

# TRANSFORMED: THE RICHES OF LIFE

March 19, 2017 | Pastor Randy Remington

This will be the 10th and final lesson in our “Transformed” series. During this series we saw the many ways that we are being transformed into his image. From the first week we looked at a new birth, new life that is imparted to us when we choose to believe and follow Jesus; it’s a dramatic death to life event. But it doesn’t stop there, in fact that is just the beginning of the transformation the Holy Spirit is working in us and for us. We have looked at his transformation through his word, through abiding in him, prayer, being together as his family, walking through the trials and anxieties of life, even as we share his life with those around us who don’t know him. Our guiding scripture and theme has been Roman’s 12:1-2 and that doesn’t change with our final subject...money.

Whether sitting with the church in our Sunday morning gathering or in a small group discussion this can be an uncomfortable subject for many reasons. Be assured that Pastor Randy’s purpose and heart is not to raise more money or make people feel ashamed, there is no agenda here. Neither is it the life groups purpose to bring guilt, however the reality is that this area of money can bring bondage and even usurp God’s place in our lives. What we are praying and believing for is that God works in our lives as we can find a freedom and the Holy Spirit’s transformation in our lives. Let’s take a look at our passage in Matthew:

*“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.*

*“After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’*

*“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’*

*“The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’*

*“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’*

*“Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’*

*“His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.’*

*“So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 25:14-30)*

On the first read this can be a very intense and tough story to digest. However, there are some very important principles that we will see in this passage that we need to consider. As we read this story, we realize that that we can look at what God has given us and diminish it or allow God to bless it and be fruitful.

It’s also important to know that it is easy to let money be a means to my identity.

## Money, more than anything else in life, has the potential to become a 'God-substitute.'

As we mentioned, our motivation to study this subject is very important. Money can become a revile to God in our hearts; this is about freedom and fulfillment.

### 1. OWNERSHIP: WHOM DOES IT BELONG TO?

*"Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them." (:14)*

The owner goes away and leaves it with them/you, but he is still the owner. It doesn't belong to me it belongs to him, that does away with the "double fisted" clutching and results in a "palms up" type of attitude and life style.

If we understood who the owner is we would manage differently.

- **The owner gives to each one of them, but he doesn't give equally to them. He gives generously but not equally.**

This frees us from comparison, I don't have to worry about what God has given you. I'm responsible for what he's given me.

*"Look, the highest heavens and the earth and everything in it all belong to the Lord your God." (Deuteronomy 10:14)*

*"The earth is the Lord's and everything in it." (Psalm 24:1)*

*"No one has ever given Me anything that I must pay back, because everything under the sky belongs to Me." (Job 41:11)*

- If everything belongs to God, then God has the right to tell us what to do with it.
- Everything I have in my life is a gift, which leads to:
  - Gratitude - doesn't come naturally
  - Contentment - doesn't come easily (As Paul told us we have to learn this)

**"Contentment comes when I am grateful for everything that God has currently given me"**

(If you're looking beyond that you're never satisfied)

*"Observe the commands of the Lord your God, walking in obedience to him and revering him. For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land—a land with brooks, streams, and deep springs gushing out into the valleys and hills; a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills.*

*When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.*

*He led you through the vast and dreadful wilderness, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. He gave you manna to eat in the wilderness, something your ancestors had never known, to humble and test you so that in the end it might go well with you. You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today." (Deuteronomy 8:6-19)*

This story is very insightful, especially for those of us who have the privilege to live in a prosperous country like ours. This group of people faced the difficulties of the desert and a lack of resources. As we read it is interesting that the real danger point for them was when they entered this promised land. The pitfalls identified are pride, forgetting who your provider is and thinking it is by "my hands" that this has happened. When things start going well, we can forget God.

The real issue is not what you have or don't have, it's the condition of the heart.

## 2. STEWARDSHIP: WHERE SHOULD IT GO?

*"The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money." (:16-18)*

- American generosity tends to be emotional This is not a bad thing in fact it's a good thing, but we also need to give out of commitment. A planned, percentage based giving, this is where the transformation happens.
- Money has a context. Money is about percentages; money isn't about amounts, it's a lifestyle. We give him our "first fruits" and our best, if we do this it will not be the "left-overs".
- By redirecting some of your money, you're redirecting your heart. God wants this part of your life, this is not about a "give to get" but a prioritization...and your heart will follow.

*"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:19-21)*

## 3. ACCOUNTABILITY: WHY DOES IT MATTER?

*"After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them." (:19)*

The message is, I'm coming back, be ready. It's about an accountability of what you have been given. This isn't about the third servant's salvation, (If you are in Jesus that is a free gift from God), it's about what we did with our life. It really isn't about how much, it's about your heart!

*"Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" (:22)*

*"You can be righteously or un-righteously poor or rich"*

*"Lord you don't want part of our heart, you want all of it"*

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Okay so we're talking about be transformed into his image and our last lesson is on "money". As you think about this subject and our passage in Matthew 25, what are some things that come to mind. It's okay to be honest if you have had a bad experience or hurt during your life in a church or? This lesson is about learning what God's Word says about the subject and allowing the Holy Spirit to heal and transform us.
2. So here's a sobering thought, "Money, more than anything else in life, has the potential to become a 'God-substitute.'" Discuss how you have seen this in people's lives and maybe in your own life. Then we look at the 3 main principles we learn from this teaching.
3. On page 3 of your notes we see our first important principle: "Ownership: Whom Does It Belong To". Maybe this is the first time you have thought about this, but when we look at the parable what does it tell us about ownership of all of our resources? Also please discuss the fact that he gave each servant a different amount.
4. Take a look at two areas, first: "If everything belongs to God, then God has the right to tell us what to do with it". This may sound harsh, but how do you see this working in our lives? Secondly, if we truly believe that "everything I have in my life is a gift, is it true that "Gratitude" and "Contentment" will result in my life?
5. The second principle is "Stewardship: Where Should It Go". What is the difference between "emotional giving" and "planned, committed giving"? Also on page 5 what's the difference between "first fruits" and "left overs"?
6. Our third and final principle is: "Accountability: Why Does It Matter". On page 6 we learn a sobering truth from our parable. For all the servants this is not a matter of salvation, we know that when we are in Jesus, we will be with him. However, there is question of accountability for what we have been given and what we did with it. Please talk about how this will impact our lives and our heart in relation to our talent, time and treasure