

2-19-2011, COTR Texarkana

Title: Who's 1st?

Purpose: Provoke people to put what God wants before what they want.

Spiritual Truth: God will take care of me when I put what He wants before what I want.

Text: Mt 6:31-33

Topic: Money, Tithing, Giving, Lordship

Series: Blessed

Series Purpose: Teach people how to experience the favor of God in everyday life.

Who's 1st?

I. Introduction

A. Review

1. Last week's message: Kingdom math: $3-1=4$. One of the things we learned was that our faith, obedience and generosity release God's blessing.
2. Picture and text, Barb Pitts. Whether our financial provision comes from "unbelievable deals", hard work, an inheritance or is the fruit of years of education God is the one who provides for us.
3. **Series: Blessed**
4. **Series Purpose: Teach people how to experience the favor of God in everyday life.** (Listen or download the messages at ChurchOnTheRock.org)
 - a. Book: *The Blessed Life* by Robert Morris. We just got another case.
5. Matthew 6:31-33 (NCV) [Context: Jesus & financial worry about future needs]
³¹ Don't worry and say, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' ³² The people who don't know God keep trying to get these things, and your Father in heaven knows you need them. ³³ **Seek first God's kingdom and what God wants. Then all your other needs will be met as well.**
 - a. We all want our needs to be met. We work, save, invest and shop to meet our needs but there is something more we need to do if we want God to take care of us. We've got to put God's Kingdom 1st, i.e. we've got to put what God wants before what we want.

B. Title: Who's 1st? (God isn't automatically 1st just because we're a Christian. We must make a deliberate choice to put what He wants before what we want.)

C. Purpose: Provoke people to put what God wants before what they want.

D. Spiritual Truth: God will take care of me when I put what He wants before what I want.

II. What did Jesus say I have to do for God to take care of me?

A. Who's going to be 1st, me or God? (Review)

1. Matthew 6:33 (NCV)
³³ **Seek first God's kingdom and what God wants. Then all your other needs will be met as well.**
2. In the Bible there are 500 verses on prayer, less than 500 on faith but over 2000

on money and possessions. Jesus talked about money in 16/38 parables. What we do with money is important to God and us.

3. God's provision starts with trust. Do I believe what Jesus said? Can I trust that He can take care of me better than I can and His plan for my life is better than mine?
4. To put Him 1st I've got to make myself 2nd. This includes letting Him determine what I do with the money He gives me.

B. Who is taking care of me? (Jesus comments about taking care of us starts in verse 11)

1. Matthew 6:11-24 (ESV)

¹¹ **Give us this day our daily bread...**

- a. We still work, go to school, etc but God wants us to recognize that The source of everything we have is Him. This mindset changes my attitude toward my financial and material world. Whether our financial provision comes from "unbelievable deals", hard work, an inheritance or years of education God is the one who provides for me.
- b. When I start my workday with this prayer I am looking to God and not just myself or people to provide for me.

C. Do I care more about earthly things or heavenly things?

1. Matthew 6:19-21 (The Message)

¹⁹ "Don't hoard treasure down here where it gets eaten by moths and corroded by rust or—worse!—stolen by burglars. ²⁰ Stockpile treasure in heaven, where it's safe from moth and rust and burglars. (ESV) ²¹ **For where your treasure is, there your heart will be...**

2. Don't just live to make money and buy stuff. Invest some of it in God's eternal Kingdom. Nothing I spend my money on will last for eternity except what I invest in reaching people and building God's Kingdom.
3. The Bible doesn't say we can't have nice things or a lot of money but if all I do with the money entrusted to me is spent it on myself I've wasted it.
4. This is where the problem lies for many Christians. We separate our spiritual life from our material world. We want God to let us go to heaven but we don't want Him telling me what to do with our \$.
5. What we do with it is a spiritual test that reveals our heart.
 - a. You are too quiet. I'm just reading the Bible.
6. Verse 21 says, my heart follows my money. I will love what I spend my money on, e.g. hobby, business, pleasure or the needs of people and God's Kingdom.
7. Jesus wants our heart, (the great commandment). He can't get our heart until we surrender the ownership of our money and possessions. Giving changes our heart.

D. Who's controlling my life, God or money?

1. Verse 24 **"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money (mammon).**
2. Money and God are both masters (def. one that has authority over another).
3. The Chaldeans called Mammon a money-god. At the heart of mammon is an attitude that says I don't need God. I can take care of myself. It epitomizes pride and self sufficiency and promises people having enough of it will make them happy and fulfilled. Mammon is a rival to God for the heart of the disciple.
4. The issue, then, is who controls me, Jesus or the money-god Mammon? The answer is revealed by my checkbook. If I want God to take care of me I must put

Him in charge of my money and trust Him to take care of me.

III. Tithing establishes God's ownership of my life.

A. The Bible teaches that our 1st and best belongs to God

1. Leviticus 27:30 (NLT)
³⁰“One tenth of the produce of the land... **belongs to the Lord and must be set apart to him as holy.**
2. If 10% of all that comes into our hands “belongs” to God is tithing giving or is it returning to God what belongs to Him? We don't give our tithe, we return it. I can't give something that's not mine. This act of submission recognizes God's ownership and our stewardship of what we possess.
3. If it belongs to God then if I spend it I'm stealing.
4. I'm just reading the Bible.

B. Tithing was practiced before the Law of Moses as a tangible way to honor God

1. In Ge 14:20, Abraham won a battle and honored God by tithing. “Abram gave Melchizedek (a priest of God) a tenth of all the goods he had recovered.”
 - a. This was 2500 years before the Law. If tithing was right before the Law is it still right today? Can I steal your wallet because the 10 Commandments are in the OT Law?

C. Jesus told people to tithe

1. In Mt 23:23, Jesus told the Pharisees,” You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things.” (Justice, mercy...)

D. God promises to bless the tither

1. Malachi 3:6-11 (NIV)
⁶“I the Lord do not change... ⁷... **Return to me, and I will return to you,**” says the Lord Almighty. “But you ask, ‘How are we to return?’ ⁸“**Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me.** “But you ask, ‘How do we rob you?’ “**In tithes and offerings.** ⁹ You are under a curse...because you are robbing me. ¹⁰ **Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse,** that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” ...“and see if I will not throw **open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing** that you will not have room enough for it.
2. It's pretty simple. If I tithe, I'm under a blessing. If I don't I'm under a curse. Do you want to be cursed or blessed? I'm just reading the Bible.
3. It's clear in Scripture that the tithe is brought to God's house.
4. Illustrate: If I give you 10 \$1 bills, which one is the tithe? The 1st one. If you get paid on Thursday and pay your bills and buy groceries and then write your tithe check, did you just give 10% and not tithe? Is it really faith to tithe after we pay our bills? Aren't we establishing our own priorities when we pay bills 1st and then tithe if we have leftover? The spiritual principle is putting God 1st and faith in that act initiates God's blessing.
5. Tithing is built on Kingdom math. 100%-10%= God's blessing
6. God doesn't need our money. He already owns it all. He wants to be 1st and tithing is a tangible way to show our spiritual priorities.
 - a. Luke 16:11 (NLT) [Parable of Jesus]
¹¹ **And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven?**
7. Proverbs 3:9-10 (The Message)
⁹ Honor God with everything you own; **give him the first and the best.** ¹⁰ Your

barns will burst, your wine vats will brim over.

IV. Conclusion

A. Matthew 6:33 (NCV)

³³ Seek first God's kingdom and what God wants. **Then** all your other needs will be met...

1. If we want Him to take care of us we've got to put Him 1st. Decide to do it now.

V. Response: Prayer/ souls