

The Evil Eye

by Tim Conway

This sermon delves into the concept of serving God versus serving money, emphasizing the importance of having a singular focus on God rather than wealth. It explores the dangers of having a 'bad eye' towards money, which leads to darkness and the inability to serve both God and money. The sermon highlights the need to be faithful with resources, make wise investments in eternal treasures, and be cautious of the temptation that wealth brings. It concludes with a call to trust in God alone and to use money to serve His kingdom.

Scripture: Matthew 6:22, Luke 16:9, 1 Timothy 6:9, Joshua 24:15, James 5:1

Topics: "Serving God vs. Serving Money", "Faithfulness with Resources"

Description

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Transcript

Verse 22, the eye is the lamp of the body, so if your eye is healthy, and I'm reading from the English Standard Version, so if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness. Now I've called this sermon, the evil eye.

I'm trying to think in Spanish, what's the evil eye? Did they just call it los ojos? Just the eyes? They got this thing in Spanish culture that if somebody looks at your child, right? Do you remember? Anyway, the evil eye, and I might almost have called this the Cyclops text. You know what the Cyclops is? And the reason is because Jesus talks about us as though we have only one eye. I mean look at the text, if your eye is bad, not eyes plural, but eyes singular.

I just, just these two verses are odd. A sister sent me a message this morning asking me to deal with something on Tuesday, and it's a portion of scripture she says that she doesn't understand. Do all of you have areas in the scripture that you know when you read through it, you come across these different places where maybe it's a cultural thing, we're so far removed from it, but you know the fact is this may have been a very common saying in the days of our Lord.

But I find this just odd. The eye is the lamp of the body, so if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.

If then the light in you is darkness, how great is that darkness? I mean look, the reality is I find the whole expression odd. And it's not that you can't figure it out, it's just how it fits in here. This is teaching that comes from heaven.

I mean Christ was sent into this world to proclaim truth to us. He is the truth. And he came to speak God's truth.

And so my question is this, what in the world does the Lord want us to think and believe and feel and do as a result of these two verses? Verses 22 and 23. And the fact is we'll never be impacted by any portion of scripture, let alone these, if we don't understand what it is that it means. So, just to start, I have a series of observations that I want to make about these two verses.

Observation number one, this is absolutely critical, you don't want to miss this one. The context in which this is found. Now this is interesting because over in Luke chapter 11 you have basically this stated over there.

It almost comes out of the blue at you. Now I don't want to go over there and spend our time because I'm not preaching through Luke. But there is another place where you basically get the same gist as what you get here.

And I find reading through Luke, when I come across that, it is always occurred to me that is odd. When I've read through the Sermon on the Mount, these two verses in context have always struck me as being odd. It feels disjointed.

But here's the thing, what's the main theme right here in Matthew chapter 6? That's what we want to ask. What is our Lord speaking about in the verses right before this? Immediately before this, what is He speaking about? Treasures. I mean look at it.

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy, where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is there your heart will be also.

The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light. Now let me ask you this question.

What is He dealing with immediately after these two verses? What's that? Right. God and mammon. God and money.

God and wealth. He's dealing with treasure before He's dealing with God and mammon. You can only serve one, God or money.

That's what mammon's all about. So you see that these two verses are actually sandwiched by a common theme. I mean the reality is that when Jesus Christ speaks right here about an eye, a lamp, the whole body, light and darkness, you know what He's doing? He's teaching us something about money.

He's teaching us something about wealth and our relationship to it. I mean what can be confusing about this allegory is that in and of itself it doesn't sound like it has anything to do with money. That's the issue.

It feels out of place. It's only the context that really brings it into clarity that hmm, this must have something to do with this topic because He inserts it right here in the midst of this. So here's observation number two.

The illustration itself is extremely straight forward. Why it's placed right here might be confusing and how it has to do with money might be confusing but the actual illustration itself is very straight forward. The eye is the lamp of the body.

I mean that's pretty straight forward, pretty plain, pretty uncomplicated. My body. What's my body? It's all of me.

Right? I mean the whole thing is my body. The eye is the lamp to the body. All of me is guided by what the eye sees.

That's pretty straight forward. Without my eye, what? I'm in the dark. If I'm blind, I'm in the dark.

I mean look, I recognize we think of lamps as producing light. The eye itself doesn't produce light but it is indeed a window which allows the light into us. It's basically an illuminator.

That's the idea. And in that sense it is a lamp. And if my eye is healthy, it shows me the world around.

You know what happens when your eye is healthy? You see you start getting old and then you start recognizing. Right? You start recognizing what happens when your eyes don't function exactly right. You know when your eyes don't function exactly right, then what happens? Well you don't see things exactly how they are.

Because the truth is after about the third or fourth row, I see pretty blurry heads but I know if I got close your head really isn't blurry. They're very indistinct. It doesn't look like there's real definition there but I know there is.

Because one time I could see and some of you I see closer but the reality is that when your eyes don't work right, there's a distortion and what happens is you begin to not see the world around you as clearly as it is. And the thing is when your eyes are working right, you get light in there. You basically see things around you and it guides your whole body and you can run around.

You'll see it afterwards. The children will be out there and they'll be running around. Well if all of a sudden you blinded them, they're in trouble.

You see their eyes showing them exactly where they can go. They see where they're going but on the other hand, you can have the brightest light shining around you. It can be noonday sunshine.

But if your eyes don't work, you're in the dark. It doesn't matter the light shining on you. Now that's the reality.

Certainly this is the picture here. The allegory by itself is straightforward. It's how it connects with money that is more challenging to figure out.

Now here's observation number three. Look at the word in the ESV. It's the word healthy.

If your eye is healthy. Now let me tell you something. In the New American Standard, the NAS, it's if your eye is clear.

In the New King James, if your eye is good. In the Old King James, if your eye is single. Now here's the thing that I really want you to capture here.

The word literally means motivated by singleness of purpose. That's what he is. If your eye is motivated by singular purpose.

If it's single. Singular. Single.

That's simplicity. Single is one. There's one object.

It's singular. See when it's not singular, it's multiple. It's complex.

It's complicated. This is a person that does not have a complicated eye. This is not double vision.

This is very singular. It's spot on. The word has this idea.

There's no hidden agenda. No double vision. The eye is singular in it's object.

There's sincerity. There's straightforwardness. It's genuine.

Now here's observation number four. This obviously is allegorical. It's symbolic.

Our Lord is not giving us a lesson here in biology. Because the truth is he's dealing with spiritual realities. These realities right here concerning money and our ability to see right.

They have to do with us whether you're old and you can barely see. Whether you're blind and you can't see. Or whether you're young and your vision is 20-20.

The reality is he is dealing with something symbolic here. He's not interested in the human eyeball. And whether I've got cataracts or wear glasses or even physically blind.

Listen. Listen. Scripture talks this way all the time.

Isaiah said, They know not, nor do they discern, for he has shut their eyes and they cannot see. Over and over and over again scripture speaks about sight, seeing, and eyes with regards to spiritual truth and spiritual understanding. That obviously is what's happening here.

This is spiritual perception. It has everything to do with the way we comprehend and perceive money. That is the connection.

That's the idea. We need to feel this in the context. Jesus has just got done telling us don't store up, don't lay up treasure here upon this earth.

Don't do it. Watch those savings accounts. Watch those retirement funds.

Watch that. That's what he's saying here. That's the context.

And you know what he wants us to say? Oh, I see. He says, I'm not talking about. He wants, there's understanding.

See, this is the eye he's talking about. It's the eye of comprehension. The eye of understanding what it is that he's talking about here.

Not our physical eyes. He's talking about how we perceive money. How our thinking in our minds basically comprehends and sees and estimates and weighs out our riches, our wealth.

Do you have an eye? And again, that eye is singular. Do you have an eye that sees money, riches, wealth, treasure in a clear manner where there is this singular motivation of mind? Singleness of purpose. Do I have that sort of eye that seeks first the kingdom? You know, that's in just a few verses.

That eye that seeks first the kingdom of God. Am I living with that singleness of purpose where I'm living for Christ with my money? Do I live to serve God, not mammon? That's in the context here. To see clearly, to see singularly.

That's to see things as they truly are. Listen, you know what he's talking about? Do you really see money the way it is? Do you really see money the way it was designed for the Christian? Do you really see it that way? Do you see money exactly the way that Jesus Christ says that you ought to see money? That is the issue in all of this. And the way they really are is this.

Your time is short. Your resources are limited. And the time you have to invest it and use it well.

Man out there is bad. Man is perishing. The needs in the world.

We have a commission to reach this dark and lost world. That's the reality. Brethren, I'll tell you this.

We possess the truth. And the truth we possess is the only hope of mankind out there. And it does cost money to get that message across the world.

Missions, evangelism, the health of the church, our needs among ourselves. Yes, brethren, take care of your family. That's one of the responsibilities that we have with our money.

We need to take care of one another. The reality is we need to be very focused. We possess that truth which alone is the hope in the world today.

And brethren, we want to use our resources to see that message propagated because there are people out there that sit in darkness. The reality is our Lord said this. He said to them, go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.

Brethren, we need to be striving to do that. We cannot say, well, you know, somebody else is going to do that. Brethren, who else do you think is going to do that? I mean, seriously, in the city of Manchester, who do you think is going to preach the gospel to the whole creation? Who is going to do it? I mean, go through your mind.

Who's going to do it? You know they're not going to do it in the schools. Who's going to do it? You're going to turn on the nightly news and find it? It's not going to happen there. We've got YouTube.

They're censoring. Do you think they're going to do it? They're going to move further and further in the direction of not doing it. Who's going to do it? The politicians? Do you think they're standing up and talking about these things? Who's going to do it? And then brethren, the reality is this.

We have a lot of people today, we still have churches all over this land that won't even open up. Are they going to do it? They're not doing it. We've got a lot of people sitting in fear, cowering away in their homes.

Are they going to do it? They're not going to do it. And yeah, we've got some guys like we saw out on the streets yesterday, these Hebrew Israelites. Do we want them doing it? They're not preaching Christ, they're preaching works.

And they're preaching that you've got to have a certain skin color, a certain descendency here. They don't have it. Brethren, I'll tell you, when you boil it all down, you know who's doing it? The faithful churches that have the truth.

And they're the only ones. And then you know what? Some of them aren't doing it. Because some of them are not taking the Great Commission seriously.

And so they'll come together and they'll talk doctrine and they'll talk about election and they'll talk about predestination, they'll talk about justification. But then you know they're very content to go home and not touch the world at all. Who's doing this? You know what Jesus said to them? Thus it is written, that Christ should suffer.

And he said, on the third day he will rise from the dead. Repentance and remission of sin, or forgiveness of sin, should be proclaimed in his name to all the nations beginning at Jerusalem. And you know they did that? Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria, in the uttermost parts of the world, in today's our generation.

Because I'll tell you what, those first disciples, they went out to the known world then, but they're not alive anymore. Now it falls to us. It falls to us and I know it falls to us because Jesus said, hello I will be with you to the end of the age.

To the end of the world. That means we have a responsibility right up to the end. Brethren, the church is God's engine for propagating the truth.

And that takes money. That takes money to support men and women to go. It takes money to train the men.

It takes money to print books, to print Bibles, to buy Bibles, to buy tracts. It takes money to do this. It takes money just to have a building.

Brethren, this church, the churches, they are God's engine for propagating the truth of this crucified and risen Christ. That's just a reality. In this world of death and decay and the people are dying.

The people, there's, brethren, the world is dark and people are perishing. And the truth is that we are the beacon of light. And it takes money to get that light to shine out there into the world.

Into the dark corners of the world. Now, observation number five. When you go to verse 23, if your eye is bad, if your eye is bad, your Bible may say if your eye is evil or if your eye is diseased.

Let me tell you something. Eye, ophthalmos, it's the Greek word from which we get ophthalmologist. Bad is the Greek word poneros.

You know what I find very interesting? There are only four places in our Bibles that use those two words together. One is here. One is in basically an equivalent passage in Luke 11.

Speaks just like this, same language. It's the other two that are very interesting that help us to get a grasp on what we're actually talking about when we talk about a bad eye. And I want you to look at both of these.

The first one is found in Mark 7.21. Turn over there. Mark 7.21. There's two of these that use the word. Now, I'm going to tell you right off.

If you have the ESV, you're not going to see this immediately. But I'm going to point this out to you. If you have the New King James or the Old King James, you're going to readily see this.

I'll just tell you this right off. That I look at ten English translations and I'm going to tell you about this in just a moment. But Matthew 7.21. Matthew 7.21. Now listen to me.

I'm bringing you to the last two places in Scripture, aside from Matthew 6 and Luke 11, where ophthalmos and poneros eye and bad or eye and evil are found together. And so what I'm going to ask you to do is in Mark 7.21, I want you to point out to me where the bad eye is. See if anything here sounds like a bad eye.

Now notice, Jesus here is talking about man's sin. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality. If you've got your ESV, the next word is envy.

If you have other translations, you may immediately recognize, well here's our word. It's the original Greek. It is a bad eye.

Slander, pride, foolishness. Ten English translations. Four of the ten I looked at say envy.

Six say either evil eye or wicked eye. Same ophthalmos poneros that we have in Matthew 6.23. Now mark that. What is envy and jealousy? Think what they actually are.

It's when I have bad feelings about you because you have something that I want. Jesus says that is a bad eye. It's interesting in the original.

If you didn't have it defined for us by the fact that some translations use envy, you might almost read that. This comes from within. It comes out of the heart.

It's a bad eye. What is a bad eye? That's the reality here. A bad eye.

Jealousy. I resent you because you have some advantage over and above me. My eye perceives that you possess something that I want.

You consider how this person's eye perceives things. My stuff is my stuff and your stuff ought to be my stuff. That's basically the way this eye sees.

God gave you that but I don't take pleasure in the fact that you got that because I want it. I don't like others being blessed. I don't like that you've been blessed with that because my eye sees that as something that ought to be mine.

I want it. That's a bad eye. It comes from within.

It comes out of the heart. That eye. Think about a person with that eye.

Do you think they walk through the world and they say, Oh, I see a need over here. We need to meet that need. Because you're not looking at what they have.

You're constantly keeping your eyes open for what people don't have. You see the people sitting over there in darkness and you recognize a lot of those people that walk through Market Street, they have more money than I have. But they don't have the most important thing.

Brethren, when we're looking around and we're constantly measuring and that's how we basically approach, that is a bad eye. That is an eye that is not looking out for an opportunity to help and relieve those who sit in darkness, of those who hurt. Why? The bad eye is a taking eye.

That's what it does. It's a discontent eye. It's the eye that wants, wants, wants.

It wants it so bad that it resents those who have what they want. That's not the eye that is looking for others in need. That's not the eye that cheerfully looks for the opportunities to help.

Now here's another example. Turn in your Bibles now to Luke chapter 20. Here's another place where we get this bad eye.

Ophthalmos and Poneros together. This is very helpful because it helps us. Jesus is talking about this bad eye.

We're going to look at it a little more in a moment. This is going to help us to see what is a cancerous kind of eye that we simply cannot tolerate in Christianity. We can't tolerate in ourselves.

We have to destroy. We have to kill. We have to flee from this.

We have to fight this. We have to put this to death. In Matthew 20, you have this well-known parable where you, and let's just read it.

Matthew 20 verse 1. The kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into the vineyard. Going out about the third hour, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace.

He said to them, too, go into the vineyard. Whatever's right, I will give it to you. Verse 5. So they went.

Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. So you see what's happening here. About the eleventh hour, he went out and found others.

He said to them, why do you stand here idle all day? Well, they said, because no one has hired us. He said to them, go into the vineyard, too. He hired them.

When evening came, you've got people that have been hired all the way through the day. From the very beginning to the very end of the day, he's been hiring. He just keeps hiring.

When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, call the laborers and pay them their wages and begin with the last up to the first. When those hired the eleventh hour came, and if they were hired the eleventh hour, they only worked one hour, each received a denarius. Now you remember, that's what he promised the guys that worked the whole day.

And these guys that just came to work at the end of the day, they got the same, received a denarius. When those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each also received a denarius, which is what he promised them. They grumbled at the master, saying, these last worked only one hour.

You've made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day in scorching heat. But he replied to one of them, friend, I'm doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go.

I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? The ESV says, or do you begrudge my generosity? New King James and the old King James say, basically, or is it your, is your eye evil because I am good? And here it is again. We have the same thing.

This is the evil eye. This is the bad eye. Think about this.

You have a man who grumbles. You get somebody in the church. You see, he's talking about real people here.

You get somebody in the church and they grumble. Why do they grumble? Why do people grumble? Why did they grumble out in the wilderness? Those Hebrews, and by the way, we're warned about them, because God was not pleased and that was left for an example. You eat grumblers in the church.

You know what I found? In any given church, you have givers and you have takers. And you know what? The takers are the grumblers. I've seen it over and over and over again.

Takers are grumblers. Why? Because they're never satisfied with what they get. They always think that they deserve more.

They always think they ought to have more. Some of the people in San Antonio that we helped the most, they grumbled the most. It's absolutely amazing.

You see it in the church. People who are always watching out for opportunities to give and people who take, take, take. You know the reality is? You'll get people, they'll come to the church, they'll come to the church, they'll come to the church, they'll take the preaching, they'll take the fellowship, they'll take the snacks afterwards, they'll take and take.

Will they give to the church? No, they'll never give to the church. And I mean, the thing is, I don't know who gives what. So it's not like I'm standing up here and making a judgment on any of you.

That's all between you and the Lord. I'm just saying, there are people in the church like that. They take, take, take.

And they will be the grumblers. And you see what happens with their eye? What's happening in the eye? This is the bad eye. It's the eye that's always sizing things up.

See, this is the person that's watching. What did they get? What did God give them? And they're not happy. They're not happy because rather than recognizing what they are, recognizing after the things that they've done what they deserve, I mean, to have anything, to have God give you anything, and be thankful for it.

You recognize people with a good eye, they are thankful because they see things as they are. They see that every single thing that they have, they didn't deserve. What they really deserve is hell.

They deserve damnation. They deserve eternal destruction and to be weeping and gnashing their teeth. I mean, I always compare.

Did I get my share? I do. Me, me, me, me, me. Brethren, if we take this meaning now of what a bad eye is and we go back to Matthew 6. Go back to Matthew 6. Go back there.

Matthew 6. If we take this meaning that we get from these two verses in Mark 7 and Matthew 20 and we go back to Matthew 6 and verse 22. The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is singular, motivated by the singular, wanting to use your money just like God wants you to use it, wanting to use it first and foremost.

You've got your eyes on the kingdom of God. You're thinking how to serve Christ with it. Your whole body will be full of light.

I find this absolutely amazing. Jesus, the Lord knows the things that are really important to talk about and He's basically saying this. If you have a right view, you have a right eye towards money, you are full of light.

I mean, it's like He is using money as a great measuring rod to find out where we are. Your whole body will be full of light. If your eye is bad, you're like that guy who's finding fault because he doesn't feel like he got his share.

He didn't feel like he was being dealt with fairly. This is bad. Your whole body will be full of darkness.

If then the light in you is darkness, how great. If then the light in you is darkness, is that darkness? You know light, Christ is light. The word of God is a lamp unto our feet.

When you think darkness, what do you think of? All the time in scripture, light and darkness. What does darkness make you think of? Blackness. Darkness has the idea of ignorance or blindness.

I mean, clearly here, darkness and blindness go together. It's when you can't see. You're basically deceived.

That's what deceived people, they're in the dark. Lies and darkness go together in scripture. Light and truth go together.

Jesus is teaching us that if you see money aright, all of you will be bright. But, if your eye is bad, if you have that eye of discontent, you're not satisfied. You're just grumbling at how life isn't fair.

Always looking at what others have. Jesus says that eye, how great will be the darkness that envelops you. So here's observation number six.

How great is the darkness? I mean, look at verse 22. If then, the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness? I mean, what an expression. Notice that.

The light in you is darkness. Jesus is actually speaking about dark light. What an expression.

I find this statement just stunning. If the light in you is darkness, how great is that darkness? In other words, you know, if we look around, if we look at ourselves and we recognize we've got this bad eye, Jesus is not saying this is some small trifling thing. He says, you are in a horrible place.

You're in horrible darkness. How great is the darkness? I mean, does anyone here get the idea that when it comes to money, riches, and wealth, Jesus is not messing around? The question is this. How does your

eye see? How do you see money and wealth? Is it seeing singular in its motivation or is it bad? Paul gives us a glimpse into this.

You don't need to turn here, but just listen to this. In 1 Timothy chapter 6, those who desire to be rich, and we can just stop right there. Be honest.

Are you desiring to be rich here? Are you really desiring to be rich in glory? Are you desiring that God will give you more because you want to give more? Do you hope for an increase at work? And I recognize, if somebody is having a hard time paying the bills, I recognize that you might desire, but listen, that is very much having a singular eye. If somebody wants money because one of the responsibilities they have is taking care of their family and they want to be able to take care of their family, in days like this, if somebody was in a position where they were hoping for some kind of financial increase because they want to put their children in a private school, I understand that. But those who desire to be rich, you just want more.

They fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. You want to run from the love of money. You want to kill that.

You want to run from that like your life depends on it. You don't want to stay there. Listen, brethren, you need to recognize the danger.

You better do inventory. How does your eye see money and possessions? Let the record speak. All you have to do is go look at your credit card statement.

Maybe you don't have checking account or checkbook ledgers like we commonly have in the U.S. that you use, but you have your financial record. Go back and look at it. How are you spending your money over the last two years? How are you spending your money? What are you spending your money on? Where is it going? Because I'll tell you that, the proof's in the pudding, like they say.

All you have to do is look where your money's going and I'll tell you exactly what kind of eye you have. There's no hiding from it. It's not like, oh, don't judge me.

Listen, brethren, things are what they are. And if your eye's bad, Jesus says you're in trouble because there is darkness in you and great is that darkness. This is just an amazing thing.

He doesn't look at, you know, the pounds you have in your pockets and in your bank accounts as some small thing. He's saying this, it opens up, it opens up things to what they really are. Let the record speak.

What have you done with your money? Is a small thing to have a bad eye? I'll tell you, Ananias and Sapphira did not end up thinking that a small thing to have a bad eye. God struck them dead. This plunges people into ruin and destruction.

Is it a small thing to be stingy and think little of the needs of others? Have you heard how God spoke? God said to him, fool, this night your soul's required of you. The things you've prepared, whose will they be? You know, I remember, I remember when my stepfather died and all his possessions ended up out in this

garage. I looked at those things.

I thought, here's the summation of this man's life. Here's all his stuff. And he's gone.

I looked at certain paintings and I remember the story of how they were bought, how he got them, how important they were at that time. And what good were they then? Fool, this night your soul is required. I'll tell you what, the Lord Jesus Christ, He is unwavering, He is unflinching, He is unrelenting when it comes to His people and the money.

And you just look where He goes next. Here in Matthew chapter 6, I mean look at it. Matthew 6, 24.

No one can serve two masters, for either will hate the one. And I'll tell you this, we try to live in the middle ground. But there is no middle ground.

Don't deceive yourselves here. There is no middle ground. No one can serve two masters, for either will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and money. Or mammon, riches, wealth. That's the idea.

And here's the thing, Jesus sees two possible masters. I find this stunning, out of all the masters that He could have come up with that we could possibly have in this entire world, Jesus boils it down to two. I think, you know what a master is.

A master is somebody that masters you. I mean that's simple enough. One who owns you, is in charge of you, possesses you.

One who gives you commands and you obey. That's a master. And do you see the picture? Brethren, you really need to see the picture here.

You got masters. You know this, people that have God as a master, it doesn't mean they give up money. They use it.

They have it. It's a part of their life. People who serve money, they just don't become atheists and throw God out the window.

You have to really recognize this for what it is. See it for what it is. The person who serves money will actually bow down, imagine, see money, personify it.

Money is there, seated on a throne. What the person that serves money does, is they want to bow to it. And they want God in the picture.

And they want God to bow to it too. They want God to do for them what they want done. Brethren, this is just like the prodigal son.

Give me my inheritance. That's how people are with God. And they sulk and they pout when they don't get what they think they deserve.

And see, they want God to serve them in this. They think bad thoughts, ill thoughts, small thoughts of God when He does not help them become more financially stable in this life. Listen, I love this.

Years ago I came across John Piper described serving God this way. God is on the throne. And Piper sees money and us standing there.

And as we go to bow down, we kick the knees out from under money and we force it to bow before God along with us. That's a great picture. That's serving God.

You don't stop using money. You force your money to bow to the living God. That's the issue here.

That's serving God. That's the idea. Christian, good eye, bad eye.

Who are you going to serve? I mean, are you going to serve the British pound sterling? Is that almighty God? Or is the Lord God? If the Lord is God, then serve Him. British currency. Think about it.

Can it really give you all that you desire? Can it really make you happy? Because that's what men think. Men really think deep down inside. They may be religious, they may go to church, they may haul a Bible around.

But what they really think is if I got a substantial raise or if I came into a big inheritance, that would really make me happy. And I'll tell you, deep down, we can subtly be serving money. We don't admit it.

And I'll tell you this, if money can really give you everything to make you happy, then serve it with all your heart. But if you're convinced that the living God, He is the one, He alone, He can take you to glory, He can really satisfy everything else that's a broken cistern, you need Him more than anything else, then serve Him. Put your trust there.

If your eye is not right concerning money, the darkness in you is great, great, great. That's what He says. Is the darkness in you that great? Does this fit you? If your eye is bad and your master is money, then that's absolutely the truth.

Think about money. What is money? I mean I can pull out a coin. We've got paper.

Whether it's the dollar or whether it's the pound, when you've got your piece of paper, that's all it is. Is that good for anything? That by itself is not good for anything. It's not good for anything.

Even the number on your phone, you can pull your phone out. If you've got Monzo, if you've got Starling, like I do, you can pull up, you can see what your balance is. What good is that number on that screen on your phone? It's good for nothing.

What's money good for? Money is good for what we can get. What can you get? Basically if you boil it all down, money buys one thing. It buys what man has for sale.

That's it. I mean you can boil it down to that. It's what money can buy that makes it desirable.

What can it buy? Well it can buy anything that man produces. Yes, it can buy Bibles. It can buy tracts.

There's no doubt about it. But brethren, what you need to recognize is this. When we talk about serving money, you know what we're really serving? We're serving the arm of the flesh.

We're serving what man has for sale. It basically comes down to man. Whether you're serving man or whether you're serving God.

That's the issue. Serving money is the very emblem of putting your trust in the arm of the flesh. It's what you do when you believe that real satisfaction comes from what men can give.

You believe that buying the booze, buying the party life, buying the house, buying that car, buying that stuff, getting my children in the best university, getting the best things in this world, having the nicest clothes, having a closet that's stocked, having the best food, living like a king, the softest blankets. Brethren, serving money is what you do when you really believe that real satisfaction, real fulfillment, real joy are found in everything that man can offer. Isaiah says this.

Stop regarding man in whose nostrils is breath. For what of a count is he? Basically Jesus is giving us a new testament. When you think about serving God or serving mammon, he's basically giving us the same kind of word that Joshua gave to the people or Elijah gave to the people.

Basically Jesus is giving us a New Testament charge that sounds like this. Choose this day whom you will serve. You remember Joshua said that.

Who are you going to serve? Who are you going to serve? Not collectively, you individually. Who are you going to serve? I mean think about it. You're going to serve the gods that your fathers served on the other side of the river? Are you going to serve the gods that the Amorites served? Is that who you're going to serve? I ask you this.

Are you going to serve the pound? Are you going to live for it? Are you going to live for retirement? Are you going to live to have your heaven here? Are you going to live for nice things and soft things? Is that what you're going to live for? Is that God? Is that really the unbroken cistern that you want to drink from? As for me and my house, we're going to serve the Lord. That's what he said. Elijah did the same thing.

Elijah, listen to this. Elijah came near to all the people and said, how long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him. But if Baal, then follow him.

I'd say the same thing to you. Be decided. If God's money, serve it.

Serve it with all your heart because this is as good as it gets because the darkness in you is deep. And listen, Jesus isn't playing around. That darkness be found in you at judgment day.

You're in trouble. Don't think, you know, it's very interesting. Jesus started out by saying basically you want treasure in heaven.

It was a kind of a treasure issue in the first couple. But you know where this thing has gone to? It's gone to a light and dark issue. And it's gone to serving master issue.

And you can't serve both. And if you're not serving God, you're in trouble. That's the issue here.

And Elijah came near. He said, how long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him. If Baal, follow him.

And you know what happened? The people did not answer him a word. What does that mean? That means people are still halting between the two opinions. I mean, brethren, I hope you would not stay quiet.

If I said, is there anybody here that is going to say, I take the Lord. Anyone? I'm not going to serve the money. You're going to kick the knees out from under it? Yes.

God, give us money so that we can send out a missionary force. So that we can send out church planters. So we can send people into the prisons.

So we can care for one another, especially for the widows and the orphans. Especially right among us. Brethren, I'm telling you, kick the knees out from under the money.

Force it to serve the Lord. That's the issue. Singleness.

All out serving him. Serving. We're his servants.

We're his slaves. You remember what Paul said. Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you're slaves of the one whom you obey.

You are slaves of the one whom you obey. And like I said, the proof is in the pudding. All you have to do is look what you're doing with your money to see who you obey.

Where is it all going? What are you doing with it? That's the issue. And I'll tell you this. I'm not up here, one of these health, wealth, prosperity preachers, trying to get you all to buy me bigger and nicer cars and houses.

That's not it. I'm not complaining about where my life is at or what I'm getting. Not at all.

Brethren, this has to do with us. Jesus is dealing with our hearts. That bad eye, he said, these things come from the heart.

These are heart issues. This has to do with where we're at. And money tests us.

Listen. Serving one or the other. God demands our allegiance.

Money demands our allegiance. They both vie for our affections. That's what Jesus sees.

We can say all sorts of things about who our master is. Paul says, we know the master. It's the one we present ourselves to as obedient slaves.

We're slaves of the one we obey. Talk to your money. Talk to it.

Tell it where it's going. Tell it what you're going to do with it. Knock the knees out from under it.

Make it bow to Christ, your King. Make it bow. Jesus says the same thing.

You cannot serve God and money. He says it another place. And just right here at the end, I want you to look at this verse.

This is found in Luke 16. There's another place where Jesus speaks the same way, but he says different things. And I want you to see this.

This is found in Luke 16. And we'll pick up reading in verse 9. Luke 16, verse 9. I tell you, this is this. Now listen.

Who do you serve? Who do you obey? You're slaves of the one you obey. And here's the King speaking. And he's speaking to you.

He says, I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, or unrighteous money, or unrighteous mammon is our word again. So that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings. Listen.

That is not hard to understand. You know what Jesus sees here? You've lived your life helping others, relieving their affliction through your wealth, taking the gospel to dark places. And you know what he sees? He sees you investing in the salvation of others, you investing in the welfare of others.

And he sees these people dying ahead of you. And when you die, he sees you entering glory. And you have made friends that come and they are rejoicing and they wrap their arms around you.

And they say, I was in Myanmar. And I was in the dark. And the Lord has told me, you contributed.

I saw, I saw what these Christians that were based over in Thailand, I saw the mercy that they were having. Your money came through them. I saw the mercy of the Christians back in the West helping us.

And it broke me. I called out to the Christ of those missionaries. That's the picture here.

And he's saying, you want to make friends for yourself out of this unrighteous mammon. So that when it's going to cease, it's coming to an end. You only get so long to use it.

And it's going to get taken away from you. It can get wings here. Remember the rust, the moth, the thief.

But death is going to take it. I just ask you this. If you were to die today, who's going to receive you? I mean, do you feel like, yes, I've kicked the knees out from underneath wealth and possessions.

And there's a bunch of people that are going to meet me in that day because I've channeled these things with a singular eye. My eye wasn't bad. I saw it for what it was.

I saw that I could make friends to receive me there. And you know who those friends are. Again, I come back to this all the time.

I was sick. I was in prison. I was a stranger.

As much as you did it under one of the least, and those least are going to be there. And I'll tell you, there is going to be jubilation when people say, you helped me. You brought the gospel to where I was.

I'm one of these Syrian Muslims. And you poured help through Brother Dan. You did that.

You see what's being said. Luke 16, 10. One who's faithful in very little, and you know the very little he's talking about here is what we have here, is also faithful in much.

One who's dishonest in very little is also dishonest in much. And brethren, there's such a truth there. If you're poor, and you're using it well, you'll use it well if you have a lot.

Don't deceive yourself into thinking, well, if I was rich, then I'd really. The reality is, whatever you have right now basically shows where you're at. Verse 11, if then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth.

Now, you might want to just catch this. He calls this money that you're supposed to kick the knees out from under and make bow to God, he sees it as in and of itself unrighteous. He doesn't call it neutral.

He calls it unrighteous. And I'll tell you why. Because it tugs at men's hearts, and it's dangerous, and it's easier to go through a camel than to go through the eye of a needle.

You better be careful when you're dealing with this. You better be very careful. Unrighteous mammon, unrighteous mammon, if you're not faithful with that, who's going to entrust you the true riches? The true riches is what's to come.

The eternal treasure. Who's going to give you that? The eternal weight of glory, the paradise, the treasure in heaven. Listen brethren, these are life and death statements here.

If you have eyes to see. Verse 12, and if you have not been faithful in that which is in others. See, what we trade with now is the Lord's.

It's in others. He's watching, and he's going to take in account. And if you're not faithful with that, who will give you that which is your own? In other words, that which you have forever.

In other words, it's not going to happen. Life and death statement. No servant can serve two masters.

He will either hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. You better be cautious.

You know there are 1.4 billion Indians. Do you know what their average salary is per year? Average across the entire 1.4 billion people on average. They make 2,800 pounds per year.

That's average. In China, likewise, 1.4 billion people. The average per year.

Now they're a whole lot more industrialized. 8,200 pounds per year. Jesus looked at his disciples and he said, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.

And let me just tell you something, it is impossible for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. You better be careful. Because I'll tell you this, don't think that having more money is going to make you more generous.

Because it doesn't work that way. Basically what happens is the riches increase. I'll tell you what increases.

Your ability to harden your own conscience by justifying not giving what you have. And I'll tell you, people proportionately, they get more, more, more, more. It may seem like they're giving more, but the percentage actually is decreasing.

People who are wealthy, they typically have a great ability to blind their eyes to the needs of others. The reality is, when Jesus is telling you, you better watch out. Because rich people do not easily enter into the kingdom.

Because men have a natural disposition to trust money. And you know it. If you are human at all, you know the tug of money.

And you better be careful. It is called unrighteous mammon by Christ. And he says, you better be careful.

I'll tell you the safe position is to give it all away. I'm just pleading, Lord, please, make it sooner than later that you give this church real, serious, our own missionary endeavors. Brethren, I want this church to have endeavors that empty our accounts.

Because that is safe. And I'll tell you this, when you have that church, you remember back to the fast that God desires. When you've poured yourself out like this for the needy.

And then we cry. And He's going to say, here I am. You know what? God is really in the business of answering the prayers when people have given.

And they've given and they've given and they've given and they have no more to give. As long as we keep these reserves. You know why people keep reserves? Because they want to be able to fall back in case God doesn't come through.

They want to be able to regulate their funds. They can't trust the Lord to actually supply for them when they get in need. They've got to have these resources stockpiled back here because really in the end, they don't trust the Lord's going to take care of them if they give it all away.

Brethren, be very careful here. Remember, remember, it plunges people into all manner of ruin and destruction. This is no small thing, especially for us in the West.

You, the Brits, Americans. Brethren, we have money. Don't delude yourself.

You're in that realm of the rich and don't think that Jesus' words can just be brushed off lightly. You do well to remember Demas who loved the world and he turned his back on Paul. You do well to remember Ananias and Sapphira.

You do very well to remember Gehazi. You remember him? Elisha's servant who went after Naaman and went after the silver and the clothing and he was made a leper for the rest of his life. We do well to remember Judas and the 30 pieces of silver.

Brethren, I'll tell you, at first this almost seems like just a matter of reward. But as Jesus develops it, He's saying this is life and death. I'll tell you what, money trusts.

Money tests who you trust. And this is no small thing because a person that really trusts the Lord, they will kick the knees out from under money and say I'm trusting the Lord. I don't trust you.

I've got you. I can use you. You know what money can do? Money can feed the widow.

It can feed the orphan. It can buy Bibles. It can send missionaries out to dark places.

It can do that. And I'll tell you what, kick the knees out from under it. Make it do that.

Make it serve the Lord. Brethren, our time is short. Jesus is unrelenting when it comes to this and He has a lot to say.

Covetousness. Have you ever read? It's almost like covetousness almost doesn't even fit in the sexual immorality in some of the passages. But covetousness because of these things the wrath of God is coming.

This is a heart matter and it will prove us as to what we truly trust. Going forward we need to live in the light of this. Our Lord looked His disciples dead in the eye and He was not messing around.

You cannot serve two masters and rich people do not readily enter the kingdom and that ought to make us tremble. That ought to make us sit up and plead Lord help me to be faithful. And you know what? You know one of the greatest ways? He told Timothy you flee these things.

Run from it. I mean if you look at it and you realize what's the quickest path? Confess. Repent.

Plead with the Lord. See the reality of this and give. And give lavishly.

Give sacrificially. And listen we need to not be foolish. We want to be good stewards.

It doesn't mean you have to run out and liquidate everything. We really need to be praying. Lord show us.

Show us. Look right now already this church is involved in things in Myanmar and involved in things in Lebanon that are very worthy causes. But we need to keep our eyes open.

What is it that God wants us to do? Very quickly it may be purchase a building. I mean it may be throwing funds into that. I don't know.

Brethren pray ask God to show you. Lord what do you want me to do? How do you want me to use the resources I have? You can't serve God in money. Father I pray that you would take these words and help us to be faithful.

Help us Lord. Lord help break any resistance, any lack of trust, any tendency in any of us to trust in the arm of the flesh, to trust the British pound, to trust the number in our bank account. Lord I pray break us of trust in anything and everything but you.

I pray this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. You are dismissed.

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