin offering, He gave everything. We can be generous without expecting anything in return because of who God is and what He has done. God has already given us all things, thus we are able to say, “Jesus is enough in this life and in the life to come.” His people cannot be less than generous because God’s generosity flows in them and through them to those around them.

II. As recipients of His generosity, the people of God are generous (Luke 6:37, 38).

This particular section begins in 6:20 and ends in 7:1.

- ¹⁷ **Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place**; and there was a large crowd of His disciples, and a great throng of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon, ¹⁸ who had come to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were being cured. ¹⁹ And all the people were trying to touch Him, for power was coming from Him and healing them all. ²⁰ And turning His gaze toward His disciples, **He began to say**, “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.” (Luke 6:17-20)
- **When He had completed all His discourse in the hearing of the people**, He went to Capernaum. (Luke 7:1)

Some suggest this is part of Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount. Most agree Jesus said the same thing in multiple settings. Thus, we can have the same saying said in different circumstances.

Let us consider the context.

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- Verses 20-23 blessed
- Verses 24-26 woe

The blessed are those noted in Luke 4:18, 19. Jesus directs the woes toward the religious establishment. This is consistent throughout Luke's Gospel.

In verses 27-36, we are to love those who treat us poorly. Love our enemies and treating them with mercy are the same actions. Jesus reinforces this idea throughout His ministry. Notice the parallel between 6:34 and 14:12-14. On the cross, Jesus embodies this principle, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:24).

Verses 37 and 38 are a string of parallel ideas in light of what we just read in verses 27-36.

- ³⁷ **Do not judge**, and you will not be judged; and
- **do not condemn**, and you will not be condemned;
- **pardon**, and you will be pardoned.
- ³⁸ **Give**, and it will be given to you.
 - They will pour into your lap a good measure--pressed down, shaken together, and running over.
 - For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return."

The believer's response is one of generosity. The way Christians live is in direct portion to how God blesses them (Luke 7:40-50). The story in Luke 7 of the harlot who kisses and wipes the feet of Jesus with her tears is another example of God's gracious generosity. We forgive as God forgave us (Luke 11:4). Christian generosity is proportionate to the depth of one's understanding concerning their sin and damnation.

Jesus begins a parable in verse 39 explaining the lesson in verses 27-38. Verses 39-45 explain why we are to love our enemies and extend mercy to the unjust. The Jesus Seed produces the Jesus Fruit. Only evil trees bear evil fruit.

Verses 46-49 continues explaining why some act in the way they do. It is all about trees and foundations.

The blind, the hypocrite, the bad tree, and the one who builds without a foundation are all the same. They hear the word and do not believe (8:21; 11:28). Those who believe Jesus is the Son of God / Son of Man are those who hear the word and do it. Because of the Jesus Seed, His people do not judge others but are gracious and generous. This is what Jesus does in and through His people for their joy and His glory.

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III. Living in His *Story* guards against covetousness and greed (Luke 11:29-12:59).

When we do not live in light of His *Story*, we focus on “building bigger barns” and want our “fair share.” We are to watch against such greed. Such thinking robs us of the blessed joy we have resting in His finished work.

Part of our problem in reading Luke is his sequence. We do not always know sequence. When we read a text like Luke 12:13-21, we have to consider the larger context for this text. The larger context will assist in our reading of this text. Let us consider the time flow of our context.

- 11:29 As the crowds were increasing, He began to say
- 11:37 Now when He had spoken, a Pharisees asked Him to have lunch with him
- 11:45 One of the lawyers said
- 12:1 Under these circumstances, after so many thousands of people had gathered together, He began saying to His disciples first.
- 12:13 Someone in the crowd
- 12:22 He said to His disciples
- 12:41 Peter said, “Lord, are you addressing this parable to us, or to everyone else as well?”
- 13:1 Now on the same occasion there were some present

If we follow Luke’s thought, our text (Luke 12:13-21) begins in 11:29 and runs all the way through 13:1-9. The surrounding context will color how we understand our text.

In Luke 11:29-54, the religious establishment rejects Jesus.

- ⁵³ When He left there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to be very hostile and to question Him closely on many subjects, ⁵⁴ plotting against Him to catch Him in something He might say. (Luke 11:53, 54)
- Under these circumstances, after so many thousands of people had gathered together that they were stepping on one another, He began saying to His disciples first of all, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.” (Luke 12:1)

In Luke 12:1-12, Jesus tells us not to fear the religious establishment. They cannot damn us to hell.

- Notice the parallel language between 11:33 and 12:2.
- Notice the parallel language between 12:4 and 12:32.

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- Notice the parallel language between 12:6 and 12:24.
- Someone in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.” (Luke 12:13)

From this seething mass of humanity, an unnamed individual makes an appeal.

In light of the hostile context (11:29-12:12) and imminent sacrifice (Chapter 9) how are we to view our lives? The passage is large (12:13-59). There are notable parallel verses in our context suggesting this. Notice the following.

- Then He said to them, “**Beware**, and **be on your guard** against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.” (Luke 12:15)
- ²¹ “So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” ²² And He said to His disciples, “For this reason I say to you, do not worry about your life, as to what you will eat; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. ²³ For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.” (Luke 12:21-23)

This section in Luke (12:22-34) is part of Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 6:25-34). Matthew’s rendition is different from Luke’s.

- ³¹ “But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you. ³² Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Luke 12:31-34)

Covetousness stores up treasure for itself. Rich toward God seeks first the kingdom. In this context, selling your possessions and giving to the poor marks the shift in priority.

What was required of them in their context does not directly apply to us. Notice the sense of urgency throughout our text.

- v. 15 be on guard against every form of greed.
- vv. 22, 29, 32 do not worry, seek, afraid about what you will eat or what you will wear. Again, this makes perfect sense in light of Luke 9:1-6 and Luke 10:1-12.
- v. 33 the statement in verse 33 matches well with His instruction to the disciples in Luke 9 and 10. Because of where we are in the narrative, this instruction makes sense. Notice, however, the shift in Luke 22:35-38.
- ³⁵ And He said to them, “**When I sent you out** without money belt and bag and sandals, you did not lack anything, did you?” They said, “No, nothing.” ³⁶ And He said to them, “**But now**, whoever has a money belt is to take it along, likewise also a bag, and whoever has no sword is to sell his coat and buy one. ³⁷ For I tell you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, ‘AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH TRANSGRESSORS’;

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for that which refers to Me has its fulfillment.”³⁸ They said, “Lord, look, here are two swords.” And He said to them, “It is enough.” (Luke 22:35-38)

Luke 12:35 parallels verse 15.

- v. 15 Be dressed in readiness and keep your lamp lit (v. 40)
- v. 35 Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed

Likewise, verse 37 and verse 43 say the same thing.

- v. 37 Blessed are those slaves whom the master will find on the alert when he comes;
- v. 43 Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes.

Seeking His kingdom (v. 31) is living in readiness for His coming. Living in readiness battles covetousness.

The ready/faithful slaves are those who believe John and Jesus (vv. 41-44).

The unready/unfaithful slaves are those who reject John and Jesus (vv. 45-48).

The slave who is not ready is the barn builder in verses 16-21.

The barn builder parallels the story of the rich young ruler. Both failed to see the deceptive nature of wealth (Luke 18:18-30).

The rich young ruler was self-righteous. He believed his wealth was a sign of God’s blessing and thus was “safe.” This is in keeping with Luke 16:14 where the Pharisees are described as those “who were lovers of money.” The parable of the rich man and Lazarus also debunks this perspective. Wealth cannot save. Only Jesus saves.

Our Lord’s admonition to sell everything and give to the poor is in keeping with Luke 12:33. In Luke 12, the context is one of urgency. Here, the individual was relying on his wealth to save him. His compliance to the Law was only superficial. Jesus uses similar language “treasure in heaven” (18:22) in Luke 12:21, 34. How we view our finances is proportionate to how we view God.

Jesus calls on those who follow Him to give up everything they were hoping in and trust in Him alone (Luke 18:31-34). Whatever one gives up in this life, eternal life is the recompense (18:30; compare with 14:12-14). The healing of the blind beggar stands in stark contrast to that of the rich young ruler (Luke 18:35-43). One was blind and could see; the other could see but was blind.

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The story of Zacchaeus also stands in contrast to the rich young ruler (Luke 19:1-10). Zacchaeus, like the rich young ruler, was rich (19:2 w/ 18:23). Yet, the Law did not bind Zacchaeus. **Grace did what the Law could never do.** Jesus made no demands on Zacchaeus. He loved much because he was forgiven much (Luke 7:36-50).

In returning to our thought in Luke 12, Jesus supports this distinction between believing and unbelieving in verses 49-53.

Verses 54-56 speak of the signs of the master's return (vv. 37, 43) and chides His audience for not understanding where they were in the program of God.

Jesus picks up the question in verses 13 and 14 in verses 57-59. All of this says the same thing. Settle your family disputes **internally, graciously**. Guard against going to the Law, externally. The outcome of the Law is unbending.

What is our take away? Although the context restricts direct application, **we know sin will make us takers whereas grace makes us givers.** Regardless of where we are in God's timetable, we need to see our stories in light of His *Story*.

By living in light of His *Story*, His people seek to be faithful in their daily responsibilities (Luke 16:1-31).

IV. Luke's continued emphasis on stewardship (Misc.)

It is of interest to read in Luke's gospel the role of the servant/slave. Luke 7 tells of a centurion's servant who was dear unto him (Luke 7:2). It is apparent the servant/slave served his master well. Through his service and kind treatment by the master, the servant endeared himself to the master. This servant was good and faithful. The faithful and wise servant is the one who watches and does what his master asks. The parable in Luke 12 portrays this well. The contrast is set between the good and faithful servant who watches and the one who from the wickedness of their fallen heart does not watch and begins to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken" (Luke 12:45).

His behavior reflects his poor stewardship of his master's finances.

In Luke 14, the servants carry out the requests of their master. They are also good and faithful servants. Likewise, in Luke 15:22 the servants carry out the request of the father. This same principle occurs in Luke 17:7-10. Servants, slaves, managers, and stewards are to faithfully carry out the wishes of their master. It appears as if the individual in Luke 16 is not a slave, but a hired employee. Slaves might be managers, but not every manager is a slave.

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We do not know if Luke intends a connection between the parables in chapter 15 and what follows in chapter 16.

The point in the parable of the wasteful manager occurs in verses 9-13.

- ⁹ “And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they will receive you into the eternal dwellings.” (Luke 16:9)

Luke provides a purpose statement.

- ¹⁰ “He who is **faithful** in a very little thing is **faithful** also in much; and he who is **unrighteous** in a very little thing is **unrighteous** also in much.” (Luke 16:10)

In this text, unrighteous is the opposite of faithful. If one is unfaithful in their stewardship, they are unrighteous. They are the unwise and unjust.

- ¹¹ “Therefore if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you?” (Luke 16:11)
- ¹² “And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?” (Luke 16:12)

Luke uses “faithful” sparingly.

- And the Lord said, “Who then is that **faithful** and **wise** steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?” (Luke 12:42)
- He that is **faithful** in that which is least is **faithful** also in much: and he that is **unjust** in the least is **unjust** also in much. (Luke 16:10)
- If therefore ye have not been **faithful** in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? (Luke 16:11)
- And if ye have not been **faithful** in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? (Luke 16:12)
- And he said unto him, “Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been **faithful** in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.” (Luke 19:17)

If you were unrighteous as a steward, why would you receive more responsibility?

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- No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. (Luke 16:13)

Verse 13 draws us into the parable. Be faithful in your stewardship before God. It seems to settle back into the servants in Luke 12:35-48.

Verses 14-17 seem to make application to the Pharisees. They scoffed at His instruction on this matter. They were wasteful stewards who were unwise and unrighteous. They chose to serve money rather than God. Gain and greed consumed them (Luke 12:15). They were the barn builders in Luke 12:13-21.

Verse 18 appears displaced. It is the only time such a statement occurs in Luke. The Pharisees have proven wasteful as managers/stewards of God's Law. Perhaps the context for the statement in Luke's gospel is the overall appeal of the gospel.

- ²⁶ "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. ²⁷ Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:26, 27)

Perhaps some were using the call to follow Jesus as an excuse to abandon their familial responsibilities. Here, Jesus puts the statements in context. If one is married, then marriage is their calling. Salvation is more important than any familial responsibilities, but one cannot use their desire to follow Jesus as an excuse to divorce their spouse and marry someone who appears more "spiritually" sensitive.

The story of the rich man and Lazarus speaks directly into their situation (Luke 16:19-31). They assume their wealth is a sign of God's blessing, but the reality is dramatically different. As Christians, we are to manage our finances for kingdom use.

In Luke 19:11-27, Jesus gives a parable stressing the continued need to engage in business until His return. Similar to the above passage, the emphasis is on stewardship.

Verse 11 tells us two things. **First**, the cross is just about one week away ("because He was near Jerusalem"). **Second**, His disciples "supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately."

In light of these two things, He tells a parable. A parable has a primary point (v. 13). We cannot seek to give every piece significance. Notice the power of verse 13, "And he called ten of his slaves, and gave them ten minas and said to them, '**Do business with this until I come back.**'"

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This is the point of the parable. In His absence, His people are to steward their responsibilities.

He holds those who are His people responsible (vv. 16-24). On one hand, the good slave hears, “Well done.” In addition, they receive more authority (v. 17). On the other hand, the worthless slave does not hear well done and what he did have, he loses (vv. 22-24).

Here is the application of the parable (vv. 25-27).

- ²⁵ And they said to him, “Master, he has ten minas already.” (Luke 19:25)
- ²⁶ “I tell you that to everyone who has, more shall be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.” (Luke 19:26)
- ²⁷ “But these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence.” (Luke 19:27)

It appears to echo the same thought in Luke 12:35-48 and in Luke 20:9-18. The Jesus Seed produces in His people the fruit of financial generosity. His people are faithful in so far they watch for His coming.

Part of our ongoing faithfulness is to pay one’s taxes. Hoping to catch Jesus in the area of one’s loyalties and patriotism, He is challenged as it relates to paying taxes (Luke 20:19-26). The issue of paying taxes is settled in a simple statement, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (v. 25). What is of interest is that both realms have a stewardship. There are responsibilities citizens have toward their political government and there are responsibilities citizens have toward their God.

Shepherding the Sheep: (What is the NEXT STEP?)

1. Learn how generous God is and how Jesus is the embodiment of God’s generosity.
2. Learn to see yourself as a conduit through which God’s generosity toward sinners’ flows.
3. Learn to see your story as a part of His *Story*. Put everything about you inside of His kingdom. This will help you guard against covetousness and greed. See the connective tissue between yourself as an individual and the believing community.

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