

*Faith Cometh
By Hearing*

Where Is Your Heart

*Sermon Preached By
Joseph Cortes*

Tonight is the first of many messages that I will be teaching on the subject of giving. To most, giving to the Lord in the correct way is a sensitive subject. Too many Christians today are at a loss on this subject. Now some of you are very knowledgeable about this subject and for you this will be just a reminder, but some of you have never heard anyone preach on Matthew 6, verse 19 through 24. Unfortunately, most preachers take these particular scriptures out of context and do not apply them to the subject matter that Jesus was addressing, possessions and money. This is a hard subject to preach on, not because I think it is difficult but because it can hit a sensitive nerve.

I do not believe there is a formula in the New Testament that you should follow. Many preachers teach that you should give 10% of your income. I believe it is more than tithing 10% as instructed in the Old Testament. I am convinced that God's word and the spreading of it should be more important to us than anything else that this world has to offer. Furthermore, when you know how to give properly, you are looking for the next opportunity to participate in spreading His good news of the gospel with your sweet smell offering that is well pleasing to Him.

Too many Christians think they are doing enough by just giving as little as possible to God and His church or ministry. God has a different view on this subject so let us begin by going to Matthew 6:19. **“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal.”** It is important for you to stop and learn what God's word says about money and possessions and how to give to His ministries and to His churches properly, without any strings

attached. Too many people give with the condition that they need to know where the money is going and how it is distributed. Money is not yours to begin with but it is God's possession. When you give to a church or ministry, you should not question, "Where is this particular ministry going to spend the money that I give?" Please do not ask me this. Paul, in his letter to Timothy says, **"Someone who preaches the Lord's word is worth double honor."**

Giving is an act of worship that has become optional because of lack luster preachers who are too afraid to address the true message of giving. They are fearful that their congregation will leave and go some place that does not require the correct way of giving.

I warned you before I started preaching tonight that this would be a sensitive subject, because money always is. The bible says that the love of money is the root of all evil because it affects your heart. It hardens your heart if you allow it. The four gospels alone mention money 348 times. It is mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew 109 times, in Mark 57 times, 94 times in Luke, and in John 88 times. That is just the four gospels, not even mentioning any other books in the New Testament.

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal." Circle the word *treasures*.

The Greek word for it is *thesaurizo*. The best definition for *thesaurizo* is to heap up or accumulate riches. What the Lord is saying here is do not accumulate riches here on

earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. However, store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal.

Most of us are pack rats (people who like to accumulate things). We hang on to our possessions because we are convinced that we might need them somewhere down the road. We like to accumulate things. Christ always went to the heart of the matter. Lay not treasures, (*thesaurizo*, accumulated riches) up for yourselves. Does that mean you cannot plan for the future and your retirement? Sure, you can. You know what it is going to take to retire. In this country, we have Social Security. At about the age of thirty, you start getting letters informing you of an approximated amount that you might expect to receive when you retire. This gives you a chance to plan your investments, which should include giving to God, and your every-day living expenses.

Do not be deceived by the false doctrine of “giving to get rich.” There is also another fad going around that if you just re-sow your seed, God is going to bless you and benefit you, and you will become rich for Jesus. I pray all of you do. However, there is no guarantee of that. In theory, it sounds good, but God sees the heart. He sees that most Christians that fall for this type of teaching “giving to get rich” will only do it for a short period to see if He will make them rich. God sees the heart, he knows how to cut through the nonsense of what you have been taught and how you react to it.

Then you have other preachers proudly proclaiming that they will not ask for money to

keep their program on the air. I analyzed that statement, and found how idiotic it is to rob listeners of the opportunity to give to God to keep His word front and center to the world via television and radio programs. If you want to continue hearing the word of God, it does not come free. There is a cost. There is no greater privilege than to keep a program, with the message that changed your life, on the air.

Therefore, you go from one extreme that tells you to “give to get rich,” and another, that has too much pride to ask for money from people listening who have received the gospel of Jesus Christ and learned to walk a life of faith. I have not addressed this issue nor have I asked you for any money in the first 14 months of this ministry. However, I have no problem in doing so because I know what God’s word says about it. The Philippians anxiously waited for the opportunity to give to Paul, no matter where he was or what he was doing. It is an act of worship that pleases God, just like faith.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth; do not accumulate riches here on earth. Jesus says we are to accumulate them in heaven. By now, you might be asking where heaven’s bank account is. The answer is simple: churches, ministries, and storehouses that preach and teach the word of God. Not everyone you listen to falls into those categories. In Matthew chapter 7, Jesus talks about people who came in his name but he said to them, “**I never knew you.**” There are ministries that Jesus is going to say, “**I never knew you.**” That is why you need to get involved with ministries that stay focused on the Word. You need to get involved with ministries that you can give to so you can lay up your treasures in heaven, your accumulated riches. I was just thinking

earlier today what a wonderful feeling it will be when you meet someone in heaven that actually can say to you, “I am here because the offering you gave to the Lord made it possible for me to hear His word.” That is a true treasure folks.

Some of you Christians need to stop living for yourselves and start living for eternity. What you have to understand is that we all have the responsibility to send God’s message of grace and faith out to the ones that have not heard it. **“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth not corrupt, and where not thieves break through and steal.” “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”** The Greek word for heart is *kardia*. *Kardia* means the center and seat of spiritual life. For where your treasure is, they’re will your heart be also or the center and seat of spiritual life. If your heart is here on earth, your whole focus will be things of this earth. However if you heart is with Jesus, and your treasure is in heaven, then your whole focus will be on sending forth the message either as deliverer or participating with the one delivering the message. Either you are preaching the word, or you are supporting someone that does.

“For where your treasures will be, there will your heart be also.” *Kardia* is the center and seat of spiritual life. Where is your center? Is it here on earth or is it in heaven? How many of you awoke this morning and asked yourself what extra you could do to get the message that changed your life out to the rest of the world? Well, if you are anything like me, you are just thankful that you made it through the night. However, go beyond that, thank Him for the privilege of putting you in a position to get one more person to listen to

the word that has changed your life. That is what He was trying to do with Peter in John, chapter 21, “**Feed my sheep**”, do not go back to your old ways, do not go back to being a fisherman, feed my sheep. Fall in love with feeding my sheep. Even though you might be a follower, you still can fall in love with feeding His sheep. Like I said, what a wonderful feeling it will be when someone walks up to you in heaven and says, “You know what, I think you had something to do with me getting here. By your participation in getting the message out, I was able to hear the word of God.” Where your heart is, your treasure will be also. Where is the center of your spiritual life? Is it here on earth or is it in heaven?

Jesus does not want all of your money. It all belongs to him but he does not want all of it. He just wants to see your dedication to how much treasure you want to store in heaven for the purpose of his kingdom. Yes, you will be rewarded up there because of your participation down here.

Let us continue to verse 22. I have read many messages, books, and commentaries that butcher it because they take it out of context. Only a few I have come across have caught the true meaning of what this scripture is saying. “**The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.**” Circle the word *single*. The Greek word is *haplous*.” It does not mean *single*. The definition is not *single*. The light of the body, remember verse 19 and 21 and all of the verses after 22, are still talking about money. Why should Jesus just in that one sentence divert to another subject? “**The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be *haplous*, thy whole body shall be full of light.**” *Haplous*. The eye is the window by which light

gets into the whole body. If it is clear, it is going to illuminate everywhere. The light would be hindered if it were frosted, colored, or dirty. Okay I understand that the light of the body is the eye, the window by which light gets into the whole body. However, what does the word *haplous* mean? I am getting there. Then my whole body shall be full of light, I will not be in darkness. Matthew 6:23 reads, **“If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness how great is the darkness!”** You are lost in other words. You are in the dark. You cannot see the true meaning of anything and you are lost. You are walking around in total darkness.

I want to go to Boice’s work for a moment and read what he has to say. “The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be *haplous*, thy whole body shall be full of light.” This is what Boice says about the word *haplous*. “There is another thought in this section coming from the word in which the King James translator rendered *single*, and the new English founders rendered *sound*. In some text, the word means *simple* and *simplicity*. However, other text says the only proper translation is *generosity*.” ***Generosity***, remember that folks. Some translators recognized this truth when it came to the 12th chapter of Romans, verse 8, for in that verse the word *simplicity* used in the King James version was changed to *liberality*, so the text now reads “he that *giveth*, let him do with *liberality*, in other words *very generously*.” I went to a Greek dictionary and I looked up the word *haplous*. It defines it as *simplicity as manifested in generous giving*. This verse refers to money. Not the nonsense a lot of authors and commentators like to enlighten you with that is incorrect. It has always been about money and possessions and it has always been about how to give God’s way. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore

thine eye were *generous*, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye were evil (or not generous) thy whole body shall be full of darkness.

In this particular verse, it has never been about anything else except money. I looked up the 26 translations bible. I was curious to see how many of the 26 translators would even want to deal with this particular verse. I only found two. The one translator that really stood out was Moffat. His translation is “So if your eye were *generous*...” Why should it be generous? Because you are laying up your treasures in heaven not here on earth. If you lay your treasures up here on earth, then you are in darkness. **“If therefore the light that is in thee be dark how great is that darkness!”** In other words, the tighter you’re wallet, and the harder you hang onto your possessions, the more darkness you will have.

I am not saying you cannot plan for your future, I am not saying you cannot live your life. God allows you to have possessions, but he wants to see what your heart will do with them. How His word has changed your life and what it has meant to you. He is looking to see where your heart is by the way you generously give back to ministries and churches that feed you the word of God. In addition, if you do it with the right attitude, because your heart is seated and centered on his word that gives you spiritual life, then you will be living in the light that illuminates your whole body. That illuminates your *whole* body folks. However, if you are a tight- fisted tipper for God, who does not do it in a *haplous* manner (generously), then you are living in a life of darkness. I guarantee you, as you progress in years it will become darker and darker. Moreover, not even a little glimpse of light could penetrate you. Scratch out the word *single* and write in *Haplous* or *Generous*.

“The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be *generous*, thy whole body shall be full of light.” Do you want to live in the light? Or do you want to live in darkness? They should label this particular message *Where is your heart?* Is it in the treasures in heaven or here on earth? Are you accumulating riches in heaven or here on earth? You can accumulate them in heaven by giving to the ministry that gives you light and hope by teaching the word of God. That has always been God’s plan.

Let us move on to verse 24, **“No man can serve two masters.”** *Kurios* is the Greek word for *masters*. It defines to whom you belong. **“For either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to one and despise the other.”** You can’t serve both God and Mammon. In other words, you cannot serve God and your possessions and money. For either you will hate the one and love (the Greek word for love is *agapao*, it is the giving of one’s self without conditions) the other. Because you dearly love the object, you are not going to put any conditions on the object being loved. For either you will hate the one and love the other; or else you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Mammon.

You will have to make the choice; God will not make it for you. It is your choice; you will serve God or you will serve your possessions. That is why Jesus was so disappointed when the rich young ruler asked him what he must do to follow Jesus. Jesus response was **“Sell all you’ve got, give it to the poor and follow me.”** Jesus saw the heart. He knew that the man would never follow Him. To follow Jesus meant he would have to leave his possessions behind. To follow Jesus, it would mean that he would have to put his total

trust in Christ. However, Jesus saw his heart; he knew very well that the ruler would never give up his possessions. That is why Jesus gave him the ultimatum. Some of you need the same ultimatum.

Listen, I have been in the ministry for a long time. I have known people that had tens of thousands of dollars in their bank account, yet when the offering plate came by, they wrote a ten-dollar check. They had no desire to participate in any ministry, including the one they followed, in order to get the message that changed their lives out to others. I have listened to stories in the news about some parent, relative, or friend who gave up their kidney or another body part to save someone's life. You have to have the same attitude in your approach to giving. It has to cost you something so God's word can save someone else's life. It is our responsibility to get the word out. It takes money and it takes possessions. It is a giving of one's self. In addition, once you figure out to whom you are going to give yourself to, God or Mammon, you will know if you will be living in light or darkness. There is no exception to the rule folks, it has always been that way, and it will be that way until He comes. Let us look what Boice says about the subject of God and Mammon. "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money." Nothing can be said more clearly or more obvious, it should be a heart-searching question for all Christians. Could anything be more insulting to God, who let His Son redeem us from the slavery of sin, put us in Christ, given us all things to enjoy, to take the name of our God upon us, to be called by his name and then, to demonstrate by every action and every decision of our life that we actually serve money? Now we are afraid to

let a little bit loose, to get that same message that he died on the cross for us out to others.

I am telling you many Christians are at this point in their lives. They have such a grip on their possessions that there is no way they can release it. In addition, some of them have developed the habit of saying they do not know if they can trust that ministry, or if they can trust that church with God's money. Why are these concerns? God is looking at your heart and your attitude towards what His word tells you to do. If it is a corrupt ministry that you are following and you do not even know it, God still sees your heart. Is it a sweet smell sacrifice acceptable and well pleasing to Him or is it something done out of a sense of obligation? Some of you are always looking for formulas and that is why some of you follow the tithing program. Outside that one statement that Jesus made to the Pharisees, there is no reference to tithing because it is more than a tithe in the New Testament. Either you are all in or you are all out.

I am sure at this time you are asking if you have to give up everything that you have. Most of you will never be put in that position, but your hearts better have that attitude. We all need to fall in love with giving to God the right way. You could never accumulate too many riches in heaven. Go ahead and plan for your retirement. You know what it will take. You know what you will get years in advance. You know what you need to sustain (even with inflation) that amount. For example, some of you know that you will need an extra \$100,000 besides your Social Security; if you plan to live 20-30 years longer than your retirement age...so plan for it! In addition, you might not live that long, put it in your will, make it your last Will and Testament and leave it to a

ministry that can and does proclaim the word of God.

You may want to leave some to your children, but the best thing you could leave your children is a bible, or notebook full of notes about how God's word changed your life. I guarantee if you leave that to them and they follow the path that you followed, Christ will see them through. Or else, Matthew 6:25 through the end of the chapter is false. You can read it later. Take no thought for your life. If you do not take any thought for your life, then why would you put your children in a position where they do not have to lean on God? You are doing an injustice to them because you want to feel good. Well that sounds too harsh. Are you living for the Father? On the other hand, are you living for yourself? You are responsible for your children, you are to take care of them; but most of you will retire and die when your children are adults. Let them learn to lean on God just as you did. The best thing you could ever leave them is your library of notes on how faith in His word saw you through. What a legacy of faith you are leaving behind. What a great source of help you are leaving for them.

“Take no thought for your life.” If you do not take any thought for your life, then why would you put your children in a position where they do not have to lean on God? You are doing an injustice to them because you want to feel good. Well that sounds too harsh. Are you living for the Father? On the other hand, are you living for yourself? You are responsible for your children, you are to take care of them; but most of you will retire and die when your children are adults. Let them learn to lean on God just as you did. The best thing you could ever leave them is your library of notes on how faith in His word saw you through. What a legacy of faith you are leaving behind. What a great source of help you are leaving for them. Take no thought for your life. If you do not take any thought for your life, then why would you put your children in a position where they do not have to lean on God? You are doing an injustice to them because you want to feel good. Well that sounds too harsh. Are you living for the Father? On the

other hand, are you living for yourself? You are responsible for your children, you are to take care of them; but most of you will retire and die when your children are adults. Let them learn to lean on God just as you did. The best thing you could ever leave them is your library of notes on how faith in His word saw you through. What a legacy of faith you are leaving behind.

Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones tells the story of a farmer who one day told his wife of his joy because his best cow had given birth to twin calves, one red and one white. He said, “You know I have been led of the Lord to dedicate one of the calves to him. We will raise them together and when it comes time to sell them, we will keep the proceeds that come from one calf and give the proceeds that come from the other calf to the Lord’s work.” When his wife asked which calf he would dedicate to the Lord, he answered there was no need to decide that then. “We will treat them both in the same way and when that time comes, we will sell them as I have said.” Several months later, the man entered the kitchen looking sad and miserable. When his wife asked what was troubling him, he said, “I have bad news for you, the Lord’s calf is dead.” However, his wife replied, “You had not yet decided which was yet to be the Lord’s calf.” “Oh yes,” he said, “I had always determined that it was to be the white one, and it is the white calf that has died.” Strangely, it is always the Lord’s calf that dies. That farmer was living in darkness. He never saw the true light of generosity in giving to God. He was living in darkness by attaching conditions; if God blessed him with a good calf and he could sell it and make a good profit on it, then no problem, he would give that calf proceeds to the Lord. However, if that calf died, the proceeds of the calf that lived would never be put to use in the Lord’s work. Conditional giving; “if you do for me God then I will do for you.” Well, Jacob said that. It is not exactly what it means, but I will get to that in future teachings. That farmer was living in darkness. Always the Lord’s calf dies unless we are clear about the true nature of our possessions. Who owns your possessions? The Lord Jesus Christ says that God owns them and you serve him, or else your possessions

own you and you serve them. That farmer was living in darkness. He could never have seen the light, he could never have been illuminated, and it would never have penetrated his whole body. **“The light of the body is the eye, if therefore thine eye be *haplous*, thy whole body shall be full of light.”** What kind of light you ask? The illuminating light only the Lord can give. You serve God or you serve Mammon, the choice is yours.

Let us go to 1 John, chapter 2, verse 15. I have discussed this before but it is worth revisiting tonight. **“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world** (in other words, love not the world or the treasures that are in the world). **If any man love (the treasures of) the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”** Why is the love of the Father not in him? Because he is not illuminated with the light of generous giving, His love is for the things of this world. How much more clearly can I make it? Verse 16: **“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world.”** Therefore, desires of your flesh and desires of your eyes are not of the Father but are of this world, and the world passes away. It will become corrupt. I have said it repeatedly that you will never see a funeral hearse towing a U-haul. You cannot take it with you. However, you can store it up in heaven’s bank account. As I said, what a glorious day it will be when someone walks up to you in heaven and says, “I think you are part of the reason I am here.

Because if you did not give that gift to that particular ministry where I heard the word, I might not be here today.” Your participation is a sweet smell offering unto the Lord. It is precious. It is precious because it allows someone else to hear what He has done for you. That is why the Lord is well pleased with this because He knows your heart.

Let us go to 1 John 2:17, **“And the world is passing away and the lust thereof, but he**

that doeth the will of God abideth forever.” And the world passes away and the lust thereof. A proper translation of that word *lust* is a diseased condition of the soul.

However, he that does the will of God remains forever. I have told you what the will of God is. It is denying yourself, taking up your cross and following Jesus. The correct way to give is obediently applying the will of God in your life. It is an act of worship to God. It is something that God looks for. He wants to be well pleased with the way you are doing it.

Like I said, they are all God's possessions. We are all supposed to be good stewards of His possessions. Start accumulating your treasures in heaven and not piling them up here on earth. Plan for your future, be a good steward, but do not make the mistake of thinking that the more you can accumulate down here, the better off you will be. No, you are just creating for yourself a condition where you are going to fall into darkness. How great that darkness will be will depend on you. As I said, the tighter you are with your possessions the greater darkness you will have in your life. Be illuminated with generous giving so your whole body can be full of light. Live in the light, be illuminated in the light by generous giving, serve God and not money, and store your treasures up in heaven. There are only two ways to act upon this message, either you will do it or you will not. There are two reasons for being folks, to glorify and serve God *and* to feed the sheep. Do not believe the lie that not everyone participates in feeding the sheep, everyone does. Either you deliver the message or you are actively supporting the one who is delivering it. Those are the only options. You store your treasures in heaven by how you participate here on earth. Give to ministries that are proclaiming the word of God correctly. You need to

make the choice whether you want to live in the light or live in darkness. It is time to step up! Some of you already have. However, more of you need to take the responsibility on your shoulders, realizing that you have a wonderful opportunity and a privilege to get a message out that changes people's lives and brings them into the kingdom of God.

Feeding the sheep is a requirement that everyone has to live up to. You have to do it in your capacity. It's time to make a decision; either you are going to live in the light or live in darkness. I am not teaching the doctrine of "give to Jesus and get rich." I am teaching you to do it out of obedience and because you want to have a generous heart and live in the light. Let us all keep storing our treasures in heaven while we are feeding the sheep on earth. Keep on Faithing!

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