

Good morning. Hey, you're a live group this morning up front!

We're in the middle of a series called YOU WERE TOLD. We're told all sorts of things. We repeat them over and over and over again but the question is: Do they line up with this [holds up his Bible] and that's what we talk about a lot here at Calvary. This morning we are going to discuss the statement you were told to live for today.

Hey, you know what, seriously, we live in a fast-moving world and sometimes we find ourselves chasing something way out there, some dream, something like that that is never going to come true. But as a result of that we're working around the clock long hours where we never see our kids, we miss that child's first step, their soccer game. We don't take a moment to sit and enjoy a cup of iced tea or look at the sunset. So we do say today when we think about life and we think about this world we realize it's the very breath that we're taking in right now is a gift from God. Right? And so we stop in this moment and we say, "Thank you, Jesus, for this moment." Let's take it in. Let's enjoy it. And that's a powerful thing.

Jesus, though, had some statements to make about living for today that may turn some of our thought processes about what we do with what we have today upside-down. Chapter 15 and chapter 16 of the book of Luke He tells two stories. We call them parables; they're a story that He tells that He tells it in order to get a point across to us. And these two stories, one of them especially is one that you're really familiar with and the word's not found in the story but we call it the story of the prodigal son. As some of you have indicated that you have a prodigal; you've used that kind of language. And when Jesus begins to tell that story He tells the story, He says: *"There was a man who had two sons"* —I'm talking about Luke chapter 15, verse 11—

The Parable of the Prodigal Son

¹¹ And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. ¹³ Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. ¹⁴ And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.'" ²⁰ And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹ And the son said to

him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³ And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴ For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.

²⁵ "Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. ²⁷ And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' ²⁸ But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, ²⁹ but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' ³¹ And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

and the younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the share of the property that is coming to me." And he divided the property among them. So this young man, he looks at his dad obviously with

disdain because his dad was standing in the way of his inheritance. His very being alive got in the way of that. What he's saying to his dad is, "Dad, I wish that you were dead because if you were dead I could grab your stuff and go live life to its fullest right now. Well, since I can't wait for you to die and you don't look like you're going to die anytime too soon, dad, give me my inheritance right now. Give me my property"—that's the word he uses here—"right now." The reason why he doesn't use inheritance, the word "inheritance" comes with responsibility. This guy didn't want any responsibility. The responsibility to oversee the family's wealth, the responsibility to see oversee generations of projects that would continue on—he didn't want any of that. He wanted all the stuff and he wanted it reduced to cash because the property would have included animals, livestock, would have included buildings and all sorts of different things. He basically says, "Hey, let's go get a payday loan. Let's reduce this to cash. Let me grab that cash and let me go out there and I want to spend that. I want to spend it on what I want today; something that will make me happy for today." Do I hear the phrase "live for today"?

Jesus says that he goes and he does that and the words Jesus says is, He says he went out and he lived recklessly. He had a blast. He spent it. He had fun. And guess what! Friends came with that, all sorts of power, all sorts of cool stuff came with that, and he was having a lot of fun until—the money ran out. And when the money ran out we read this statement in the text. Verse 14 it says this:

LUKE 15:14-16

And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

I don't think we know a whole lot about famines. We've heard about them. They seem like they're in a distant, faraway place. When we hear about them we're concerned but we've never experienced a famine. If we're a little late for dinner, we think we're in the midst of that and we're grabbing something, we're making a quick dive into Wawa just to hold us over.

Famines in that time were absolutely horrendous as they are in our time in the places where they are occurring and there was no food. There were no jobs, there was no opportunity, and this guy now is without money. He's in a land where there is a famine and pretty soon he goes looking for a job. No jobs to be offered until he gets offered a job to go work with the pigs. For a Jewish boy to be in a Gentile country to have to go work with the pigs you don't get much lower than that. Basically, his selfishness, his me-ism, his wanting everything now had led to the very lowest of level but not low enough to do anything where he might say, "Hey, you know what, I need to go make things right with dad." No, he hasn't gone low enough for that until he gets to a place where he's sitting there eating the food that the pigs are eating and at that point he recognizes—in fact, I believe that he hits rock bottom and it says this in verse 17:

LUKE 15:17

"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger!'

In other words, he now for the first time thinks of his dad and thinks, "Wow! Back home dad has people that work for him and they're always well taken care of." Evidently his dad was very generous with the people that worked for him.

Now, let me stop for a moment. Remember I told you Jesus tells these stories and the goal of these stories is to get a message across to us, to help us understand something, to see something. So here's what I want you to picture in this story. I'm going to put a little graphic up on the screen right now for you to see it. In this story the father represents God; so the father is picturing God. The son is picturing

FATHER (GOD)

SON (ME)

us and we have this tendency to want what we want, to want it now, and forget God in the process of that—until we hit rock bottom, and maybe even lower than that because, you know, when he goes to feed the pigs he goes there in the first place, he doesn't even think of his dad at that point. But when he gets there he thinks of his dad and thinks of his dad's love and his generosity and his kindness for his own hired workers. And it's at that point that he thinks to himself, "Wait a minute. Wait a minute. I'll go back to dad. I mean, at least if I'm one of his hired servants or hired workers I can go back there and do that. That's way better than the pig stuff that I'm dealing with." And he heads back home to see his father. He is broken. He's going to tell his dad, "Hey, dad, I've sinned. Let me at least do this."

He gets there and here's what he finds—and this is such a huge key to understanding God, to understanding the father—as he is approaching the father sees him from a far distance and the text tells us he comes running to meet his boy. And what we see here is we see this picture of God, that God wants us to know and as Jesus tells the story Jesus is God, He wants us to know that no matter how far we've fallen, no matter how stupid we've been with the gifts that God has given us in our lives, no matter how much we've wasted those and been frivolous with those gifts, God says, "You can come back to Me and I'm waiting. And you don't just come back, I'm going to bless you in that process. I'm waiting for you."

Now the people around who had heard what had happened, had seen how this family has been torn inside and out by this kid, this young man if you can call him a man, I mean, his behavior, those around would expect him when the son comes to have all sorts of caveats, all sorts of things to basically put him down. After all, this kid has embarrassed his family. But no, that's not the case. The dad's waiting with arms wide open. Again, God wants us to know through these stories that He is a God who is waiting with arms wide open.

And when the boy comes back we read in verse 21, we read these words:

LUKE 15:21-24

And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³ And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴ For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.

I highlighted my Bible, underlined those words, "lost" and "found." You know, God just loves that which is lost, bringing it back to life, finding it, bringing it back to Himself. And so you see here not a finger-pointing thing, not a lecture, not a stern face, but my son was dead, he's alive, come home, son.

And you realize, wait a minute, that son's me. God the Father is saying to me, "I love you. Come home. I've been waiting for you. Get on in here!" And then, "I'm not gonna beat you up when you arrive. I'm gonna feed you. I'm throwing a party for you. I love you. I've been waiting for you to come home."

I don't know, for any one of us who have been the prodigal, who have been wasteful—and by the way, that word "prodigal", that word prodigal means "to be spending money or resources freely, recklessly, wastefully extravagant." I mean, for any of us who have wasted our lives, who have wasted what God has given us, who have run away, it is so freeing to know that we the prodigal can come to God the Father and what's God the Father show us? He shows us great unmerited, undeserved favor, welcome home, son.

Now today I want to put two of the stories together. Normally when you hear this story taught you wouldn't hear the second story. Normally when I would teach it, I wouldn't teach the second story. But I believe they run together beautifully because we go from this wastefulness and a God that says, "Hey, I'm going to offer you grace. I get it, but I want you to come home and I'm going to offer you grace"—to a second story that's very similar but very different. But it's interesting when you look at chapter 16 because this rolls right into chapter 16. It says this, verse 1: "*He also said to his disciples*"—so Jesus

The Parable of the Dishonest Manager

¹⁶ He also said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions. ² And he called him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your management, for you can no longer be manager.' ³ And the manager said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. ⁴ I have decided what to do, so that when I am removed from management, people may receive me into their houses.' ⁵ So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' ⁶ He said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' ⁷ Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' He said,

'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' ⁸ The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light. ⁹ And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.

¹⁰ "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. ¹¹ If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹² And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? ¹³ No servant 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."

is telling the story. You ever been in a place where they just told one story and spent the rest of the night on that one story? We were at dinner last night, my wife was telling story after story after story after story after story. We don't just tell one story. So Jesus is telling this story, hey, there was this son, he wants all this stuff. The father says here it is. He goes away and he wastes it and ends up in a pigpen. After things are this low he comes home and the dad's waiting for him to come home. Can you believe it?! This dad takes him back in!

And then Jesus tells another story, verse 1:

LUKE 16:1

"There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions.

So picture in your mind what's going on here. A really wealthy guy, he's got this huge estate. As a really wealthy guy, you can't manage that huge estate on your own. You need people and he's got people and he's got a manager that oversees everything. He manages all of his investments. He manages all of the proceeds that come in and out of his place.

Here's when we find out it says that owner finds out that he's wasting this. Can you imagine the owner's at a party and he overhears a conversation over there about some stuff and he goes, "Wait a minute. That's my stuff? Who's using it for what?" And he was, "You've got to be kidding! No, no, no, no! No, that's my stuff. You can't be doing that!" He realizes his manager is wasting his stuff so he goes to the manager, sits him down, you know, one of these employer-employee conversations? And says, "Listen, it's time that you make an accounting for everything that you have done and what we have and what you have, and when you're done making that accounting you're out of here."

It's the conversation you don't want to have said to you, and that's the conversation that's said to this manager. And that manager in that moment is put into this, "Uh-oh!" Shock. Throw you for a loop. And the text tells us, you know, he doesn't want to have to go dig and all this kind of stuff. He's like, "I don't know how to do anything else. I'll never get a job paying what I get paid here. There aren't any owners of estates this large anywhere else. I don't know where I could go. I don't know how I can get a job like the one I have today paying what I have paid today." And he said, "What should I do?" And so he makes some decisions on the spot.

Before I go there let me give you a similar chart to what I gave you a few moments ago. In this story the owner is a picture of God. The owner is a picture of God, and the manager is a picture of us. So I want you to capture those two things: the owner has everything, the manager just manages everything. There's two different types of things. So the owner asks these kinds of questions. I have all this stuff, what do I do with it?

OWNER (GOD) God owns	MANAGER (ME) I am not an owner
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Let me ask you a question. Let's just say tomorrow you find out that you receive this really huge inheritance. You weren't expecting it, you know, you were living fine the way life was going on. All the bills are paid, all the needs are met, but now all of a sudden life changes radically for you. I mean, what would a huge inheritance be? Students, five thousand bucks? Why are you laughing? What number do you want to hear? [Points to someone in the audience] Twenty thousand? We've got a million. It's been raised to a million. We're up ten million. [He laughs] Now we're up to one billion. [He laughs] When you get that inheritance, I mean, what do you do with that? I heard one of you up here say, "Well, I'll pay my college." Anyone buying a car? You're buying a what? [Points at someone in the audience] Nothing? Okay. Oops, that's the problem with sitting up front in the spit zone. [Laughter]

No, but seriously, the owner, I mean, his responsibility is to sit there and figure out what's he going to do with what he has. So any of us who own anything, I mean, if you're the richest person in this room and you have a lot or if, you know, all you own is a bicycle, you know, I mean, it's like you have to decide what am I going to do with that bicycle? What am I going to do with that big pile of stuff? And that's a discussion that's all of is have. We had one up here saying pay my college. So we make that decision what we're going to do.

A manager is very different. The manager is looking at what the owner has and saying, "How can I manage what you have to accomplish the goals that you have for this stuff?" And what Jesus is going to

say here—remember we said the manager is me and I get the opportunity to manage everything that belongs to the owner. So in the book of Psalms it says this verse, it's awesome, Psalm 24. It says this:

PSALM 24

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein,

So everything in it is God's, all the people that are in it, the earth itself, it's all God's. He's the owner. The book of James says this:

JAMES 1:16-17

Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above,

So everything that we have, managers, is from the owner; everything I have is from God. So this story, when it's talking about the manager and the owner it's a picture of us being managers of everything the owner, God, has given us to manage. So if it goes from a bicycle or the person here who said they'd be fine with five thousand dollars, or the person here who said they'd be fine with one billion dollars, God gives you one billion dollars. God bless you, you are a manager of that one billion dollars.

Evidently this is what happened to that manager that Jesus is telling about. He forgot that he was a manager. He thought he was an owner and started using it like he was the owner and he became wasteful of it. And the owner looks at it and says give me an account for that. Why did you spend it on that? Why would you do that with it? I've given you some priorities. I've given you some expectations and you're using that money in ways that I would never expect you to use. Give me an account.

In the process of saying, "Oh, no; I have no future," this guy goes to work on saying, "What do I have to do to get a future? What do I have to do at the end—these were the words he said. He said, "What do I have to do so that someday after I lose this job people will answer the door when I knock on it?" You know, people answer their phones when I call them because, you know, when you move from this being the manager of a very wealthy owner to being a no one, you're a no one. All of a sudden your phone stops ringing. All of a sudden people stop taking your phone calls. He knows that. He's worried about that. And so he makes a decision and his decision is simply this: Well, I'm going to go out there and I'm going to make some deals. I'm going to make some deals for the owner that at the end of the day are going to make friends for me.

So what he does, and the text talks about wheat and oil and this kind of thing, so he goes and he says, "Hey, you owe the owner this much wheat. What if we make that fifty percent, you know, what if you just pay fifty percent of that." And the guy says, "Yeah!" "Hey, you owe the owner this much oil. What if we just make that eighty percent?" "Sure. Bring it in." And so this guy over a course of a couple days because he has very little amount of time, he realizes I have to use this time to the maximum right now because my time is ticking away really fast. He moves rapidly with that and he makes these deals. I mean, it would be sort of like in our time if someone said to you, "Hey, you know what? That college loan that you're taking out? Twenty-five percent, get that thing paid and you're out." "Your mortgage, make that twenty-five percent and pay that and we'll be good." "Hey, that car loan that

you just took out, yeah, make that forty percent of that and we'll call it good." I mean you'd be like wow, and these people were leaving there saying, "Hey, listen, if there's anything ever I can do for you, uhm, you know, give me a call." And the guy's, "Oh, I'm fine today but, yeah, I'll remember that."

What's rather shocking in this story is when Jesus tells the story Jesus' response to this, because it feels a little bit uncomfortable that this guy would do this with the owner's monies. But here's what Jesus says when he responds to him. It says this in verse 8, so if you look down to verse 8 of chapter 16.

LUKE 16:8a

The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness.

You know, wow. Okay, well, he's not giving us a spiritual point here. He's just saying what the master of this business did, he says, "Good job. You a lot of debts paid off. Even though they paid less you got it done. Good job for your shrewdness." And then Jesus gives a little commentary on it and says this:

LUKE 16:8b

For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light.

So Jesus gives a thumbs up to this, puts His approval on this and says, "Hey, listen, when you deal with business, when you deal with life like that, you're looking at this through the lens of what can we do to make this work at the end and what can do we do so that we have connections later on. He says, "Why is it that we—as followers of Jesus Christ who are part of the kingdom, who see the world as way more than a business transaction, way more than getting myself ahead in the world, those are us who see this as a, you know, I'm already living in eternity, this is going to go forever, God is the owner of it all, God is everything and I'm going to live my life for Him—He says why wouldn't *we* think like that? Why wouldn't we be that shrewd in our dealing? And then he explains exactly what that would look like it. He says, verse 9:

LUKE 16:9

And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.

By the way, He's giving us a little bit of commentary on money there. It's not anything that's overly valuable when it comes to the Kingdom of God. It's not going to last. It's not going to be around much longer. It's going to fail you. It's going to let you down. Those are His exact words. Unrighteous wealth is going to fail you sometime, so He says why wouldn't we take that thing, that tool that is going to fail eventually—just like the manager knew that job was going to fail him—why don't you take that and why don't you leverage that for eternal purposes? And that's His message. That's the story He's trying to get across. This guy worked the last few days while he had a little bit of time to use the little bit of money that he had to work with to make for himself an opportunity in the future. And He says, "Hey, listen, those of us who have eternity ahead of us, why don't we do the same thing? Why aren't we

doing that? Why don't we do that so that when we get into heaven there will be people waiting for us there that will say, "I just want to say thank you because you used that little bit of unrighteous wealth and that money that was going to fail you, that probably some next generation was going to waste on who knows what. Because you use that for something spiritual and for something eternal, I'm here. Thank you." He says so that friends will invite you into their homes. Jesus says, "Why wouldn't we think about that for eternity?"

This week I got a letter here at the church. I tell you what, I tried to read stuff that's sent to us. Can we put a copy of this letter up on the screen? I'm not sure; we think this might be written in Ukrainian or Russian, so if you speak Ukrainian or Russian maybe you can come up afterwards and tell me what this letter says because I'm not sure. I had some people decipher it, my son even tried a couple different apps on it, the apps wouldn't tell us what it said. It's beautifully written, but I don't know what it says. But they say or you were told a picture's worth a thousand words, it came with a picture and a really, really, I mean, it's sort of a blurry picture.

Okay. For the little I was able to get out of this letter and a little bit of the thousand words that I was able to get out of this picture, these are children probably somewhere in Ukraine or Russia holding Operation Christmas Child boxes which, from what I can understand, they opened and when they looked through it they found our address. They were so moved by what we had in the Operation Christmas Child boxes that they assigned someone to write us a letter and a thank-you note and send it to us as a church. We had no idea when we packed these boxes last year at Christmas time with love and with prayers and with things that you went and went to the different stores around and purchased and brought back here and then eventually packed those boxes and put little notes and little cards in, we never knew which children they would go to. But there's about eight or ten children here that we know who they went to and they wrote to say thank you and we are now connected with some people who wrote to say thank you. To me that is a little picture of what it looks like that I use a little bit of my time—it takes time to run out.

I saw that big pile of backpacks going out to the children of Coatesville this week laying out in lobby, and when I came back in there was a big pile of backpacks. I was like, people went out and went to the store, bought those things, and there's that stuff, I mean, you think, "Oh, that can't cost that much." It costs a lot. It's just like wow! And carefully packed it and carefully put a note in there. A little bit of time and a little bit of funds say I have—what did He say here [motioning to his Bible on the table]? What did He call it? Unrighteous wealth or worldly wealth. I'm going to take a little bit of that, that's not going to last, and I'm going to spend it so that I have friends in eternity.

I was talking to one of our children's workers this week about our children's ministry. I was told the story about a family in our church that had foster children and, you know, foster children come and they go. And the foster children left their home and so they're no longer, obviously, coming to this church. But the foster children had built such a close relationship with one of their teachers in Kids' Gym that the foster child said to her mom, who she was returned to thankfully, "Can we go back to Calvary? I need to go every week and be with my teacher." I asked, "How long has that teacher been teaching?" She said, "Seven years." A little bit of time, some money, using that to build friends and change lives. And the family is driving a long distance now to be at this church every week because that teacher loved on the child. Using what I have to make a difference.

I want to make a statement. The statement is this: Money is a test. When Jesus comes out of this story this is what he says in verse 10:

LUKE 16:10a

"One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much

So the one who bought a bunch of toothpaste tubes to put in these boxes—faithful in a little—God says you're faithful in much. Money is a test. What will I do with what God's given me? Am I like the prodigal? Remember the word prodigal means wasteful, reckless spending. This for me; this money is what we're spending for dinner tonight. Money is a test.

LUKE 16:10-11

"One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches?"

Something beyond this world, something bigger than this—I want to have something laid up for me in the future. And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's—remember, we're not the owner, we're the manager—if you've not been faithful in something that's not yours, that's God. See, even notice oftentimes those that tithe think, "Well, I gave my tithe to God, the rest is mine." No, it's *all* God's. It says:

LUKE 16:12

And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?"

I'm going to share with you one more thing. Remember I said money is a test? I'm going to say also money is a spiritual test. Listen to this, the last verse and you've heard it before:

LUKE 16:13

No servant 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."

It's a spiritual test. When you look at where you spend your money, you're going to find out am I the prodigal? I'm wasteful, reckless, it's me, mine, I want it for today. God, the Father, I just wish You were dead. I don't even want to hear from You. I don't want to see You and I don't want to think about You. I want it now. I want to play with it. I want to have fun. I want to just live life." That's what I'm saying to God. God, I don't care about You. But when I say, "God, this is all yours. God, how do you want me to use it?"

We've got about students in these green shirts today [PHOTO ON NEXT PAGE]. They're going to spend a week at camp so that they can bring in students from all over Coatesville at that camp to reach them with the love of Jesus. They're taking time off work. They're taking time that they could be going playing and

hanging out so that they can be building into the lives of others. I just had a little conversation this morning finding out about all the adults that are going to camp at the Old Mill this week because they're cooking, they're cleaning up dishes in the kitchen, they're serving the kids, they're running the rope lines, they're running the canoes, they're opening up their homes for the pool. And I just don't—I just listed a couple of them because what I almost started writing them down and said, "I'll remember a couple of them." Just a whole pile of adults from this church, they're saying, "Listen, I'll take time off work," as opposed to "That's my vacation time. I use that because I need a break and that's our time." And they're saying, "No, I'm going to leverage that time and I'm going to put it to the future."



I have to say this really clear, too. Do you remember at the end He says you cannot serve God and the word is "money" because oftentimes in these things we go, you know, "I'll give a little bit of my time and hopefully I'll feel better because I can give a little bit of that," because we love our money. Listen what happens next. The Pharisees are ticked and in the very next verse, verse 14, it says this:

LUKE 16:14
The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him.

They were furious. The problem is we love our money just like that prodigal did and we want to keep that for ourselves. Hey, we'll give a little bit of our time, we'll chuck a tip towards God. God says no, I want you realize everything you have you're a manager of. You're managing my entire estate and I've given you what I think you can handle. How will you manage it? You will be held to account. It is a test and it shows the truest, clearest picture of where our heart is when we decide what we're going to do with our money.

Middle of the summer, I think it's a great time for us to be rethinking some things as we head into the new year. In a moment where we have had some great vacation times and I have to and I've enjoyed the moment and I'd lived for that day and I've just memorized that moment and it's been special, I have to bring myself back to reality saying, "God, You are first. You'll be first with my wallet, with my pocketbook, with my money. You'll be first with my time. God, I have time and I have money. I know that it's all yours, it's a gift from You. I want to invest it for them, [he points to the big screen], for then.

**Live for today
or
Live for THEM _ THERE _ THEN**

I want to look ahead. It's not about me. It's about them. It's about there. It's about then. And I'm going to leverage what I have now to be ready for then, just like that manager did.

I ask all of you: Think seriously — how can I do that?

Thank you for jumping in. Thank you for serving in our kids' ministry. Thanks for going to Camp Old Mill. Thanks all you adults for jumping in on that. Thanks for serving in our youth ministry. Thanks for seeing that person in need and just jumping in there and taking care of that need.

I talked to someone recently. They walked into a store and they just felt this strong leading come across them that they were supposed to do something. This lady said, "I said to God, 'God, I'm your girl. What do You need from me in here today?' " and was prepared to take care of business and did. How many of us would just say, "God, I'm your manager. I've got all your stuff right now, how do You want me to use it?"

I think it always starts by praying to God and saying how to do that. I think it starts by giving back our tithe, and that word means "ten percent", it's just the first part of what He's given us in this place, to God's work here. I think it continues to give in our lives and stepping out of here and going beyond that.

We're going to give you the opportunity to do that right now. I'm going to say a word of prayer and close.

Lord God,

Thank You for today. Thank You for the breath that we breathe, the light that we have. Lord God, I also want to thank You for all that You have given us, the gifts You have given us, and we don't take that lightly. And so right now, Jesus, as we give our gifts back to You, we see those through a little different eyes right now. We don't want to be reckless with what we have. We don't want to be wasteful with what we have. We want to give back You and boldly give back to You, joyfully give back to You, because we know that kids in Coatsville are being helped, and kids in Ukraine or Russia, we don't know where they're from right this moment, but Lord, Owe know they're being helped.

Lord, thank You for the work that's going on here in this church, and thank You for all these wonderful people that love You so much that right now are saying, 'Yeah, I'm your manager, Lord God, what do Yu want me to do because I want to I want to make a difference for eternity.'

It's in Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

Okay, listen, at the end of your rows are a black bucket. If you're sitting near an end of the row, if you'd just grab that black bucket and pass that across and give back to the Lord. I know some of you give through our app, through the website; those options are available to you, but thank you for giving to the Lord. Thank you for serving the Lord. There are many opportunities to do so and if you want to know more, jump into that. We're here for you on that.

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/225752755>

YouTube: <http://tinyurl.com/ycnukmf5>

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