

## **THE BIG IDEA: When Jesus has my heart, I won't give in part.**

### The Take-Off

Before we get into this week's mark of the born again life, I need to take you back to the very beginning of our series and remind you of the foundational truth that everything else we talk about is based.

JESUS IS LORD.

Everything else flows from that, and until we accept that, nothing else really matters.

But when Jesus is actually our Lord, then He'll be first say in everything we've talked about to this point.

He tells us to be baptized? Our answer is yes, Lord.

Our closest friends don't encourage us to love Him more and He says He to limit our time with them? Yes, Lord.

He wants to meet us in the Word each day? Yes, Lord.

He wants to baptize us with the Holy Spirit and fire? Yes, Lord.

He wants to talk with us like a friend talks with a friend? Yes, Lord.

None of those requests are always going to give us goosebumps, but since Jesus is Lord, He gets to call the shots.

To quote the main character from *The Princess Bride*, our response to the Lord should be, "As You wish."

Here's the thing, we all agree with all of that until it becomes about our resources.

Martin Luther once said that there are three conversions necessary: the conversion of the heart, mind, and the purse.

Not that I want to disagree with Luther (he was a brilliant man), but I think we should highlight the struggle in a different way.

If Jesus isn't Lord of our purse, then He isn't Lord of our heart.

1 Peter 3:15 tells us to set Christ apart as Lord in our hearts.

When He's Lord of your heart, He'll be Lord of your time, your talents, and your treasure, too.

I think the reason we let people off the hook about not giving is because we don't want to imply that upwards of 80% of the people who sit in churches and don't give don't love Jesus.

So, since this intro is already a brutal slap in the face, I'll just tell you that I don't have to imply it: Jesus said it.

**Matthew 6:24 (NIV)** / this verse is about as clear as it gets, right?

How we steward our resources reveals the Lordship of Jesus in our lives.

I'm guessing that's got our attention, so let's talk a little more about it.

### **1. It isn't yours anyway**

- a. **Psalm 24:1** / everything belongs to the Lord
- b. We don't own anything that we have!
- c. When it comes to our resources - time, talents, treasures - we need to remember that we are STEWARDS and not OWNERS
- d. **Matthew 25:14-15** / owner gave the servants HIS goods ACCORDING TO THEIR ABILITY
- e. God knows what resources you can handle, and what you have is given to you by Him to be used for Him

### **2. Put your heart into it**

- a. Owners love their stuff
- b. Stewards love their owners (and therefore love their stuff)
- c. I remember not taking care of my dad's car very well
- d. It was a Chevy Caprice Classic (basically a box with 4 doors) and I didn't care if it got banged up or was kept clean
- e. You know all that changed when I got my own car, right! My guess is we're all the same in that area.
- f. So people will tell you that ownership changes everything, but I disagree.
- g. What changed was what my heart was attached to.
- h. **Matthew 6:21** / our hearts follow our treasure and vice versa
- i. There is a link between our treasure and our heart that can't be broken
- j. I paid nothing for my dad's car, but when my money went to my car, things changed
- k. But dig a bit deeper with me: if my heart was fully given to my dad, would that have changed how I stewarded his car?

- l. Of course it would. If we know that we need to talk with God, then some wonder how exactly we should pull that off?
- m. Are we stewarding our Father's things in a way that reveals that He has our heart?

### 3. First things first

- a. Do you see how all of this is tied back to the born again believer's three word statement of faith?
- b. Jesus is Lord, and that means He has first place in how I handle the resources I've been given.
- c. Are we putting God first in our time, talents, and treasure, or is He getting our leftovers?
- d. **When Jesus has my heart, I won't give in part.**
- e. If He doesn't, then I'll keep trying to control and manage what I think is mine.
- f. Putting Jesus first requires that I trust Him to take care of the rest.
- g. Putting Jesus last requires no trust, no sacrifice.
- h. If I have enough energy after a fun Saturday night, I'll go to church.
- i. Sure, I've got a gift for getting things organized at work, but on Sundays I just want to sit and take it all in.
- j. If I have some money left after paying all my bills, I'll give some of it.
- k. But giving first actually makes room for God to come through miraculously!
- l. I'll spend the first part of my week in worship with my church family!
- m. I'll serve with the gifts and abilities God's given me wherever they may be needed!
- n. I'll give the first part of what I make in tithes and offerings!

#### The Landing

I feel like this is where I should take an offering, but this about so much more than a tithe.

This is about setting Jesus apart in our hearts as Lord and trusting Him with our time, talents, and treasure.

Let's close with a powerful truth from **Malachi 3:8-11**

*God tells them that He has the ability to "rebuke the devourer" for their sakes if they will return to Him by giving tithes and offerings obediently. You see, you will never keep a tithe from God. You will give it to God, or you will give it to the auto mechanic, the appliance store, the doctor, the plumber, or someone else who has to fix your unblessed life and the things in it. By the way, giving doesn't ensure you'll never have problems, but it radically reduces the negative and increases the positive. (Jimmy Evans)*

I'm going to close us in prayer, and then we're going to throw an image on the screen with information that you can use to immediately begin walking in obedience in the way you steward your time, talent, and treasure.

Let's pray.