

Talk Notes

Title: The Kingdom of God 5 – Attitudes of the Kingdom Money, Sex and Power

Meeting: Freshwaters

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Introduction

Now we are up to talk 5 about the Kingdom of God. I am not going to go back over the first 4 talks but if you have missed them then I would encourage you to download the notes from our website audio page for **23rd April** – this provides a summary of the first 4 talks and tells you how you can access the original talks.

This morning we are going to continue to look at 'Attitudes in the Kingdom' and specifically we are going to look at 3 areas which have great power for good if they are approached with a Kingdom attitude, but great destructive force when hijacked by the enemy.

The three topics are money, sex and power.

Money & Possessions

Who likes money?

Money and possessions are not evil in themselves and if we have a godly attitude towards them then they can be a blessing to us and to others – in fact they can help extend the Kingdom of God.

A Godly attitude to money and possessions

a) Seek first His Kingdom and live righteously

In **Matt 6:19-34** Jesus gives some practical advice about money – let's read it together.

You could sum up this passage by saying don't hoard, don't serve and don't worry about money.

The key is found in **verse 33 – 'Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.'**

If our focus and priority is the Kingdom of God we will not hoard money, building up our wealth as some sort of insurance policy against the storms of life. Firstly because **the things of real value are eternal and investments into the Kingdom of God have a security that no money can buy**. Secondly if our focus and security is on money we will always be worried about not having enough or losing what we do have. **The result is that instead of money being our servant, we become enslaved to money.**

If this is you then apply **verse 33**, seek God's Kingdom, live righteously and then trust God who is Jehovah Jireh, literally 'The Lord who see's and provides'. Don't be like the rich young man described by Jesus in **Luke 18:18-29** (and **Mark 10:17-29** and **Matthew 19:16-28**) who came to Jesus to see how He could enter the Kingdom of Heaven but ended up going away sad because Jesus answer was to give away his riches and to follow Him.

b) Protect you heart

In **verse 21** of the passage from **Matthew 6** that we read earlier Jesus said '**Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be**'.

1 Timothy 6:10 says '**For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.**'

Money in itself is not intrinsically evil and used rightly it can be used for great good, but when our attitude towards money is not good, when it dominates our thinking, when we begin to crave it more and more, then our hearts can become corrupted and money and possessions can become idols, stealing away our love and even our worship.

You may ask 'how do we worship money' – haven't you ever seen the inside of a betting shop, or watched the lottery draw. People who have won millions on the lottery continue to play craving more.

If we do not recognise the seductive power of money and possessions then we as Paul's warning to Timothy describes, can end up wandering from the faith and being pierced by many sorrows. Why? Because like all idols, **money promises much that it cannot deliver**. It cannot be trusted as God can be – you can't buy love, happiness or even security and even if you could in the blink of an eye it will be gone, and what will remain, faith hope and love.

c) Make money your servant not your master.

If we are determined to make money serve the Kingdom of God rather than undermine it, then there are a few things which will help us.

- a) **Generosity**. **Prov 11:25** says '**The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed**' – There is something about generosity that creates an atmosphere where we and others can prosper. Generosity recognises our generous and extravagant God who gave the most precious thing He had to us when He sent Jesus. Generosity flies in the face of that mean, stingy, greedy spirit that hoards up wealth for itself and instead says what I have is not my own, it belongs to God and to those He gives me the opportunity to share it with.
- b) **Return the tithe**. **Mal 3:8-10** says **“Should people cheat God? Yet you have cheated me! “But you ask, ‘What do you mean? When did we ever cheat you?’ “You have cheated me of the tithes and offerings due to me. You are under a curse, for your whole nation has been cheating me. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so**

there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do,” says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies, “I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won’t have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test! – Now I don’t know what your attitude to tithing is, I believe it is a Kingdom principle, our tithe belongs to the Lord and if we withhold it we are robbing God. **Those who challenge the tithe are very rarely doing it from the place of generosity** – I have not often heard people say to me “I really struggle with tithing because I just want to give so much more” – the great news is that if you are one of those rare people there is an answer for you – it is called a Freewill Offering – our real giving begins after the tithe is returned. Now I haven’t got time to go into all of the arguments about tithing – but for those who would like to explore more about the biblical basis for tithes and offerings please take one of the leaflets on the side and study it for yourself. Once you have done that then by all means come to me with any questions or comments you may have.

- c) **Invest wisely** – We all know the parable of the talents from **Matt 25:14-30**, and I am sure we have all taken on board the encouragement to use wisely the gifts that God has given us – what we often miss is **the most simple interpretation of this parable – that it was about money!** What is true of our God given talents and abilities should also be true of the financial resources that God blesses us with. We should make wise investments – that is not just investments that reap a financial return, but investments that advance God’s Kingdom, investments that improve the lives of others. Sometimes that involves taking a risk, but if our security is in God and we are genuinely seeking and then acting upon the guidance of the Spirit then you might even call it faith.
- d) **Tend towards Lend** – One of the biggest shifts in societies approach to money is the move towards a culture of credit over the last 50 years or so. At one time borrowing or credit had a stigma attached to it. . It was considered a necessary evil that the poor had to borrow to survive. It used to be the case that if you wanted to buy something beyond your means you saved for it. Now credit is an everyday part of our culture – if you want something you can’t afford you buy it on credit and then pay for it over the coming months and years. This is not considered undesirable, it is considered the norm. If you speak about saving for something you are likely to be considered just a little bit strange and somewhat old fashioned. In the blessings and curses recorded in **Deuteronomy 28**, one of the blessings of obedience to God was that they would **‘lend to many nations but borrow from none’ (v 12)** and one of the curses was that **‘they will lend money to you but you will not lend to them (v43)**. Somehow we appear to have got this the wrong way around in our day. **Prov 22:7** says **‘Just as the rich rule the poor, so the borrower is servant to the lender’**. So many people are in bondage, not just to loan sharks and the seedier side of the finance industry – but also to banks and credit card companies – again rather than money be our servant we become its slave.

Sex.

Who likes sex? Well most of us do and we are meant to. When God said first to Adam and Eve in **Gen 1:28** and later to Noah and his family in **Gen 9:7 'be fruitful and multiply'** he was not expecting them to do it without sex – and it's not recorded that Adam and Eve protested and said 'but Lord, surely there must be another way' – no, they did their duty and enjoyed it.

Sex is a God given gift, that is partly to do with having children, but is also part of the process of '**two becoming one flesh**' – something Jesus declared about the relationship between husband and wife in **Matt 10:8**, quoting from **Gen 2:24**.

So in the correct context of marriage, sex is fun, sex enables us to reproduce and sex brings an intimate bond which enables two people to become one.

God's gift distorted

So sex is good, but as with money, it can be distorted by the enemy and can become a hindrance to the Kingdom of God.

We live in a very sexualised society – we are constantly bombarded with words and images which play upon our sexual desires, sometimes in the name of entertainment, sometimes in the name of product promotion and sometimes just to get us to part with our money – perhaps not the wisest of investments!

Through the ages both men and women have used their bodies to gain control over others, again we can become enslaved. If not specifically to an individual then to the huge porn industry which is more and more accessible, even to our children.

We can try to argue that this is just a physical thing and that it doesn't impact our relationship with God or others – but this is just not true. **It damages our relationship with God** because sexual gratification becomes our focus and obsession, and whether in front of the computer or TV screen, or in the physical act, we give our worship. Our hearts become corrupted and again we find ourselves wandering from our faith – as we know, sin separates.

It damages our relationship with others as people become sex objects with a constant focus on the physical, rather than on the whole person, body mind and spirit intricately and wonderfully made in the image of God.

It can also damage our relationships as we become 'one flesh' with more than one person, tearing away from each new partner but leaving part of us behind.

If you struggle with the whole sexual area I would really encourage you to proceed with the following steps:-

1. Acknowledge your struggle and ask God to help you.
2. Confess your sin and repent
3. Talk to someone you trust (not someone you fancy!) and make yourself accountable to them.
4. Follow the advice of **1 Cor 6:18** and **'flee from sexual sin'** – turn over the telly, switch off the computer, excuse yourself from a potentially compromising situation – and if necessary run down the street screaming 'God help me'!
5. If your problem relates to the computer, load a filter and if you are really serious get your husband or wife or friend you are being accountable to, to set the password.

Power

The final part of my trilogy is Power. **Put up your hand if you like power!**

You may not have put up your hand because you don't think of yourself as someone who is or wants to be particularly powerful – and yet most of us want the power to be able to make our own choices and decisions. We want the power to do good and to have influence for good. That's not necessarily becoming prime minister, it might be just encouraging our friends and families in the values of the Kingdom of God.

Now many of us may have been put off power because we primarily associate it with the abuse of power. But actually, as with money and sex, there is nothing intrinsically evil about power – and in fact used correctly it provides great potential for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

In **Gen 1:28** it says **'Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground."'** – Under God's power or authority, man was given authority or power to reign over the earth.

Each of us has been delegated power and authority from God, whether that is to do with our personal choices and decisions, or to do with running a home or family, a church or business or charity, or a nation.

Power can be used to build up or tear down. It can be used to **support, equip and enable** others to thrive or can be used to **control, manipulate and abuse**.

Wanting power for the good it can do for God's Kingdom and for the good of others can be a noble thing fully compatible with the working of God's Spirit in our lives. However, like Money and Sex **it can also become corrupted**, people can crave that sense of control over others, they can like the sense of superiority they may feel over others or they can just use it to gain more of what they want from others.

Proper authority is subject to authority

In **Luke 7:1-9** Jesus has an interesting encounter with a Roman Centurion and it says that Jesus was amazed at what he had to say. The centurion gave us an insight into the correct

operation of power and authority. He used himself as an example – saying that under the authority of his superior officers he had authority to command his soldiers and he related this to the authority which Jesus had to command that his servant be healed.

As a soldier his authority was subject to his subjection to the authority of His superiors – **as the Son of God, Jesus authority was subject to the authority of His Father.**

In **John 5:16-29** Jesus talks about His authority coming from His Father and being given to His followers – in **v 19** it says **'So Jesus explained, "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does. 20For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing'.**

The model is one of voluntary submission based upon love and trust, rather than forced submission based upon abuse of power and control.

If we will freely submit to the authority of Christ which comes from His Father and ours, not because of fear but because of love and trust, then we are in a position where we can exercise power and authority in a Godly context that will bless God, bless others and expand the Kingdom of God, in fact it comes back to our original definition of the Kingdom of God – the place where God reigns – that reign is just being administered through us.

Conclusion

Wow, that was a lot to get through this morning and we have just scratched the surface of just three areas where a Kingdom attitude can bring blessing to ourselves and others seeing God's Kingdom expand, while the enemy has sought to distort corrupt and to use those same things to 'steal, kill and destroy'.

If you are struggling with your attitude to money, sex or power this morning – or maybe all three, then take the opportunity to receive prayer, make a note of what action you are going to take and share it with a trusted friend and ask them to hold you to account.

Let our attitude to Money, Sex and Power as Citizens of the Kingdom, redeem them for the honour of His name, the good of our neighbour and the extension of His Kingdom – Amen.