

Stewardship “Rich Toward God” Luke 12:13-21

I'm going to read to you from Luke chapter 12, Jesus teaching on generosity. Listen to God's Word.

Someone in the crowd said to him, That is Jesus, teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me. Jesus replied, man who appointed be a judge or an arbiter between you? Then he said to them, watch out! Be on guard against all kinds of greed, for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. And he told them this parable the ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, what shall I do? I have no place to store my crops. And then he said, this is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns, and I will build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to myself, you have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy, eat, drink and be merry. But God said to him, you fool, this very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you prepared for yourself? This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself, but is not rich toward God.

Let's pray for a moment.

Lord, give us, we pray ears to hear all that you're saying. Apply your word to our hearts one by one, and together we pray. In Jesus name. Amen. You may be seated.

About ten years ago, I was in Australia to speak at a seminary called Sydney Missionary and Bible College. There were three parts of my time there. There were formal lectures. There were sermons in local churches. And then for me, the most instructive part was meals I shared with the students because my wife and I were on campus for a week, 5 or 6 days anyway, and we had meals with students, breakfast, lunch and dinner. And the meals were interesting. You know, Australia is a prosperous country, and there's a sort of a tradition to begin ministry after you've done something else for a few years. And so the students there were, physicians and physical therapists and engineers and bankers and you name it. But generally professional people who had a career already established and at an earlier age and then later on decided to go into ministry. They came from all over. They came from Australia, but also from the Pacific Rim, you know, from Indonesia, Malaysia and other countries, Myanmar. And they went all over the place. They went to Vietnam and to Laos and Cambodia, to, yes, Australia, but also to India and China and Tibet and places like Tajikistan and Sudan, poor countries, poorly managed countries, countries, a lot of hostility toward Christianity. And it's almost as if they were getting ready for that in every way. And it included the meals. Now, again, it's a prosperous country. But our meals, which I remember well, were full of delightful conversation. But they were simple meals, lots of pasta, a little bit of cheese, not much

meat, a lot of roasted pumpkin and peas. And after we ate peas, we had more peas and we had peas in our salad, peas in our soup. And sometimes it seemed like we had peas for dessert. And it was sort of a warmup for a life of non-extravagance. They were there being generous with their lives. They were being rich toward God, going to hard places, poor places. And that's of course part of discipleship. Once God puts his call upon us, we don't just live for ourselves.

Luke chapter 12 is a portion of Luke that's describing discipleship. And as he does, he's with a large crowd. Luke tells us the crowds are so thick, people are practically trampling each other to get near to Jesus. And his big idea was, don't play at discipleship. Don't say you're a disciple and not live it out. Hypocrisy is folly. God sees and knows all things. And if you're trying to decide how to use your life, don't fear those who can destroy the body in this life. That was something those students in Australia knew. Fear the one who can cast both body and soul in the hell. Fear the Lord, the judge, the Almighty. Now of course, if you put your trust in him, he'll take care of you.

God numbers the sparrows. He numbers the hair on your heads, your numbers, the days of your life. Nobody's going to take your life before your life is over. And God's plan. If you confess me, Jesus says before men, than I will confess you before my father in heaven. Even if the authorities haul you in to demand an accounting of your life and they're hostile to Christianity, confess your faith, even if it cost you something that's a theme in the New Testament here and there.

Because the Roman Empire was largely very hostile toward Christianity. In fact, in Hebrews chapter ten, the author tells the people of the church to look back on their life with the Lord. He says, remember your former days when you endured suffering, sometimes being exposed to public reproach and affliction, sometimes being partners with those who were so treated for you, compassion on those in prison.

You went to visit them and thereby identified yourself as a fellow Christian. And you joyfully, I'm quoting again, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, joyfully accepted it, because you yourselves knew that you had a better possession and an abiding one. That's Hebrews chapter ten. Now as Jesus is meditating on these things and saying these things to a crowd, it's almost as though he paused just for a moment, maybe, maybe to get a sip of water.

And while that pause occurred, somebody blurted out a question to him. It seems to distract, but actually, it's still on the theme of discipleship. The question is, or the assertion is teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me. Which sounds odd to call out in the crowd. Evidently, he's upset that dad's inheritance has not been properly divided, and he wants his share, and he's calling on Jesus, and he's calling on Jesus for a reason.

The reason is that in those days, rabbis, not lawyers, but rabbis, teachers, teachers of God's law settled or adjudicated disputes and families disputes about wealth. And Jesus was regarded by most people as a teacher or a rabbi. So it makes some sense. But

Jesus says, I'm not going to give you what you want. He says rather brashly, man who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you and your family?

I'm not going to. I didn't come here to fame to resolve family financial disputes. I'm not going to give you what you want, but I will give you what you need. What you need is a warning. Watch out. Be on guard against all kinds of covetousness or greed. Because a man's life, a person's life, does not consist in the abundance of their possessions.

Now Jesus says it twice because it's easy to lose our way on this. He says, watch. I'll be on guard because greed is slippery and it works its way into our heart without us necessarily noticing it, as we maybe see what the people around us have. And we want that, and we just think we want normality, but it's actually greed and it's easy to fall into it.

I'm going to pick names that are not represented here. We're going to have Rohan, the man is Rohan and the woman is Avignon, and Avignon and Rohan are newly married and they're poor. They don't have much money at all. And so when they finally get time to take a family vacation, the only place they can go, the two of them newly married, is to their aunt and uncle.

Because the aunt and uncle have a kind of a nice spare room, and they live in a city that has, you know, a few nice cafes and some parks and maybe a museum or two, that's all they can afford is a drive to see and their aunt and uncle, and they do that one year, two years. But, I mean, they're spending their time with their aunt and uncle, wonderful people, but they start to pray and they pray, Lord, would you just give us enough money to have a vacation of our own?

And they do have enough money and they get a vacation learn they get a cabin in the woods. But it's one of those one of those cabins, one of those parks is not the very best. There's a lake, but it's small. And they forgot to spray for mosquitoes. So the place is full of mosquitoes. And, and, there's skunks roaming in the area because, I don't know, the garbage cans aren't always secured.

And one day the skunk actually came into their cabin, which happened to my wife and me once that skunk chewed for about 20 minutes, they think to themselves, can we just have something a little bit nicer? And they do. They pray for something nicer and they go to Yosemite, or they go to Disney World, or they go to Glacier and it's crowded.

And so they pray again. They say, Lord, we want someplace awesome but not crowded, secluded, but not too secluded because we want some cafes and so forth. And they slowly begun to think the life does consist in a bunch of their possessions, haven't they? And they didn't even see it coming. They just wanted a little bit more, just a slightly nicer house, just a slightly bigger car, a slightly better vacation, a slightly more stable income.

It all seems rational and somehow eventually begin to think life does consist in the abundance of my possessions. That's why Jesus says, watch out! Be careful about greed. And so Jesus, of course, because he wants us to learn, tells us a story. It's

known as a parable. Now, in the parables we have figures, representations of the kinds of people live in the world.

And when you first read the parable, you think Jesus got it wrong because the man wants more money. The man with the problem about the inheritance wants more money. And the problem with the man in the parable is too much money. But Jesus is divulging a secret, and the secret is that having too much and too little can be very similar.

A person who doesn't have much and wants more can be greedy for possessions, and the person who has a great deal can be greedy to hold on to their possessions. And so, although their outward or financial opposites inwardly in their hearts, they're facing the same challenge. But Jesus tells a story like this. There's a farmer, and his land produces an enormous crop.

And so we think to ourselves, you know, God gives the sun. God gives the rain, God gives us soil. God controls pests. God has chosen to give this man a blessing, and he sees it that way. Well, sort of he certainly sees that he's been blessed. And so in verse 19 he says, really, what I need to do is, is make an investment.

And I've got all these crops and I don't know if I have enough storage space for them. So I think, it looks pretty good. I'm going to make a capital investment to protect my non durable assets. I'm going to tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Seems a little grandiose. I'm going to just tear down publicly and put up a big building.

But we can maybe defend it and I'll store my grain and my goods there. I'll keep it safe. I'll be a good steward. We might say, but then it gets a little bit worse in verse 19 when he says, what I plan to do is eat, drink and be merry. No, if you know Bible times, you know that's the hedonist, secular pagan credo eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we will die.

He leaves the tomorrow you'll die part off. Jesus supplies it later on. So he says, I'm going to eat, drink, even married. Jesus says, yeah, tomorrow you're going to die. That's New Testament humor. A little bit dark. If you like dark humor. And if you don't, it's still dark humor. Now, if you have a few doubts about this man right now, what I want to do is reread his speech in verses 17, 18 and 19.

I want you to follow along as I read it with you, because it reveals what's happening, in fact, in his heart. So I'm going to read 17, 18 and I just kind of 19 and emphasizing the words, I mean, myself, and you'll see the difference. He thought to himself, what shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.

Then he said, this is what I will do. I will tear down my barns, and I will build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to myself, self, you and I begins talking to himself. You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. You take life easy.

You eat, you drink, you be merry. Now, I know not all those words appear in the English, but in the Greek it's very clear. There are 54 words, and 18 of them are I, me, my mind or myself, or. He talks to himself about himself. The man is overbearing, the egotistical. He forgot God. God sends the sun. God sends the rain. God gave him the crops. And he doesn't have a word for God. It's a monologue in the Psalms. Sorry. In the Proverbs, in the parables, almost every parable has two or 3 or 4 characters, and they talk to each other about things. And this is the one time a man talks to himself about himself. We notice who he doesn't talk to, who doesn't talk to his family, doesn't talk to his friends, does not his rabbi, doesn't talk to needy people.

He talks to himself about himself. And at the end he realizes that although he thought there's only one person in the room, there are actually two people in the room, and the other one was the Lord.

He says, you're a fool now. In the Bible, one of the main marks of a fool is that they say in their heart there is no God. There are a couple, the couple Psalms about this. Psalm ten, Psalm 14. So the fool says in his heart, there is no God. That's the first statement, but the next statement, which is almost to contradiction, but it makes perfect sense, is there is no God.

And then and then he addresses God and says, you will not call us to account. And then it says he will not see what we do. So you understand that the fool sometimes says, there is no God, there's no God. And other times they say, you know, there might be a God. It's possible, but he won't call us to account.

He doesn't see. He doesn't care if God exists, which I doubt 3000 years ago, 2000 years ago, right now, today, if there's a God which I doubt, it doesn't really matter much. I mean, he created the world. He drifted off. Who knows? He's not going to hold us to account. And that's foolishness. Jesus says in verse 20 that God said to him, you fool, this night your life is required of you.

You said, I'll eat, drink you in marriage. Jesus said, tomorrow you're going to die and your life will be required. Now I want to talk about the word required. It's a it's a word that was used in Bible times of loans that were recalled. Your life will be required means your life is going to be evaluated. Your life is a gift and all that you had was a gift.

And I'm going to ask you what you did with it. Your life is a loan from God. It's not yours. God loaned it to you. God gave you all your skills and all your resources, and he's going to ask what you did with it when you meet him at the end of time. I want to be really careful here.

We're talking about money or wealth, but in the Bible, the great wealth that we have is not finances or houses or cars or vacation. The great wealth that we have is our abilities, and many of those are given to us at birth. They're just they're and others were given to us by parents or grandparents who mentored us and trained us and

encouraged us and taught us and gave us wisdom, or by coaches or by, teachers, by people who are over us in the workplace.

And they honed your skills and my skills, and we go around saying things like my skill, my physical strength, my ability to make a presentation, my ability to make a sale, my ability to write code, my ability to design a building. And it was given to you as you all know it. and most occasions I'm a professor.

And as a professor, I sometimes teach Greek and you learn the enormous variation in the distribution of gifts. When I was in grad school, there was a professor retired a little bit earlier. I knew him just a tiny bit. And I happened to be walking down a sidewalk one day and I said to him, Dr Bateman, what are you what are you working on right now?

And he said, well, I'm learning Polish. I said, why are you learning Polish? He said, well, it's because it's the only major Indo-European language I haven't learned yet, so I thought I'd do that. Okay. how many languages have you learned? He said, I'm not sure it's 46 or 47. That's pretty good. And then I taught Greek, and I found out that there was a thing called suicide Greek. And you take 2.5 hours of class in the morning. And I taught that several times. And then the students, most of them go and study five, six, seven hours a day, and some do well and some struggle. But among the students, some learn more Greek in 45 minutes than others do in seven hours. I had a student once who said, Dr. D, I've got to, I've got to lead a mission trip for my church. I'll be away a whole week. And, is it okay if I miss class all week? There's only six weeks to the whole class, and there's a test on Monday. I said, are you going to be ready for the test on Monday? Expecting the answer to be no. He said no. I'll be ready. He studied about 45 minutes, 50 minutes a night while leading a bunch of teenagers on a mission trip to Haiti, and came back and walked in with a 94-95. I can't remember which one. I think it was in 94.5 another. People studied 48 hours for the same test and got an 82. God distributes his gifts. And so Dr Benton and Doug, that's actually his name, have a gift and they better use it. And you have gifts. You can do things that nobody else can do that people wonder, how did you do that? And the answer is, God gave him the ability, and I want to use that ability for the Lord. Because finances are small potatoes compared to finance. Sorry, finances are small potatoes compared to the gifts we have now. I encourage you to take an inventory today. Drive home. Walk around. What has God given me? What native gifts? Just there.

Maybe with numbers or words or math? And then what have I had the opportunity to develop because of mentors teachers? How can I use those gifts now? I'm not denying the place of financial giving and financial generosity, but it always starts with your ability to make your way well in this world. So I definitely advocate tithing and more than tithing.

I definitely advocate supporting the poor and the needy and missionaries, as we often do in this church. But I also want you to just be generous. The passage here calls us to generosity. My wife and I have three daughters, and one of them is a women's ministry

director. By the way, WebMD, which I think is great because it also stands for Weapons of Mass Destruction.

That's for you, Christy. Mass destruction of sin. She was leading a mission trip that wasn't in my notes, by the way. So she was leading a mission trip to Kenya for her church. And along the way, she met some young women who had been, I'll just say, terribly mistreated and abused. And she wrote us a note and just said, hey, I found another girl for us to support. They're already given their ties to their church, but a friend of mine gave him the idea of supporting children in third World. You can give children a place to stay and an education and food and some clothing and a place to live for about \$5,055 a month. And that's been in our family for a long time.

And my daughter just said, I just had we're already giving generously, but we just we just have to give to this this woman. Let's because there's a sense that the goal is not to be a tither. The goal is to be generous, using the abilities and skills that God has given us. Now, the opposite idea is to say that I have made my way in life, and so it's all mine.

Some of you know the old movie 1965 Shenandoah. Jimmy Stewart, one of our beloved actors, plays a Civil War farmer whose wife died a couple of years earlier. He's not a Christian, but his wife was, and she asked him to do two things on her deathbed take my children, our children to church and pray every night at mealtime.

Teach them to pray every night. And so he prays. It's 22 seconds. You can find it on YouTube. This is what Stewart said, Lord, we this is his prayer at a table. Lord, we cleared this land. We plowed it, we sold it, we harvested it. We cooked the harvest. It wouldn't be here. We wouldn't be eating it if we hadn't done it all ourselves.

We were dog bone hard. I don't know what that means, but I think it means really hard. We were dog bone, hard for every crumb and morsel, but we thank you just the same. Anyway, thanks for the Lord. We're about to eat. Amen. That's why some people think the Lord says no. It's all a gift. Every ability have, every opportunity.

You have. Jesus talked about money in this parable, and the truth is, he spoke about no social issue more than he spoke about money or wealth and how we use it, because he knows that it's easy for us to love wealth and to fall into the patterns of greed and living for ourselves. That's why over in Matthew chapter six, verse 24, he says, you cannot serve both God and money.

And if you have a Bible translation, you notice really carefully. It's, I think, the only time in the whole Bible where an ordinary noun like money gets a capital, it's God and money capital M, and the reason is in that passage, Jesus gives money a unique word, a rare word used only four times a New Testament. That word is mammon, and mammon means trusted thing or what we trust.

So the name of money is what I am in danger of trusting instead of trusting God. That's the name that Jesus gives it. And we also give money names that kind of reflect the same sort of thing. For example, if you invest in the stock market, you call it stock.

Sometimes we also call it securities, and there's a Securities and Exchange Commission to make sure people, you know don't cheat people.

It's called securities because it makes us secure. Right. And what do you call the thing we get when we're 67 or 68 years old? What do you what do we call it? We call it social Security, as if that money will make us secure. And we actually have a name for money that lines up with a name for God we call money.

The Almighty dollar. And when people talk about somebody who's rich, they'll say things like, what is he worth? What she worth is if the amount of their assets indicate their worth, that's all language that suggests that the money has way too big a role in the way we think about people, the way we regard people regard ourselves. And Jesus tells that farmer who said, I'm going to eat drink with Mary.

He says to him, tomorrow you're going to die. And then who will get the things that you prepared for yourself because you forgot? God? Now over in Luke chapter 12, verse 48, the same concept comes up that's there in verse 20, and I want to read it to you. The second half of the verse, it's where it begins, with everyone there on your screen, everyone to whom much was given of him.

Much will be required. Same word recalling alone and from him to whom they entrusted much they will demand all the more so if you've been entrusted with much. If God has given you much, Jesus says again, it's not strictly about money here at all. It's about everything. God has given you, all the experiences God has given you, your education, your training.

You need to be generous with God. It's a. The fool says in his heart, there is no God. And those riches you stored up, whose will there be? The solution is to be rich toward God, to be generous with what you have to give it away. One of the best ways to break the hold of money on us is to give money away.

One of the best ways to break the hold of career, when we're just trying to rise and rise and rise, is to give our time away and volunteer to serve others. Now, the point of all this is not that we should just go and be generous. Jesus tells us. The apostles tell us a couple things. After Jesus says, be rich toward God.

He then walks through the reasons in the rest of Luke 12, and you can read the rest of Luke 12 today if you wish. I'm just going to highlight four of the reasons Jesus gives for being generous in the next few verse. Verse is the first one is that God takes care of us, and worrying about money or about our career is pointless.

No one added one day to their life or one inch of their height by worrying. Jesus says that's number one. Number two God clothes birds and wild flowers. And if he takes care of birds and wild flowers, surely he will take care of you, because you are of much greater value than the wildflowers you see around the neighborhood.

Number three pagans run after food, clothing, and shelter, but your father knows what you need. You have a father in heaven, and he knows what you need better than you do. He's not going to leave you desperate and needy. He'll take care of you. And finally, of course, as I said a moment ago, what's there in our passage?

If you've been given much, much will be required. The Lord will call you to account for the way you've used your life. Now, that's not meant to terrify us. It's meant to move us to see life as we should. And one of the ways we see life is to recognize that God gives us what we need. First Timothy chapter six, verses eight and nine.

The apostle Paul says, if we have food and covering, we should be content with that meaning food, clothing and shelter. God will give us our basic needs. We might say. Also, education and medical care. And then over in first Corinthians, sorry, first Timothy chapter six, verses 17 and 19, he tells us even more if you're well provisioned and almost everybody in America is well provisioned.

He tells us how to view our wealth, he says, as for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. Now, if you like acronyms, I've got one for you. What? How do we use our money?

Number one be basic needs food, clothing and shelter. Number two E and joy. And number three verse 18, there to do good. Be rich in good works and be generous. G beg God to help you, beg you, beg God to help you use money well, basic needs, enjoyment and generosity. Now the Bible does not tell us when we've enjoyed too much and it's time to be generous.

Because the Bible isn't a rulebook. The Bible is a story of salvation. The Bible is a description of what covenants God made with sinners in the sending of His Son. In our place to redeem us. It's. And so the way you figure out when it's time to give more, and when to be more generous, and when to keep a little more for yourself, is by praying and talking to your friends and asking the spirit to guide you.

There's no rulebook here.

But we do know that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the Apostle Paul. Has made us rich. And we know that although he was rich. And I'm quoting here from Second Corinthians, although he was rich, he made himself poor. He was rich with the father and the angels in heaven with all the glory and all these anybody could ever ask for.

He lived a life of humility, of poverty. He had nowhere to lay his head. He says at one place he slept on the ground. And like most people at that time, he probably had seven items of clothing, one pair of shoes, two pairs of under garments, you know, underwear and outerwear. That's six. And then one cloak, that's it.

That's what the average person had. If they had a home, which Jesus did not, it was probably one room. He lived a life of poverty and then he died. He became poor for our sake, to make us rich. And therefore, if we trust in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, if we trust God, then we will be willing to make ourselves poor, to plan, to give.

This a good church to give to you, if I may say so. You know, we give about half of our money away to missions, church planting all over the world. If you're worried about generosity, your generosity goes out and there are blessings in a large church, and one of them is they vet the places they investigate, the places money goes.

If you're if you're going to give money, please understand that people here have tried to make sure it's a cause. We're a person that deserves our trust. But in all of this, the goal is, again, not primarily money. The goal primarily is to seek first the kingdom and his righteousness. The goal, first of all, is to serve God in your career and your in your, and your progress through this world.

And all the generosity you have comes from serving God. Seek first the kingdom. Whatever you eat, whatever you do, do it all the glory of God. The Apostle Paul says, now I have conversations with people about these things, and they sometimes say, you know, my family life, that's the glory of God and my church life. My prayer life.

But I mean my work. Come on, it's just ordinary work. I drive a truck. How can I glorify God by driving a truck and a conversation about restaurants? Has several friends who run restaurants and they make things like chicken sandwiches and French fries and baked potatoes. And the question goes up, how can you glorify God by making chicken sandwiches and French fries? I mean, a French fries, a French fries, a French fry. I mean, how what how can you glorify God with a French fry? Aren't you the same? Isn't that all governed by natural? Doesn't a total secular person make a French fry the same way? Because you got to control your cost. It's got to be good. You go out of business.

It's no glory for God. And you say, well, a restaurant work is hard and often people are working late at night and it leads to people staying up late, and that leads to alcohol and drug abuse foolishness late at night you may be making a potato the same way somebody else makes a potato, but are you caring for your people, are making sure they get a day off?

Or are you working them week after week, day after day after day? Are you acting like a father, like a leader to them? And how do you treat the farmers who supply those potatoes? Do you care about them or do you just try to get that potato for at least money you possibly can? Or do you care for the farmer you care for the food chain?

If you're making light bulbs or refrigerators, do you care for everybody who put their life into that refrigerator or that light bulb? All the workers, all the suppliers? Yeah, there is there is a truth to the idea. A potato is a potato and a refrigerator is refrigerator. But there's a way to make refrigerators or light bulbs or potatoes to the glory of God, because you believe God has given me the ability to make good food, and I'm going to

take care of the people around me and not just make the most money I possibly can. offering her life out of trust to God. So I've talked about friends of mine a fair amount.

Today I want to talk about one more man. Very successful career, very high up in a major corporation and he was ready to retire at a certain point. He had all the wealthy needed, but above him in the organization, very near.

He was very near the top, but above him was a man who was a tyrant and a bully and screamer and shouter, and he stayed on in his job five more years to protect the people under him from the tyrant. He did not need the money. He was not looking for another raise. He was giving his life to the people around him, as he was the one guy who could talk to the bully and reign him in.

And then when he finally did retire, he was very generous with the wealthy had and, and, one day I was going out with my wife to see him and have dinner. And at that point in our lives, we had four drivers and two cars. Now, some of you wince because you know that it's kind of hard to pull off four drivers in two cars.

It can't be done. You got to work it out. And one day my daughter was sitting in a red light on a rainy day, a lot of traffic, and somebody wasn't paying attention and didn't see, didn't look up, slammed on the brakes at the last minute, slid into the car, totaled the car. Now we have four drivers in one car and we were going to his house. And so I called him up. I said, John, we're not going to make it tonight. daughter was in an accident. She's fine. Car's totaled. He said, okay, well, we'll, we'll reschedule. But he said, also tomorrow, take your one car, drive out to my house, and I'll give you one of my cars, because I know you need to buy a new car, but I don't want. You don't have to buy one right away. Take your time, find the right car and so forth. And I thought, that's great, because John has. I knew that John had a 22 year old Mercedes Benz with about 300,000 miles on. I said it'd be kind of fun to drive around a car with 300,000 miles and. And I got there and his car was gone. That car was gone. I said, John, where'd the old Mercedes go? He said, I gave it away. Somebody needed it. Got a new car. I said, okay, I'll take your pickup. He said, no, you're not to take my pickup because I'm really needed to haul something. I said, and so what are you going to do? He said, well, my wife's not going to let you take her car because she doesn't trust anybody with it. So you're going to have to take my new car. It was a brand new car, \$100,000 car. And he had the biggest grin on his face. You are going to take my brand new car because he just loved to be generous.

You're going to keep it as long as you need it. John's a Christian, John's a Christian man and he trusts his career. He could have he could have retired earlier. He didn't. He trusts as well to the Lord. And he delights to give it away because he knows the Lord delights in him. And that's the source of generosity.

Trusting God and His goodness, giving it away even as Christ gave his life away for us. Let's pray me, father, thank you for sending your son, Lord Jesus, thank you for making

yourself poor, that we might be rich. Your sacrifice for showing us the way, therefore, that we should live. All these thoughts about generosity and kindness and protecting others and living for others.

Never be a work of our own, but always a response to your work in us, always your response, our generosity to your first generosity. Would you pray that you would give us warm hearts, because we know we can and do trust you to care for us and make life cycle of giving, giving back, giving the people around us, delighting in it.

We pray in Jesus name,

Amen.