

## THE BIG IDEA: When we put God first, he makes everything else last.

### The Take-Off

This month we're in a series called "Breathe" and we're talking about the need for margin in 3 areas: our calendars, our cash, and our connections.

In the first week, we talked about how weeds can choke the life right out of us, and that these 3 areas are the ones where we find weeds the most often.

Last week, we put margin in our series on margin by taking a detour and talking about the need to be people of prayer in light of all that is happening in our world right now.

When God calls an audible like that, you make adjustments, but if you were here and heard the message, you know it was the right call. It'd be worth it to catch it on the website if you missed it.

Next week, we'll talk about calendars and connections, and so today, we're jumping right into the topic of money.

Some in the room think this is crazy, because you always have enough money for everything that happens in your life and you're perfectly content when it's time to pay bills, or fix the car, or repair the washer.

You and your spouse never fight over money and you feel zero stress when you check your balances online.

But for the other 99.9% of us, my guess is that our financial lives look a little bit like this...

[VIDEO - Indiana Jones]

If our finances are Indiana Jones, then the bills are the Germans and the end of the month is the rapidly-approaching wall that Indy is going to hit head on, right? And somewhere around the 25th of the month, we can feel trapped as the margin gets squeezed out, and we know that - without a miracle - we're running into a financial dead end.

And then, it happens. A miracle, a turn, and there is margin - space - to climb out of that place.

Most people are already hoping and praying for a miracle in their financial situation, because a lot of people are following the 3 step plan to financial freedom:

- Step 1: go to the convenience store
- Step 2: buy lottery ticket
- Step 3: win

But the truth is that money problems are rarely financial. People think they are, and so we all think our money problems would be solved with more ... right, money.

But money problems are almost always spiritual.

Honestly, I think that they are always spiritual, but that can sound harsh if you're in a situation where you're working hard and still struggling financially.

But I'm going to do my best this morning to help you see how one spiritual decision can be the game changing event that causes the miraculous turn that - like Indiana Jones - gives you the victory over the enemy in your finances.

That miracle happens in the margins, and it all starts with one decision to put God first.

When we make that decision, we'll find the truth of today's Big Idea: when we put God first, he makes everything else last.

Let's dive a bit deeper and see what I mean by that. We can put God first because...

### 1. He orders our priorities

- a. I hate to say the word, but let's talk priorities, okay?
- b. Our spending habits say a lot about us, but what they say about us the most is this: they tell us what we value the most.
- c. If we're honest, giving can seem - especially if you're just beginning to develop this spiritual habit - a little but boring.
- d. Like, I can have a brand new car or I can help my church support a brand new missionary.
- e. Most of us would pick the new car and assume that someday we'll grow into the "mature and boring" Christian who wouldn't.
- f. But I want to show you something amazing in Psalm 37:4 - it's not your job to get all your priorities right.
- g. It's God's!
- h. He just asks you to get the FIRST priority right, and that's him! Then HE defines the priorities of your heart.
- i. When we put God first, HE makes everything else last.

- j. Our value of Jesus and what our cash can do in his kingdom makes the value of everything else begin to fade.
- k. And the other thing I love about Jesus is that he doesn't devalue other things, nor does he ask us to!
- l. Matthew 6:33 tells us clearly that when we get the FIRST priority right, our Father adds the other stuff.

## 2. He maintains our provisions

- a. So God makes everything else last in terms of priorities, but he also makes things last in terms of provision
- b. In other words, when we give to God first, he's able to make what we've been given last
- c. Turn with me to Deuteronomy - it's the 5th book in the Bible - and let's me show you something amazing
- d. Deut. 29:5 / Imagine going 40 years without buying clothes and shoes! God made it last.
- e. What I love about this is that he doesn't do this to show us how good WE are, but how good HE is (v. 6)

## 3. We put God first by putting God to the test

- a. How do we put God first in our finances? Scripturally, there is only one way: tithing.
- b. People get all weird about tithing and percentages, but I think at the heart of the tithe is the concept of FIRST - it isn't just 10%; it's the first 10%
- c. And God knew that we'd struggle with the concept, because he knew that it would take faith
- d. So he offered us a test - Malachi 3:10 - "test me in this"
- e. In other words, honor me first with your cash, and you'll see that I can do more with your less
- f. The truth of the matter is that many don't take this step
- g. We don't give God his portion first, and instead use it on ourselves
- h. God says that's the same as robbing him
- i. We stop being content with how God has blessed us and we start to covet all the ways he hasn't
- j. But contentment gives back to God what is already his, and trusts him to make everything else last

### The Landing

In case you are tempted to think that this is just a ploy sermon to get you to give more for a building, let me be clear: we believe as a church that if God's people put God first in the area of giving, that there wouldn't be the need for campaigns or fundraisers ever again.

This isn't a message about raising money for God; it's a message about raising faith in God, and the only step of faith in the area of cash is by giving to God first, and then watching him do the impossible in our finances.

Your values will change, which means your spending will change.

You will find that what you have lasts longer because your contentment with what you have lasts longer.

And just like Indiana Jones, God will time and time again do miraculous things that allow you to breathe in your finances, because when we put God first, he makes everything else last.

Let's pray.