

Finance Seminar

(Hosting Shane Willard)

 Audio Transcripts of Sunday Sermons

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Finance Seminar (hosting Shane Willard)

Shane Willard offers a unique Jewish/Hebraic perspective for Christians on Finance and Giving. Shane is mentored by a pastor with rabbinical training, and teaches the context of the Scriptures from a Hebraic perspective. This perspective helps people to see God's Word in a completely new way and leads them into a more intimate relationship with the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

[Finance \(1 of 2\) \(Shane Willard\)](#) There's a great cure for poverty, it's called get a job, work hard. God never set himself up as the cure for laziness, or the cure for stupid. There is no supernatural, super-spiritual thing that over comes a lack of hard work or laziness. We've got to be wise, which means staying out of debt, not putting money in things going down in value, not trusting the government to do it for us, live on a budget, take charge of your finances, show self-control! To know God, is to take care of the poor and the afflicted. Tzedakah (Hebrew) is introduced, equating Righteousness with Generosity/Charity

[Finance \(2 of 2\) \(Shane Willard\)](#) We're called to live on a circle in a square. A circle inside of a square is 79%. The math from the commands matches the illustration from agriculture. 2.5% is put in the hands of the Priest; then a tenth is given to the church; and a tenth for yourself, in the form of savings, but one third of that is given to the poor. He doesn't want you just to go to heaven one day, he wants you to bring heaven to earth now. If your first fruits are in the right hands, your finances can't die. You sanctify everything else in your life by honouring the lord with your first fruits.

James 1.26 If anyone considers himself religious and does yet not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. Religion that our God our father accepts as pure and faultless is this; to look after orphans and widows in their distress. The religion our father sees as pure is generosity.

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Finance (1 of 2)

Sun 12 Jun 2011 AM [« Back to Top](#)

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There's a great cure for poverty, it's called get a job, work hard. God never set himself up as the cure for laziness, or the cure for stupid. There is no supernatural, super-spiritual thing that over comes a lack of hard work or laziness. We've got to be wise, which means staying out of debt, not putting money in things going down in value, not trusting the government to do it for us, live on a budget, take charge of your finances, show self-control! To know God, is to take care of the poor and the afflicted. Tsedaqah (Hebrew) is introduced, equating Righteousness with Generosity/Charity

Anytime that you bring up the topic of money, you open up all kinds of things - people get really irritated; and they instantly go: is this law, or grace? The short answer to that is: it's all Grace.

If I can make a point: other than food and money, people don't have a problem with the Old Testament at all.

If I were to say: the topic for the seminar today is “don’t be sexually intimate with your mother”, that’s in Leviticus 12, it’s a command: don’t be sexually intimate with your mother. But that verse is nowhere in the New Testament; and I guarantee you no one would say: wait a minute, you’re putting us under law!

Even though it’s nowhere in the New Testament, if I were to say: the topic of today’s lesson is “Don’t burn your children in Fire”, I guarantee you no one would say: wait a minute, you’re putting us under law!

Let me just handle the law and grace thing... Even in the oldest, of the oldest, of the Old Testament, your forgiveness was never found in keeping the commands; your forgiveness was found in putting your faith in God’s faithfulness.

They put their faith in a lamb, and they were forgiven. How are we forgiven: we put our faith in a lamb! Same - old & new – no difference, forgiveness came by faith, through grace.

The commands were never intended to forgive sins; but to show forgiven people how to live. This is not about law at all, this is about how God intended for us to live the best sort of life.

We have to ask ourselves some core belief questions, and that is this: if I’m willing to trust God with my eternal soul; what is it about money that I don’t trust him with? We trust him with something as big as eternity, but when it comes to money there’s something in us that wants to hoard.

God actually instituted a ‘divine order’, of handling money; a ‘divine order of giving’; or ‘divine order of living’.

He actually instituted a divine order of handling money, and he intended it to create the most blessed group of people in the history of the world.

Did it work, yes? You have a group of people, which make up less than 1% of the world’s population; yet they have 30% of the world’s wealth. They’re on to something!

We’re going to have five main points today. Let me just give them to you all at once: #1) Work; #2) Wisdom; #3) Honor; #4) Knowing God; #5) Tzedakah.

Financially, first we have to institute a couple of things; #1 Work.

God never designated himself as the cure for laziness. As a matter of fact, in the Torah, there is a certain disdain that God has for laziness. He actually deplors it. So God never set himself up as the cure for laziness.

There’s a great cure for poverty, it’s called: “get a job; work hard”. There is no supernatural, super-spiritual thing that over comes a lack of hard work or laziness.

We've all been taught to tithe? We've been taught that: if you tithe, it opens the windows of heaven – is that true? Sure, but is tithing the cure for laziness – no!

People say: "I've tithed, but God isn't blessing me?" Yes, but you're sleeping until eleven! You're not doing anything to gain a skill that's marketable!

There are things that you have to do in the natural that you can't overlook; you have to work hard! In the age of the Jewish world, they worked six 12-hour days; and they still sort of carry that today. They worked six twelve's; we work five eights - and we're worn out.

They worked $6 \times 12 = 72$; we work $5 \times 8 = 40$; so take god out of it, and you already have 32 man-hours a week, of production, more than what we do. There's a side to favor that's spiritual; but there's a side of favor that's very natural. Have you ever noticed that very-prepared people are 'luckier' than unprepared people? So is it really luck? No, it's preparation. So #1, work hard! Work Hard.

#2, Live in Wisdom. Let me say this: God is not the cure-all for laziness; nor is He the cure-all for stupidity.

God is not the cure for stupid. A stupid and selfish act on your part does not constitute an emergency on God's part. If you do something stupid, or if you do something selfish, it does not constitute an emergency on Gods part.

Let me give you an example of what I mean (outside of finance). At this church, we believe in the Power of God, correct? We believe in God's power to: Deliver, Save, Heal, Restore, and Redeem all things? Would you rather pray for someone, for a miracle; or would you rather see them prevent the need for the miracle?

Now I'm all for miracles - sometimes people face things that they did not deserve; they did not set up; they did not make decisions to sow into; and those are the people that we want to believe God to touch.

And we really want to believe for God to touch all people, regardless of if it was their fault or not; but to smoke 3 packs of cigarettes for 30 years, and then make prayer for lung cancer, that's a little bit more preventable – are you with me?

Do we want to see God heal lung cancer, yes! But we would rather see you give up smoking at 22; so at 52, you're not in that situation. So in other words: do all you could do... wisdom!

Let me just give you a couple of points that they have: they work hard; they stay out of debt. They don't borrow money; and they particularly don't borrow money on things going down in value.

If you're paying 8% interest on something that's losing 20% of its value a year, that's a real problem. A car is a good example of that. There are some cases where getting a new car is ok, but in 90% of cases, a new car is going to lose 50% of its value in the first 3 years.

If you buy something for \$40,000, and in 3 years you know it's going to be worth \$20,000, you have to know that's not the best choice.

If I said: I have a business proposition for you. I want you to give me \$40,000; and in 3 years I promise I will give you twenty back - are you going to do that? Of course not right? Anyone want to play? Of course you would never do that; but what if I said: you give me forty, and in 3 years I will give you twenty; but in the meantime, I'll let you drive a really nice car. Um, ok.

Now I'm all for nice cars, I have a nice car; but what I'm not all for, is: borrowing money going on something going down in value; or putting too much assets in the things going down in value.

The combined total of your toys, what I mean by toys is: anything with wheels; or has to get where it's going with wheels. If the combined total value of all of those things is more than half of your income, then even if you own it, you can't really afford it. Even if you don't owe money on it, there's too much of your liquid ability in something going down in value.

We have to have wisdom. Don't borrow money; if you can't afford it, save. If you can afford it, make a commitment that: I'm going to save until I can afford it; and in the time that it takes you to save, you'll realize: you don't need it; and it will save you a lot of heart-ache!

So #1 for Wisdom: Get out of Debt!

#2, Save! It was biblically mandated, a biblical command, to save 10% of your income. They saved 10% of their income, their whole life.

Let me show you how smart God is. If you're over 55: if you had saved 10% of your income your whole life, how much money would you have now?

Financial people tell me: if someone saves from 18-30 and then stops, they'll have more money; than someone that starts at 30, and saves until 60; because of compounding interest, and the rule of 72 (your money will roughly double every 6 years).

So those first 12 years get you two extra doubles at the end, which makes up from anything earned. It's not a matter of amount, it's a matter of time, a long period of it. It was a biblical mandate to save money, 10% of your income.

I thank my God in heaven, on a regular basis, for my mother. My mother made me save 10% of my income, from the time I was 4.

When I was 4 years old, she opened a bank account for me; mom would drive me to the circle-K, we would go in; and mum would ask for 10 dimes. Out of those 10 dimes, I had to put 10c in the offering plate; and I had to take 10c to the bank.

She would actually drive me to the bank, and teach me how to fill out a deposit slip; then let me hand it to the teller with 10 cents in it – she taught me how to do this. From the time I was four, I have always saved 10% of my income.

I don't want to get too god-area, but I just want to tell you the power of that. That even from 4-25, when I was 25 years old I crossed the \$100,000 mark.

Now it's in something I can't touch until I'm 60, alright... You'd have to put up with me until I'm 60 to get it! To have \$100,000 at 25 is a fair whack of a good start, isn't it?

So to have wisdom: don't borrow money; save.

Here's another one under wisdom: don't trust the government to do it for you.

Let me share this scripture with you, from someone we would consider a hero; but he made a mistake; he's still considered a hero because all people do make mistakes. It's Joseph – it's in Genesis 41:33-36. Joseph is in prison, and he is able to interpret the dreams of Pharaoh.

Pharaoh has this dream, which tells him is that: there's going to be 7 years plenty; followed by 7 years of famine. He asks Joseph: what do we do about this?

This is Joseph's answer: "Let Pharaoh look for discerning and wise man, and put them in charge of the land of Egypt". I love it!

Have you ever said something that has an underhand meaning, like Joseph said in front of the Pharaoh? He's still an inmate, and Pharaoh says: what should I do about this Joseph? And Joseph's like: if only there was a wise man you could trust to take care of this... I love it!

"Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land, and take..." Everybody say "take"! "...Take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt, during the 7 years of abundance."

So what did Joseph do? He instituted a 20% tax. So instead of making a rule/law that everyone has to save 20%, and store it up in their own barn; he says: no, let the government take it.

Presumably, if we take 20% over 7 years, we will have enough to provide for our people at the end. And that sounds good at first, but it never works!

Everything the government ever tries, fails, at least in America. Maybe in NZ government is better, but in America everything they have done fails. Amtrax broke, the post office broke, now they want to run healthcare – are you kidding me?

So it says: “they should collect all the food from these good years, and store the grain under the authority of Pharaoh”. In other words: the government will take care of it, to be kept in the cities for food.

“This food should be held in reserve, for the country, to be used during the 7 years of famine (now this all sounds like a good idea) that will come upon Egypt, so that the country may not be ruined by the famine”.

So Joseph says: the government’s going to take 20%, and save it for the people; so when the famine hits, we will be able to take care of them.

This whole story ensues, about his brothers and things; and finally the 7 years of famine comes around, Genesis 41v56-57.

“Now when the famine had spread over the whole country, Joseph opened the storehouses, and sold grain to the Egyptians”.

Sold? So he took it from them, and then he sold it back to them; what a great business plan! Um, I’m sure he had good intentions at first; but eventually what happened is really, really not good.

It says that he collected so much grain, that they quit measuring it, because it was pointless. 20% of everybody’s harvest, for seven years! They quit measuring it because it was pointless...

“...and he sold grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe throughout Egypt, and all the countries came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe in the world.”

So not only did he sell them at a profit to other countries, he also sold it back at a profit to the people he took it from to begin with.

Genesis 47v13-21 tells you the end of the story. It says: “there was no food in the whole region, because the famine was severe. Both Egypt and Canaan wasted away because of the famine; and Joseph collected all the money that was to be found in all of Egypt and Canaan in payment for the grain they were buying”.

In other words, he took it from them; then sold it back to them until they ran out of money – all the money was gone, in payment for the grain they were buying. And he brought it to Pharaohs palace.

When the money from the people of Canaan and Egypt was gone, all Egypt came to Joseph and said – give us food. In other words: give it to us for free now, c'mon seriously, we're starving! “

“Why should we die before your eyes, our money is now used up.”

“Then bring your livestock”, Joseph said. “I will sell you food, in exchange for livestock, since you're money's gone. So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and he gave them food in exchange for the horses, sheep, goats, cattle, donkeys, and he brought them through that year with food, in exchange for their livestock”.

So first he took all their money for the food (that he took to begin with), and then he took all their livestock, and everything they had.

Now watch what happens – “when that year was over, they came to him the following year and said – we cannot hide from our lord the fact that since our money is gone, and our livestock belongs to you, there is nothing left for our lord except: our bodies; and our land”.

“Why should we perish before your eyes, we and our land our land. Buy us, and our land, in exchange for food; and we, with our land, will be in bondage to Pharaoh. Give us seed, so that we may live and not die, and that the land not becomes desolate.”

So Joseph bought all the land in Egypt, for Pharaoh. The Egyptians, one and all, sold their fields, for the famine was too severe for them; and the land became Pharaohs, and Joseph reduced the people to slavery!” Joseph reduced the people to slavery.

In other words, you can't trust the government to do for you, what God has called you to stand up and take responsibility to do for yourself.

Let me make one more wise observation: Jesus might not come back in your lifetime. It is better to be prepared, than to hope for that. You want to play Russian roulette with your whole financial future, over a theological concept that you have no idea when it might come to pass?

We have got to be wise. #1, we've got to work hard. #2, we've got to be wise, which means staying out of debt.

It means not putting money in things going down in value. It means not trusting the government to do it for us.

It means all kinds of other things: it means live on a budget. Take charge of your finances; show self-control.

If you want a good book on that, the best book I've read is called "The total money maker", by Dave Ramsey. It will really help you a lot with those practical things. It has budget worksheets, and all kinds of things in the back of it.

So #1, Work; #2, Wisdom - stay out of debt; don't put your money in things that lose value; save 10% of your income - don't trust the government to do it for you.

#3, Honor. You want to stay within your calling, and your strengths; and you want to honor strengths and callings of other people.

Without going through the whole scripture, one of the things that stand out for me, from the story of David and Goliath: David is a shepherd, and the issue with David is the plan-o-graph.

You guys remember the plan-o-graph? How big is David on the plan-o-graph, and how big is Goliath? Goliath was like 9 foot 6; but the idea that David was some kind of small, puny guy is not true.

David was a shepherd, he was a tough man, he was a man's man. He killed a lion and a bear with his bare hands! This guy is not someone you would just go mess with.

Goliath is challenging the armies of Israel, and he's blaspheming God. David goes to Saul and says: are you just going to let him do this? I'll go handle this...

I would say that David was probably a little bit hot-headed... David said: I'll go handle this, no problem, let me at him.

Saul says: we'll, if you're going to go at him, at least wear my armor, right? When David put the armor on, did it say that David couldn't use it, because it didn't fit? No, it says: David couldn't use it, because he wasn't used to it - it wasn't his tools.

It says: Saul was a head & shoulders taller than anyone else in the land; so David must've been a pretty big dude, for them to think that they could even possibly fit him into the armor.

This issue wasn't that it didn't fit; the issue was that it wasn't his tools. David was anointed to be king, but it wasn't his time, his calling was still a shepherd.

So he goes down and gets five smooth stones, and this is what it says: and he put it in his shepherd's bag. So when he goes to face Goliath, what does he look like? A shepherd - he's got a staff, he's got his shepherd's bag, which had the sling, and the five rocks.

If you go back to read the story, this is what it says: "and Goliath was enraged, and he said am: I a dog, that you are coming at me with a stick (which is a staff)?"

Goliath chose to dishonor what David's calling was. Goliath chose to dishonor and disrespect what David's calling was - and ultimately it was his downfall.

David chose to stay within his calling, and it ultimately ended up resulting in victory for David, and the entire situation, and ultimately the nation of Israel.

Listen, one of the most destructive things you can do financially, is live in such a way where you always wish you were somebody else. If only I had this gift, if only I had opportunity, if only I had this education, if only...

Hold on, we've got to come back to a point of belief here. Do you really believe that God has already put in you everything you need for life and success and winning in abundance?

One of the Ten Commandments says: "don't covet anything that is your neighbors" - anything that is your neighbors!

There are people in this room that would never get up in front of people and talk, because they'd be too scared; but those same people are the ones who can run business, and without them, I can't even operate.

What I see is: a bunch of people with callings, and gifts, and talents, and personalities that I need to choose to honor; and it would be futile for me to live my life wanting to be like you; and it's futile for you to live your life wanting to be me.

One of the keys to financial success is: honoring what God called you to be; by seeking it out, discovering it, being introspective, going through a process where you guess just what your talents and personalities are; and then finding something in the centre of that to make your living.

So #1, work hard! #2, be wise: get out of debt; save money; don't put money in things that are going down in value; don't trust the government to do it for you. #3, honor.

#4, Knowing God! Matthew 22:37-40, someone has asked him: what we need to do to inherit eternal life? There's this discussion about how to read it; and then finally there's this question:

"What's the greatest command"? Can you summarize your holy yoke in one sentence?

Jesus says: "Love the lord your god with all your soul mind and strength - this is the first and greatest commandment, and the second is like it, love your neighbor as yourself. All the Torah and the prophets hang on these commands".

In other words, either: memorize the entire Old Testament; or, just do those two things.

Here's the issue: for us, we tend to think of 'loving God' and 'loving people' as two things. What's your goal in life? I want to love God, and love people.

Actually, in the literary formation of the senate, as well as just in their thought, 'loving god' and 'loving people' is exactly the same thing.

To them: loving people is loving God; and loving God is loving people. That it is impossible to say: you love God, if you don't love other people.

It is also impossible to hate other people (or have animosity between yourself and other people), and then say you love God.

It is also impossible to be a generous, loving person towards other people; and not somehow learn the love of God in the process.

That loving God IS loving people; and loving people IS loving God; to them, you can't separate the two.

I was sitting with a rabbi once (not my rabbi, I just got on a plane), and he said: Shane, don't you understand, that in Jewish culture, it's impossible to be righteous and greedy - you just can't do it.

You can't say you love God, and then turn your back on a hopeless person. The way you love God is the way you love other people; and the way you love other people is loving God - the two things are intertwined.

Now in the bible, you're going to see a lot of phrases like, 'the kingdom of God', 'the kingdom of Heaven', even as sometimes you see 'inherit the land' - all these phrases are the same as that phrase.

The word Heaven sometimes refers to a place, like a place we go, the abode of Heaven. But other times, Heaven is a euphemism for God, because they didn't like to say the name God.

Even today, you might get an email from a messianic Jew, and they spell God, G (hyphen) D. They don't want to completely articulate the idea of God; so what they did is they called it Heaven.

So sometimes, the bible might say: "you have sinned against Heaven" - that's just a euphemism for: you sinned against god.

So the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, it was a euphemism, not for where you go someday; it was a euphemism for: what would your life be like, if God was in charge of it now, here, now, today?

What would it be like, if God was the ruler, and the reigned over everything in your life. If everything in your life was brought into the light, and darkness was dispelled; what would your life look like then? That was the kingdom of God.

So for the rest of this session, I want to ask you a question that's going to seem confrontational, because it's a question we have to deal with, and that is this question: Do you know God?

Do you know him? If I was to hand out a piece of paper, and I want you to write down a one-sentence definition of what it means to know God, we would get all kinds of different answers.

Some would be right, some would wrong; all would be sincere, all would be heartfelt, and all would have an element of your personal thing with God in it.

The question is: how important is it to know God; and the answer is VERY.

The second question is: how does God define what it means to know him?

Luke 13:22-30 says: "Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. And someone asked him Lord, are only a few people going to be saved"?

I love that – "lord are only a few people going to be saved"? You have to understand, the region he's in, is in a highly orthodox region of Israel; it was filled with people who had made the Torah even harder than it was.

There are 613 commands in the Torah; but they were actually keeping 3000 commands, so they had made the Torah even harder than it was.

Here was their thought: since we are keeping the Torah better than anyone else, God loves us more than other people.

So they started having the thought that: we're in, and everyone else is out. We're right, and everyone else is wrong. We would never do that would we?

This group of people had names for themselves: the elect; the remnant; God's special people.

So when they ask him: "Rabbi, are only a few going to be saved", here's what they're saying: "Rabbi, are only a few going to be saved... and it's us right"? Tell us we're right, were in, and everyone else is out. We're right, and everyone else is wrong.

When someone asks you a question like that, there are two ways to handle it. One is Taekwondo. The other is Judo. Judo, Taekwondo - you confront it. In Judo, you sort of

side yourself with them; then just at the right moment you throw them. Jesus choose Judo, I love it.

“Lord, are only a few going to be saved?”, and he said to them: “make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many I tell you will try to enter, and not be able to”.

Jesus is saying: you guys think that only a few people will get in (through the narrow door), but be sure to enter through the narrow door; you’re right, there’s a lot of people who think they’re in; and they’re actually out.

Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will be the one standing outside and knocking like they do.

In other words: you’re right, there are a lot of people who think they’re in, and they’re actually out, and that’s actually you.

“Sir, open the door for us”; but he will answer: “I don’t know you, or where you come from”.

But he will say: “but we ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets”, but he will reply: “I do not know you, or where you came from. Away from me you evil-doers, and there will be weeping there and gnashing of teeth”.

When you see Abraham, and all the prophets in the kingdom; but you yourselves are turned out; people will come from the north, the east and the south and the west, and will take their place at the feast of the kingdom of god.

Indeed, there will be those who are first, and those who are last; and those who are first will be last.

He says, to this group of people: there are a lot of people who think they’re in, and everyone else is out. Actually, it’s you who are out; you who thought you were in - you are the ones that will be shut out; because at my wedding table, many will come from the north and south and west - and there’s no room for people who think they’re better than everybody else.

So Jesus tells the story, and at the center of the story, twice, what does he say? “I don’t know you”. The issue was not-knowing God.

The other application is: how you treat others matters. He ends that whole thing by saying: the people you think are out; are actually the ones in.

All those people who you think are out (because you’re in, and they’re out), they actually the ones in, and you’re the one shut out.

Jesus is slamming them: how you treat others matters; and the issue is: I don't know you.

John 17:3 – “now this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God”.

So for Jesus, what was 'eternal life' defined by, in the simplest sentence? To know God.

How do you know you have eternal life? You know him. You know him – this is eternal life, that they may know you. H

Matthew 25:1-12. This is the introduction to Jesus sermon on sheep and goats. This is what he says to introduce this:

“at that time, the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom, five of them were foolish, and five of them were wise. The foolish ones took their lamp but did not take any oil with them; the wise however took oil along with them in jars along with their lamps”.

I was listening to one Rabbi teach on this, and he said that in the Hebrew version of Matthew, when it says “they took the oil with them”, it says “they took no Tzedakah”, which is the Hebrew word for generous, generosity, or charity. They took no Tzedakah.

Tzedek is the word Righteous. Tzedakah is the word generous, generosity, charity. Try saying it: Tsadaq; Tzedakah.

So Righteousness and Generosity are the same word. You cannot separate righteousness and generosity. You cannot say you are righteous, and be greedy.

2106 verses of scripture connect righteousness with generosity. Greed and wickedness are also interconnected: Jesus said “the love of money is the root of all evil” - greed is the root of all evil.

Generosity was the key to righteousness; the suffix means 'to reveal'. So 'righteousness revealed' was generosity.

The five foolish virgins, they don't bring any generosity with them. This is going to play a huge point. The wise however, took oil along with their lamps, verse five.

The bridegroom is a long time in coming, and they all felt drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight the cry rang out: here is the bridegroom, come out and meet him!

Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps; the foolish ones said to the wise: give us your oil, for our lamps are going out.

No, they replied, there may not be enough or both of us. Instead, go to those who sell oil, and buy some for yourself.

But while they were on their way to buy oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins were ready, went in with him to the wedding banquet, and the door was shut.

Later the others also came: “Sir Sir, open the door for us”, but he replied: “I tell you the truth, I do not know you”. The issue was: he didn’t know them – “I don’t know who you are”. The issue in the parable of the ten virgins is: I don’t know who you are.

The parallel is the introduction to Jesus sermon on sheep and goats, which is all about generosity. The sheep were on the right, the goats on the left.

To the sheep, he said: come into the kingdom and prepare the foundation for the world; for when I was hungry you gave me food, when I was thirsty you gave me drink, when I was a stranger you took me in, when I was naked you clothed me, when I was in prison you came to me.

And the righteous (Tsadaq), will say to him: when did we see you naked, or thirsty, or hungry, or in prison, or chains – when did we see all that and do all that for you?

He said: when you did it to the least of these, you did it for me. Now come on in; and to those on my left, I will say: away from me, for you did not do those things.

So in Matthew 25, when Jesus talks about how he’s going to judge the world, the key to how he judges the world is generosity. It was: Knowing God; Tzedakah!

In the sheep and goats, he doesn’t say: to those on my right, come in to the kingdom, prepared for you for the foundation of the world... for you said the sinner’s prayer!

No! So come in; for when I was hungry you gave me food, when I was thirsty you gave me drink, when I was a stranger you took me in, when I was naked you clothed me. It was Tzedakah, it was developing a Tzedakah spirit.

Matthew 7:21-23 – “Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven; but only he who does the will of my father, who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord did we not prophesy in your name, and drive out demons, and perform many miracles? But I will tell them plainly, I never knew you. I never knew you!”

How important is it to know God? Pretty important! So Jesus says: there are a lot of people, at the end of the day, who think they’re in, but they’re actually out...

...this is incredibly scary! Can I get an amen? Why is that scary? Because I think I’m in, and so do you.

What separates me from them? Nothing yet: they think they’re in; I think I’m in. They’ve cried out: “Lord, Lord”; you’ve cried out “Lord, Lord”, so have I.

Then Jesus goes into this huge description, and he describes Pentecostal leaders. Who else is prophesying, casting out demons, and performing miracles? Who else is doing that – nobody, Pentecostal leaders! I mean seriously, Baptist in Auckland – they're safe. Right, they're not doing that?

Jesus says: many will say to me that day, "Lord, Lord"; and I will say: wait a minute – I don't know you. Wait a minute, "but we cast out devils, and we performed many miracles, and we prophesied".

"But I didn't know you", which is scary, because that sounds like me. I've cried out "Lord, Lord", I have. I've made Jesus the lord of my life - I did it a lot of times; because in the Pentecostal church, you've lost your salvation every time you sinned - so I got saved every week. I'm more saved than all of you, probably. I might be in!

I've cried out Lord, Lord, I've prophesied, I have – I move in the spirit quite a lot. I don't really do it when I'm here (because it happens here all the time), but I do move in the spirit quite a lot, I prophesy, I've cast out devils. So, I've been a part of miracles; some things that I would call miraculous. So what separates me from them? Nothing!

The issue isn't what they did; the issue is: they didn't know him. Which begs the question: what does it mean to know God?

You know there's only one scripture in the bible that defines what it means to know him – only one!

Jeremiah 22:6-8: "He took care of the poor and the afflicted, so it will go well for him". Is this not what it means to know me, declares the lord your God. So to God, to 'know him', is to 'take care of the poor and the afflicted'. Doesn't that make sense!

To do something for someone, who can't possibly do something in return for you; that in doing that, you would know the heart of God, because isn't that what God did for you?

That we are called not to go to heaven one day, we're actually called to bring heaven to every place there's hell now. This is central to their financial freedom.

We could talk about the whole system they have for dealing with money (we're going to), but if I give you the whole system, and you miss the heart of it - it doesn't make any difference.

If I give you the whole system, but you're going to be lazy...whatever; if I give you the whole system, and you're going to make stupid decisions, selfish decisions – whatever.

If I give you the whole system, and you're going honor each other, and honor what's in your own life – whatever. If I give you the whole system, and you're going to miss the bigger aspect, which is: do you know him...

This thing of 'knowing God' followed Jesus through His whole ministry. "This is eternal life, that they may know me". "Depart from me, I never knew you".

Jesus was nice to everybody; who's the only person that Jesus said went to hell – only one. Jesus whole life, he only said one person went to hell. There's a rich man, who overlooked a poor man at his gate – that's the man that went to hell.

Before we excuse ourselves from that conversation... we are the rich man! If you drove here in an automobile, it doesn't matter what kind of car you have, you're in the richest 8% of the whole world.

If you left your spare car at home, you're in the richest 1% of the whole world. If the home you have has a concrete foundation, and lumber is the primary building material - in other words, you don't live in a trailer; if your home is not mobile, you're in the richest 0.1% of the whole world.

We are the rich man, the question is: what are we going to do about it?

If you look at the rich man in Lazarus, the rich man goes to hell because he overlooked that poor man at his gate; and then even in hell what does he do? Abraham: send that beggar over here, to give me some water.

The man is in hell; and he still thinks he's better than the poor man! The very thing that put him in hell; he still kept making the same decision to stay there.

You know anybody like that? You know anybody that made decisions that put their life in hell, then they're in hell, and they kept making the same decisions? Sounds like us.

So this thing follows Jesus through his whole ministry: the rich man and Lazarus; and the sheep and the goats – what was the key?

In Matthew 25, what did the sheep and goats get separated by? Tzedakah; Generosity; is this not what it means to know me?

Acts 10, Peter shows up, he says: Cornelius – god has already counted you righteous; because he knows at some point you're going to pray a prayer. God has already counted you righteous, because your generosity to the poor went up as a remembrance to him. Is this not what it means to know me declares the lord your God?

Let me close this session out with a scripture from first 1 John 3:16. John has picked up on this principle, and this is what he says:

"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us, and we ought (here's the application) to lay down our life for our brothers."

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