

# Ash Heap Lives

by Francis Schaeffer

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*Francis Schaeffer's sermon emphasizes the need for Christians to practice their faith authentically in a materialistic and post-Christian society.*

**Duration:** 55:05

**Scripture:** Luke 16:1

**Topics:** "Judgment Seat"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of viewing material possessions from a different perspective. He suggests that Christians should visit a city dump to see the things that people have spent their lives accumulating, only to realize that they hold no true value. The speaker refers to a parable in Luke 12:15-21, where Jesus warns against covetousness and emphasizes that life does not consist of the abundance of possessions. He encourages the audience to understand that material possessions are not inherently good and that true wealth lies in banking on the eternal kingdom of God.

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## Transcript

Our theme for this morning is Atheist Lives. Atheist Lives. One thing that we would all agree on, and that is that Christianity is losing ground throughout the world.

Large numbers of countries that were considered, in some sense anyway, as Christians in the past, say the United States and our northern European countries explicitly, Canada being included, of course, are now in the post-Christian world, with the Christians being not just a small minority, but a total minority in an absolute sense. And then, of course, as the population of the world grows, the proportion of those who are Christians in any sense has decreased, and surely among those who are named as Christians, the largest proportion wouldn't be Christians at all, it would be some kind merely of external saints, or in relationship to a group where the doctrinal position is not clear at all. So here we stand now, in this place, of all places, we wrestle with the question of the Christian in the post-Christian world.

We discuss it, we talk about it, we ask what it means in our art form, how we are going to communicate. We wrestle in the area of literature and painting, poetry, so many different areas, looking to see what's wrong with what is being presented, and asking ourselves, how can we do something in the midst of this post-Christian world, and the decrease of Christianity in that world. We mustn't ever talk about these things, however, merely abstractly, we carry something with it, in a very definite nature.

And I suggest two things are carried along, if we are going to really show any real seriousness about living in a post-Christian world and being concerned for it. The first one I'll mention very briefly, and then spend time on the second. The first one, of course, is that our doctrinal position must be right.

The kind of thing that I would have emphasized, is that Berlin Congress on the practice of truth must also be right. And that is, we must be united with those who are holding a clear position, and not confusing the thing by saying we believe something, and yet showing that we really are not so serious about it, by being united with those who hold a position which is anything but clear in its typical sense. We can't expect to go out into the post-Christian world with all its tough fiberness.

We just can't expect to do this, and present an uncertain sound. We can't go out in the epistemological world today, where no one thinks that truth is even thinkable, and then present less than a practice of truth, and expect anyone to take it seriously. Surely this cuts like a knife down over many of our questions of church affiliation, boards we will work with, missions we will work with, who we will cooperate with in what.

And it must be taken seriously. The practice, the holding, and the practice of truth. But it must go deeper than merely being orthodox.

And this is the second point. It must go really deeper than being orthodox. It is perfectly possible to be completely and even obnoxiously orthodox, if I could express it so, and still have absolute nothing in what we present into the teeth of a tough, the non-Christian, post-Christian world.

Not to diminish the necessity of the orthodoxy either in what we hold, what we confess, or what we practice in our cooperation. But we can say we can do this unhappily in such a harsh way, and such a merely external way, that it has no real meaning in the 20th century anyway, and the orthodoxy might as well be non-orthodoxy as anything as far as a real cutting edge goes in such a generation as our own. Rather, we must go into the practice of our orthodoxy.

Because, as you know, it is one of my very strenuously held beliefs that every doctrine is meant to be practiced. That even such a doctrine as Trinity is meant to be practiced in the concept that we must show the seriousness of personality in our daily living to show that we really understand what the heart of the final great beginning was and environment is, and that is personal rather than impersonal. So we must be practicing our doctrines.

In the midst of doing this, and therefore practicing our doctrines, we must understand that along with the orthodoxy there must be true spirituality. And my thought in this direction would be the last chapter, for example, in *Death in the City*, the concept of two chairs living in the supernatural chair. But this morning, now, I want to take it and look at it from the other side.

And that is, look at it from the side of something that stands in antithesis of spirituality in the Christian's life, in the hope that we might then, all of us together, feel something more of what it means to be practically spiritual. And that is, I want to talk about materialism. Now, as soon as we talk about materialism, of course, our mind falls in a place like this, where many of us are philosophically orientated and where we're trying to help some of the rest of you who haven't been to be.

It falls naturally into the concept of philosophic materialism. And it's perfectly true, of course, that philosophic materialism stands as an absolute antithesis of Christianity. If you have a philosophic

materialism, religion can only be a psychological or a sociological tool.

It all can be. It can't really deal with truth, the real sense of truth. Or we might think, and we reject this, of course, the Christian rejects this.

If he's a Christian, he cannot be a materialist. On the other hand, from a philosophic viewpoint, on the other hand, many of us, our mind would jump into the practical kind of materialism represented by the communist count and the communist world and communist philosophy. And we react to this.

And we say, is this not horrible that here are these thousands and thousands of people, and especially the children, being raised in a situation where the limitation of their view is a practicing materialist. And all this is carried with it of the subordination of the individual to the state, all these other things. And we as Christians say, isn't that horrible? So we say, oh, we're talking about materialism, downward philosophic materialism, downward communist materialism.

But there's another kind of materialism which all too happily, none of us perfectly, and all too many others living this way, do practice. And this materialism which the Christian often does practice, tragically, and we all do sometimes, we must acknowledge, is certainly just as much materialism and just as much is practiced the antithesis of true spirituality as would be, is practiced now, as would be, let's say, the other forms of materialism that I have discussed. And that is simply our materialism tends to be that we do live as he's lived.

That is, that most of us spend most of our time and most of our money in what is going to end in the city dump, and we live this way. Now, we must understand, in thinking of these things, that material possession, let's begin this way, though it's the least important, but let's begin this way. Here we are, we're going along, we live in the midst of the affluent society, a society that has, in the system, in the establishment, in the syndrome, the concept that what is really important is material possession.

And what is important is technology, in one form or another, and the products of technology. And, of course, even in the unbelieving world today, there is coming a conviction that technology is not always good. We've given up our innocence in relationship to technology.

We no longer think that everything man can make, that he should make, because everything he should, because if he made it, it would necessarily be good. So even in the intellectual world, in the non-Christian intellectual world, there is a huge discussion today of the problem of technology. And this falls down in the area where I've just spoken.

But I'm saying, do we really feel it in our bones? The understanding that material possessions, in themselves, are not necessarily always good. One should visualize that we came to the emission field, first of all in 1948, and even more, a little sharper, still in 1947, when I first visited Europe, and went into the various emission fields. And, of course, Europe in 1947, and even in 1948, was exceedingly poor.

And if you were working, except for a very, very few, very, very few wealthy people. So here you came into Europe as a missionary, and you were confronted with a poverty-stricken people. And I was very struck in the misuse of material things among some of the missionaries in 1947.

For example, I remember being in Italy, and maybe happily thinking of Italy today, there were not many automobiles running around Rome in 1947. But there weren't many there. And then you would visit a missionary, and he would invite you into a great big American car, and drive through the streets of Italy.

It was no good for the world. It was a misuse of material possessions. It was a complete denial, not only of spirituality, but a complete denial of sensitivity.

To think that the big American automobile skipped over a titanic expense on a boat, and landed in the docks of, let's say, Genoa, and driven to Italy, to Rome, would automatically increase the missionary's effectiveness. It didn't. It diminished it.

It sunk. It was awful. And I just came back wounded with a lack of sensitivity.

That there was a real materialism. These people, some of them, would not have understood philosophic materialism, but they were materialists. Were they Christians? Yes, they were Bible-believing Christians.

But they had no sensitivity. They had failed to understand that material possessions are not necessarily good. That was true in 1947.

It was true in 1948 in Europe. Another experience. I mentioned many of them.

But I went to Spain. And Spain in 1947 was bitterly poor. But it was bitterly poor.

And I was invited. People were living in the most dreadful ways, except for the very, very wealthy, who were completely up there, and in contrast to the people. And yet I was invited to a missionary's apartment in Spain, in one place, which was overwhelmingly luxurious.

It was tremendous. It wasn't luxurious, mind you, in comparison to what this same man would have had as a pastor in America. But it was just as luxurious.

He had brought all his luxury with him to Spain. I want to ask you something. What do you think happened when he invited the poor people of his community into that apartment to give them a Bible study? It would be a complete antithesis of anything that would be useful.

It was the very opposite. One could run down through these things. Now, of course, there are still countries in the world where this is true.

Many of the countries in the world where this is true, many, many countries in which you can't possibly make the people to whom you talk believe that you're serious about trusting your Father in Heaven and sharing your things with your fellow men. But in Europe, this is not so true now. Now, we, the shapers, are the ones who are secure because we don't own an automobile.

So you come then to our own country. And the missionary countries, this is what Europe was in this other situation. Now it is somewhat different.

These things do not stand out because the Jewish people have no problem in Switzerland, let's say. But now when you come to this, we must realize this isn't our problem in exactly the same way in Switzerland and for most of you coming from various well-developed countries, not all of you, but most of you, that isn't your problem back home. You are not going to stink in the presence of the people to whom you're trying to work merely because you have an automobile.

In the midst of our own countries, whether we're living here in Switzerland or whether we are living in one of the other well-developed and rather affluent countries, do we really understand that even in such a situation, even for this life, because now what I'm talking about is this life, that even in this life, material

possessions are not necessarily good in themselves? Let me give you two illustrations from here in Switzerland and then I'll come back here. But when we first came, most of the women still washed at the village pump. And this was not just something you saw and something that was on a picture postcard for the tourists.

Very few women washed anywhere except at the village pump. When we first came, all these places you see set up for washing were still being used, very largely. And as I came into Europe and I saw these women getting cold, they were out here in the weather, as an American, I reacted.

And I thought, isn't it a shame? Isn't it too bad? Isn't it going to be wonderful if people could just have more material possessions in this life so that these women didn't have to work at the village fountain? I don't think this anymore. I want to ask you a question. Very often.

Here you have a woman and she works in the fountain. And it takes a lot of her time to work in the fountain. And it takes up a lot of her day.

And she's there in the fountain and the time all laid out nicely in the village. She's with the other village women and she's working away in the fountain. She's doing her job, she's talking, and she's here in her own cell.

It's a very human cell. It's not necessarily better for a woman then to suddenly have, let us say, I'll choose my own country, the United States where she has all these labor-saving devices where she merely pops the roast in the oven, can set the timer and come back at night and the thing is all nicely cooked, theoretically anyway. Or pop a wash into the washer and then it goes away and it comes back.

And she's being lonely. If she spends her whole time just doing nothing or if she spends her whole time as a modern suburban woman, most of them, getting into trouble, wouldn't it be much better not to have the material possessions and do washing at the village pump? I think so. It depends what you do with it.

Material possessions are not necessarily good in themselves. It's what you use the material possessions for. The same thing can be true, the same thing can be true with the women working in the fields.

When I first came to Europe, all the women worked in the fields and there was no such thing, there was very little farm machinery in Europe in 1947, 1948, 1950 in Europe. Even on the larger farms, most of the work had to be done by hand and surely so out here in the small farms of Switzerland. And I came and in those days cutting the hay wasn't very hard.

I'm intrigued to see the little balers they're making now, the bale hay. This is a revolution. But in those days, cutting the hay meant somebody took the scythe, somebody turned it by hand, somebody loaded the wagon.

It was hard, hard, hard, hard work. And I saw these women out here working with their husbands, turning the hay, sometimes doing the hard work of pitching the hay, and they didn't have to do this. And I thought, wouldn't it be wonderful, repeating the same, if they just had increased material possessions.

And I changed my mind completely. The women out here who work with their husbands in the fields and then go to sleep with them at night have the greatest riches in the world. What is more poor than our American situation where the wife and the husband have no share in the real life of the man? Nothing could be more poor.

And the women out here who work with their husbands have the greatest riches in the world. What is more poor than our American situation where the wife and the husband have no share in the real life of the man? Nothing could be more poor than our American situation where the wife and the husband Nothing could be more poor than our American situation where the wife and the husband have no share in the real life of the man? Nothing could be more poor than our American situation have no share in the real life of the man? Nothing could be more poor than our American situation where the wife and the husband have no share in the real life of the man? Nothing could be more poor than our American situation where the wife and the husband have no share in the real life of the man? In other words, if you only take the material possessions in the present life, if there were no future life, this would be true. But if you extend it into the biblical perspective that we are never to live in the perspective of the present life.

The Christian is a man who is to live constantly in the perspective of the horizontal extension into the life to come, a cause-and-effect relationship between the now and the then. These are not separated, they stand in a causal relationship one to the other. What we do now has a result in what will be the eternal then.

So therefore, as we look at the biblical position, we must realize it is more that we are told that our perspective concerning material possessions is that it is not true that you can't take them with you. Did you ever think of that? Everybody gives us a truism, you can't take it with you. It isn't true.

You can take it with you if you are a Christian. Let's look at some of the verses. The liberal theologian, with his concept of realized eschatology, and this would include personal eschatology, would merely say this is an optimistic way to stir up some kind of motivation for the present life.

But that isn't what the Bible says, it isn't the perspective of the Bible. He only says that because he doesn't believe the Bible and doesn't have the biblical perspective. The biblical perspective is simply this, and that is, as I said, there is a horizontal projection from this life into that which is to come.

Now, look at those verses where your Bible is open. Notice what it says. You can lay up your treasure in one of two places.

In one place it's going to rot away. In the other place it'll never rot away. You can lay it up in land, in verse 19, or in the bank, or investment, but the Bible clearly indicates it is just as realistic and objective of laying it up in heaven.

In other words, from the Biblical viewpoint, there are two places where you can put your treasure. They're both equally real. One is, it isn't just a psychological adjustment, it isn't just inside of your head, it is something very, very specific, that there are two banks, and it's specifically from Jesus' viewpoint as much as, though he said, the first national bank, in opposition to the bank suite.

And you have two banks, and you make your choice whether you're going to make your investments in America or whether you're going to make them in Switzerland. And here you have two possible banks to bank them in. Jesus' mentality is exactly the same, the Christian perspective.

There are two places where you can bank. You can bank in the places in this life, or you can bank in the bank which carries over in a horizontal extension into the days to come. This is meant to be taken totally literally.

If you make it less than literally, you reduce the Bible to merely some kind of a pious, in the bad sense, expression. And this is what it's meant to be. Notice further in the book of Luke, in the 12th chapter, verses

15 through 21.

Luke 12, 15 through 21. And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness. For a man's life consisteth not of the abundance of the things which he possesseth, but of the things which he possesseth.

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, What do I do? Because I have no room wherein to bestow my fruits. And he said, This I will do.

I will pull down my barns, I will build greater, and there will I bestow my fruits and my goods, enriching his pleasant place of store on the one side of the ledger, on the ledger of the here. Now Jesus goes on, and he continues, And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. Jesus responds, But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.

Then who shall those things be whom thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. A very strong word. A man is a fool to lay up treasure in a bank that isn't going to last, when there is a bank that will.

Now, it's perfectly true that most of us as evangelicals tend to use this as a kind of an evangelistic verse, and say that a man is a fool to lay up everything in this life and forget that one day he is going to have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ concerning heaven and hell. And undoubtedly this is involved, it's not a wrong use of it. But let me point out to you that it's not the only use of it, it's not all that is met in it.

It is spoken for Christians as well as non-Christians. The man who lays up all his treasures in the now, and is not consciously laying up his treasures for heaven, either really doesn't belong in heaven, or belong, pardon me, either he does not really believe in heaven, or he's a fool. He's a real fool.

And Jesus is speaking here not only to the man who spends all his time, like some of our family, all their time accumulating wealth, and we know they're going to die and they're lost, and we cry out to God for them, he isn't only speaking to them, he's speaking to you and to me if we are Christians, and saying, either we don't really believe in the horizontal extension into the future life, we really don't believe it, or we're fools if we spend all our energy laying up money in a bank that is going to just leave it open to the thieves instead of the place where it really is going to count, where it's going to count in time, where it's going to count in the area of importance as well. Thinking of this which Jesus says about thou fools and this matter, and the verse, so that he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God, let me repeat again, and notice how Jesus' words fit into this in Matthew 6, 19 and 20, lay up not for yourself treasures upon earth where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor the rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through and steal. Notice that these clusters, Luke passage makes one thing, it makes one thing, the man, the rich man who is a fool cannot be applied only to the non-Christian, it must be applied to us.

Notice in Luke 12, 33, the end of the verse, Luke 12, 33, the end of the verse, provide yourself bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approaches neither doth moth corrupt. Notice again it's exactly the same thing as the Matthew passage, Matthew 6, 19 and 20. You can choose two bags.

It's as simple as this. Jesus is being very explicit. Here's a man and he's going to carry 35,000 francs in gold coins, and he has two choices of bags.

One bag is made out of cheesecloth and won't last very long and pretty soon the coins will be dripping out as he walks over the mountain field, let's say if he's trying to get over the frontier in the time of war, and he can choose a cheesecloth bag and his money is going to drip out, so by the time he gets over into Italy or France or wherever he's trying to go and he needs his money, it will all be gone. The other, he can get a good heavy leather bag which when he gets there the money is going to be inside. Jesus is being just as explicit.

When we lay up our treasures, only in this life we've chosen a stupid bag, we've chosen a stupid, stupid bag, a container to carry it in, in contrast to the bag which is strong and light, and when we get where we're going, because we're going someplace, you know, we're really going someplace, when we get where we're going, our riches are still in the container. This is Jesus, this is Jesus' balance here. Notice how practical this is in the beginning of that verse, so what ye have and give on.

Now this is a very important thing to notice, that the scripture does not make a distinction between giving to those who need it and missionary work. To the Evangelical mind, money is given to the Lord when we give to missionary work, and I'm not minimizing the giving to missionary work. Certainly it is altogether true that Christians do not give enough to missionary work, there's no doubt about this.

It's shameful that a country like the United States, a country like Britain, even with its financial needs, gives such a small amount of the Christian's income into God's work. And God sold us for this, and we will one day answer to God. We will one day answer to God for this, there's no doubt about this.

But let us notice that in the Bible, giving to God is not cut up absolutely to giving to missionary activity. Remember, I'm not minimizing it, anything else, but at the same time you can give to God not only by giving to missionary work, but giving to people who need it. There is a very, very practical humanitarianism in this scripture.

We have an importance to being our brother's keeper, and not just in other areas, but in his material needs. You read in the book of James, the Bible is very tenuous at this point. It's a horrible thing for Christians to fail to understand we have a responsibility for the material needs of our brothers and of our fellow men.

To love our neighbor as ourselves, even beyond the Church, includes a care for his material needs. If the Church had remembered this and preached it in the rise of the Industrial Revolution, we wouldn't be in the mess we're in now. We simply have been poor.

We have been poor in our comprehension. I do believe in capitalism, as long as it's a biblical kind of a capitalism. I don't believe in the state owning everything and everybody being its slave.

But having said that, there is a very peculiar kind of capitalism in the Bible. It's a capitalism that cares for people, and that is what we have forgotten. The choice is not between a harsh capitalism, which is hard and cold and unloving, and not giving one care for anybody else and amassing great fortunes, and on the other side, a state owning everything.

The Christian choice is not between these two, but a third thing entirely. I know a man who has made \$150 million, and he has a granddaughter who has spit on the floor about the whole thing, and she refuses to

wear shoes. I don't blame her.

What in the world can you do with \$150 million to keep to yourself? You can't do anything with it. It's ridiculous. It's wicked.

And as you have here, we must understand the biblical, biblical form of laying up our treasures in heaven includes not only the missionary giving, remember I'm not minimizing the missionary giving, but they'll go somewhat hand-in-hand, too. We in the Evangelical Church in our affluent countries are poor in our missionary giving and we're poor in our other use, our wider use of money for God's purposes of caring for people. And I will repeat, I'll repeat, if the Church has preached this message, and it is a biblical message, just read the Old Testament, if you loan something to a man and he gives it to you as a collateral, his cloak, be sure to return it before night or he'll be cold.

It's a very, very special kind of capitalism, and poor capitalism, let me repeat, in contrast to totalitarian situations, either in rule or economically. But it's got to be a Christian thing or it soon becomes ugly, and really ugly. Now notice Jesus has something stronger still to say about this in the book of Luke, in the 16th chapter, and now if we'll read responsibly, Luke 16, 1-7, Luke 16, 1-7.

You will read this responsibly and then I'll go on and give a quick exegesis of 8-14. Luke 16, 1-7, and he said also unto his disciples, there was a certain rich man which had a steward, and the same was accused unto him that he wasted his goods. Then the steward said unto himself, what shall I do? For my Lord taketh away from me my stewardship, I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed.

So he called every one of his Lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, how much owest thou unto my Lord? Then said he unto another, and how much owest thou? And he said, a hundred measures a week, and he said, take thy bill and write for a store. Now let me say that the exegesis I'm going to give is the one Alfred gives for this, and I think it's right. If you think another one's right, it doesn't change anything about the message, however, because what I'm going to say is certainly what the Bible teaches.

But I think it's what Jesus is saying explicitly here. Now keep your Bibles open and follow along. The 8th verse.

The Lord. The confusion here often comes that people think that this is Jesus speaking. It isn't Jesus speaking, it's the steward's Lord speaking.

So the steward's law commended the unjust steward, not because he was unjust, because by this time the unjust steward is a technical term referring to the man. If he had been called John Smith previously, it would have said his Lord commended John Smith. Why did he commend him? Because he had done wisely.

What he did was a wise thing. What did he do that was wise? Well, Jesus then takes and applies it, beginning in the 9th verse, so Jesus' application begins in verse 9. And I say unto you, make for yourselves friends. How make for yourselves friends? Why, by the wise use of the present world's riches.

You are to make friends, says Jesus, if you're going to be as wise as this wicked man, who is wicked but wise. You are to be wise, not wicked now, but wise. You are to be wise by the present use of your money, that when you fail, and I do think what's being talked about here is when you die, they, who is the they? They are the ones of whom you have been made friends by the use of your money.

And these then now are pictured here as already having gone before you, and they're in heaven. So therefore you are to use your present money now in such a way that when you die and when you get to heaven, they are already going to be there, and they will receive you into everlasting habitation. They will receive you, that is, with joy in heaven.

Very realistic. It just happens that's the Bible's mentality. The Bible's mentality is heaven isn't an upper-story situation, it isn't an L.S.D. trip, that heaven is just as real as the year, that it is not merely something you teach people so that they can stay in the present problem, but you're really going to be there.

And when you get there, it's just going to be as real as this, that some of the people you now know are already going to be there. And Jesus is pictured in something, and you say it's simplistic. I want to tell you, the Christian's profound philosophy is not simplistic, but simple, and that is that there is a continuity, a horizontal continuity of cause and effect between the present and the future, and the future is just as real as the present, and when you get there, you're going to meet some people up there, and they're going to speak to you about what you did down here.

And it's a nice thing to meet somebody and say, thank you very much, thank you very much for that money you gave to me when my children were starving. I didn't have a chance to thank you then, but I thank you now. And that's just what Jesus is saying.

Jesus is saying, be careful how you use your money now. Remember what he said to the rich man, you're a fool if you don't keep this in mind. Remember what he said about the bags, you're a fool if you choose a bag that's going to be all leaked out by the time they put you in a box, put your body in a box, and bury it.

There's a way to lay up money now so that you can take it with you, is the whole point that Jesus teaches. Now he goes on further, and he emphasizes this in 10 and 11, he says another facet. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much, and he that is unjust or unfaithful or unrighteous in the least is unjust also in much.

If you therefore have not been faithful in the unrighteous manner, that is just plain money, what jingles, who will commit to your trust the true riches? Any Christian ought to know, as we've covered today, that the true riches would not ever be just money. And we're talking about, remember how we started this sermon, and that is we're talking about how to live in a post-Christian world so we can see something accomplished in the midst of the awfulness of the present post-Christian world. How can we do it? Well, we need true riches.

We need spiritual power. Remember what I said? I was examining the fact that it is not only necessary to be orthodox, but spiritual, and I wanted to come to the question of spirituality through the problem of materialism. All right, now, what we need is spiritual power, but Jesus is saying, if you don't have enough sense to use money correctly, why do you think you're going to be given any spiritual power? It's a very nice question.

The Church is saying, where's our power, where's our power, where's our power? Well, this is certainly at least part of the answer, and that is, if we don't know how to use even money with a view in mind that what counts is eternity and not the present, if we don't even know how to use that this way, why do you think God is ever going to entrust to you spiritual power which can be used in so many different ways, both positively and in a way that is less than it should be used? Jesus says, don't be foolish, don't be foolish.

Why should God give you anything more if you haven't got sense enough to use your money correctly when you say you believe in heaven and you believe you're going to live forever? Notice he carries this on into a different phase again in verse 12. He says, and, the priest says, and, and what you have here is saying there's a second thing, if you have not been faithful in that which is another man, he shall give you that which is your own.

No servant can serve two masters. You notice how the whole thing begins in 16.1, a steward. This was not the steward's money.

It was not the steward's money. And our money is not our money either. When Ellen stood up here today and said she, Christ would be the Lord of her life, and I looked to her, and I said this would mean something for all of us, that includes our time and our money.

Our time and our money are not exempt from the Lordship of Christ, and it's his money and it's not mine. And what Jesus is saying is here, if you don't use your money wisely, why do you think anybody's going to give you something that's more important and of more value and more explosive, really, in its use or its disuse? And on the same, on the same hand, if you don't use what's mine, why do you think I'm going to give you anything for yourself, for you? If a son can't take his father's money and get it to the store safely and home safely, the father isn't very apt that same way to increase the child's allowance. It doesn't make sense.

It doesn't go. Now you notice, finally, he says in 13, 14, and this is the key to the whole thing, shows what the perspective of all these verses, the first verses, are, and those serving can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, he will hold to the one and despise the other, you cannot serve God and riches. And the Pharisees also, now these were the Orthodox party, boy, they would fight for their orthodoxy, but the Pharisees also, which were covetous, heard all these things and they derided them.

They laughed at them because they really wanted money. So they were Orthodox, remember the Pharisees? The Pharisees were the people who believed in the resurrection in contrast to the Sadducees who don't, but they love money and so they don't want any part of it in Jesus' teaching. And let me say with some tears that there are all too many of us who are Bible-believing Christians who are also Orthodox and we fight for the resurrection, but we live as though the whole life is going to be on this side of the grave, as far as our material possessions and our time and energy and our talents are concerned.

What Jesus is saying here is simply, and notice again how it fits into 624, no man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to the one and despise the other, you cannot serve God and riches, he has just said over this where after what we have read so many times now, lay up not for yourself treasures in heaven, etc., etc., etc., he says here are two irreconcilable reference points for life. Here are two irreconcilable, yes, two reference points that cannot be reconciled for life. It can't be done.

It can't, I'm not going to try it again. It just can't be done. You either live with one reference point or you live in another reference point and you're always at one reference point or the other.

One will be the overshadowing task of your life or the other will be the overshadowing task of your life, and then existentially at every moment one of these will be the reference point of your life. It will be riches in this life or the reference point of the reality of God and the future. And Jesus says if you've chosen your

money and your time and your talents and the whole thing you've got, if you're living always in the reference point here, you're not living in the reference point there, and these cannot be missed.

They're two totally irreconcilable reference points. They cannot be done. You cannot keep them together.

So we find in Matthew 6.21, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The bank where your bank.

The bank in this life or the bank in the life to come where your wealth is stored. In other words, here is a spiritual thermometer, and here is a test of the reality of the whole thing to us at this moment, whatever it is in our life. If I say I am Orthodox, but I'm only banking for this life, do I really believe there is a resurrection? Do I or don't I? If I really, really am banking only for this life, what is my spiritual temperature? Well, I must say it must be counted, if I'm banking only for this life, it must be counted as something very, my spiritual temperature very low indeed.

Now, in conclusion, let us notice then that each moment we spend, each guilder, each mark, each franc, each dollar that we spend, we're either laying a treasure in heaven or it's to end in the ashes. Everything we do, every dollar, every mark, every use of our talent, every use of our time and our energy, it's being banked one place or the other. It's either being placed over there where we're going to be someday, or it's being placed in a thing that's going to end up totally in the ashes.

And let me emphasize again, it's not just the money we give to the church, quote unquote, but it's the way we spend everything we've got. The question is not just what to give away, but what to keep. The question is not only missionary giving, but to care for your fellow man.

And then how you spend, the mentality with which you spend what you have. You have a right to spend money. Spend it on your family.

Don't start not getting guilt feelings in the wrong place, because you love your neighbor as yourself. You need something. You need some clothes.

You need some food. And there's a time to buy flowers. And there's a time to go on a vacation.

But the question is your mentality and the set of your mind and your reference point in the whole situation. I would invite you as we come to the end of the message to join me in the city dump. Have you ever walked through a city dump? Have you ever walked through a city dump? Those of you who come from St. Louis, Missouri and lived there in the old days until when they hadn't yet put in the smoke ordinances, everybody had their own dump in the back of their yard.

Nice little concrete or brick dump. And you would walk in the front of the houses and they were terrific. Really nice.

Then you go up to a place with a driveway and you passed all the little dumps. You had to hold your nose. You looked in and saw amazing things in there.

Things that people have really been spending a lot of their life for. And now they were there just picking up the city and making the smoke in the street over the city. Or even better, to go into a big city dump.

A big city dump is one of our great cities where they're burning this stuff. And here they are burning it and burning it and burning it. You don't have to go so far away.

There's one between Egg and Olom. And it'll do. It's a small one, but it's sufficient.

And you just go and walk through the city dump. And I've had some very, very silver moments. Because as I look into the midst of the city dump with its smoke and its stench, I see there almost everything that most people spend their life for.

And that's where it is. That's where it is. Have you ever broken up a rich person's house? Isn't it pathetic? All these things they've spent their life for.

I'm, of course, you know, I'd be the last person to say it isn't worth having beautiful paintings. It's too much a part of the Christian life, the aesthetic expression. But it's the mentality and what you spend your life for.

It's a tragedy to go to a person's house who has spent their whole life for the riches in this world. And now they're dead. And they could be a Christian too.

And the admonition of Jesus has come to pass. They've proved to be a fool. Because everybody just takes it and carves it away when you look at it.

And it's overwhelmingly, totally overwhelmingly pathetic. God must point out to us where our own follies in this area lie. But purely just as the machine dominates, just as the automobile dominates the world today.

I was just reading a thing on this great art exhibit on the machine in the Modern Museum of Art a couple of years ago. Someone sent me a catalog and I've just gotten around to reading it. And they're quite right that the automobile dominates our culture.

The machine dominates the culture. The automobile dominates the machine in our lives because it touches more people's lives directly. And if there's anything, anything, anything that exhibits this folly, the absolute folly of living only for this life, it's the automobile.

It's the automobile. The thing to do is to go into the showroom and see the pride with which the man drives out his new automobile. Deeply dilly, you know, the whole thing, and preferably purple.

And he drives it out. He drives it out. And then go immediately from there to the town automobile graveyard.

You ever do that? I've done it just to feel it. And I'll tell you, it's an experience. If there's anything so ugly, it is the automobile jumped on the American city street in a bandwidth by thousands.

These are awful. They're skulls. They are screaming against all materialism.

I'm just saying, you're fools. You're fools. You're fools just as much at this point as we unsaved man.

I had my own experience in this that taught me a lesson. We had our A Model Ford in Vietnam. And we were married in it.

We had our honeymoon, not in it, but in it. We had our honeymoon in it. I rushed to the hospital like mad to get Priscilla born properly in it.

And we served in our first pastorate in it. And previous to that, I had courted Edith in it. And it was a very, very precious automobile to me.

I wish now I had kept it. I really do. But I got paid the place where I had to sell it.

The Catholic Church decided that it was going to ransack for their pastor. So therefore, I sold it. And I bought a brand new second-hand automobile to take its place.

And I've never been more filled with pride. I was sad about my own automobile, but this was really tremendous. And I dilly-dallied home from the automobile showroom until somebody passed me too closely and scratched the finger.

And the whole joy was gone out of it. I never enjoyed that automobile again. But I'm so glad.

I'm being very, very, very, very, very grateful. That was one of the best things that ever happened to me. I suddenly learned how much riches change if you just look at them in a slightly different perspective.

And I want to say to you, some of you who are trying to do some kind of Art Expressions Master, guess the topic. The topic would be meditation in an ashram or old in a city dump. Now, I'm not being humorous.

I'm being exceedingly, exceedingly, exceedingly serious. A Christian may be to go from time to time. You just stand in the city dump and see the stuff that is there that men have spent their life on which has been laid up in a bag with holes.

In a bank, there is nothing. And on the other side, the bank is increasingly empty. Now, at this particular place, I'd ask you to open your Bibles and read some responsive reading.

1 Corinthians 3, 10-15. 1 Corinthians 3, 10-15. I am not exaggerating.

This is the perspective of Scripture. 1 Corinthians 3, 10-15. According to the grace of God which is given unto me as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation and another buildeth thereon, but let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

But, because it is but, but if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, if any man's work abide which he hath built thereon, he shall receive a reward, safe, but everything gone. Safe, but everything gone. Because things were laid up, were seized, bred through, and stealed.

This is not only true of the businessman. It is certainly the problem of the missionary. It's the problem of the minister.

It's not only the problem of the individual. It is the problem of the individual congregation and the problem of the individual Christian activity, organization, mission, or work. And I'll finish with a story.

And that is, when we were in Champéry, the Lord enabled us, Betty Carlson, the Lord enabled us to see a woman's wonder Christ. He later led us to Betty Carlson, knowing her, and then Betty's salvation. And this was Baroness Von Dummerath, a very important name in Germany, a family name.

And she was an old, old woman, and she had spent her whole life in the social circles of Egypt. Highly placed, in the ecclesiastical circles of the ambassador life there, and a very important person. And she had had everything.

And she had lost everything, and she was living in Champéry on a dole from one of her family. And she was living there and looking back over her life. And we came and we met her, and after some time she made a real professional face.

And I'm perfectly convinced that Baroness Von Dummerath is a real Christian, and we're going to meet her in heaven. Completely serious, completely certain about this. But I'll never forget Baroness Von Dummerath.

After she saved, she sat and she was crying, and I said, but why do you cry? And she said, because I remember. But now I'm saved, and I've wasted everything I've had. And I could point her to the blood of Christ and forgive me, but I want to say to you, it's far more serious for those of us who have been Christians for years, and if we were honest with ourselves, we would have to sit and cry, because we don't have, we have practically nothing waiting for us when we get there.

We've banked in the wrong bank, we've professed one thing in our orthodoxy, and we have lived another way in our life. And Jesus said to the man, this is the way you have lived. Shall we pray together? Now, Heavenly Father, we ask that these things may have meaning to us.

They may not just be words. They may not just be a sermon for a Sunday morning. Now, Heavenly Father, we would confess that every single one of us in this place will have something to tell you we're sorry for.

And Heavenly Father, for those here who are still struggling with the problem of truth, of Christianity, may they understand what a foolish thing it is to live in a small circle for this life and never, never, never really come to grips with the problem of what happens with a horizontal extension of death. But, O Heavenly Father, for those of us who are Christians, forgive us, and we need the greater forgiveness. We need the forgiveness, O God, of fighting against the liberal theologians and insisting on a resurrection and then living as though there is no.

We need forgiveness, O Heavenly Father, for using our talents and our time, as well as our riches, really in a perspective as though everything were only under the sun. O Heavenly Father, forgive. Forgive us, O Heavenly Father, and make us to realize that it isn't just a matter of individual reward either, but also that it has something to say about why the Church is so poor in the present world and in the present post-Christian situation.

Why it is we do so little. To understand, O Heavenly Father, that the real reason comes that we exhibit materialism of a crass sort when we express in our doctrines that which is contrary to materialism. Forgive us, O Heavenly Father, for how easily we speak about communism, and yet, O Heavenly Father, we live in a circle of materialism in which we are bound by material things.

Remind us to be wise in understanding that material things are not even always good for themselves in this life, but to make us to understand that once we look beyond this life, that then indeed it becomes foolish to lay up treasures only upon earth where the thing is going to be drawn. Help us, O Father. Help us indeed to live this way.

Help us to live this way not only for the lost world and not only for our own good, but to realize that it's the only expression, the only expression, that really finally will give cutting edge to the fact that we believe what we say we believe. Help us. Now, Heavenly Father, we ask in the name of the Lord Jesus we may remember that this is a part of following Christ, because Paul, in talking about justice subject matter,

points out as an admonition that we are to follow Jesus, he says, who though he were rich made himself poor for our sake, but surely in the circle of understanding the completeness of all there is may we live this way by thy grace.

We ask, O Father, that beginning this day we may consciously take our talents, our time, our energy, our riches and place them in a bag that is solid. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

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