



Pastor: Dr. Henry Schorr

Date: April 28/29'18

Sermon Title: Pursuing the Kingdom: God's Plan

IN Opportunities to connect and pray as a group

1. Describe a memory you have about your involvement at Centre Street Church.
2. What has inspired your spiritual journey during your attendance at CSC?

UP Time that is devoted to the Word of God

1. Pastor Henry gave three principles of God's economy (grid below).
What are the contrasting principles that the world holds to?
Are there areas that overlap? Discuss.

God's Economy	World's Economy
God owns what I have God provides what I need God blesses others through what I give	

2. How are 'needs' and 'wants' calculated in each economy?
Refer to Ex 19:5; 1 Chron 29:14; Psalm 24:1; 49:16-17; John 3:16; Col 1:17; Phil 4:19.
3. What is the focus of God's mission? (Mt 6:10; 1 Peter 3:9)
What is God's plan for His Kingdom economy to work? (Luke 6:38; 1 Cor 3:9; 2 Cor 9:11)
4. What mindset and lifestyle is called for in God's Kingdom economy?
How are 'time, talent and treasure' to be allocated?
What hinders us from making any necessary changes?

OUT Seek to be the Community of God's people in your community

1. 'If Christianity is true, then it is of infinite importance.
If it is false, then it is of no importance.
One thing it cannot be — is moderately important.' (C.S. Lewis)
What does this say in terms of our understanding of, and response to, the difference between God's economy and the world's economy?
2. Assignment for the week! Make a list of all the gifts God has given to you.
Thank Him. How can you use those gifts to be generous to others this week?
2. What is the more difficult question for you to answer:
Can I trust God? Or Can God trust me? Why?
3. How can the Group pray for you as you take small steps in this process?

UP — IN — OUT reflect a balanced life including a focus on our personal relationship with the Father (UP), staying connected to the Body (IN), and reaching our world (OUT).

THE WORD (NIV)

Exodus 19:5

⁵ Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine.

1 Chronicles 29:14

¹⁴ "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.

Psalm 24:1

The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;

Psalm 49:16-17

Do not be overawed when others grow rich, when the splendor of their houses increases;¹⁷ for they will take nothing with them when they die, their splendor will not descend with them.

Matthew 6:10

your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Luke 6:38

³⁸ Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

John 3:16

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

1 Corinthians 3:9

⁹ For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.

2 Corinthians 9:11

¹¹ You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

Philippians 4:19

¹⁹ And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 1:17

¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

1 Peter 3:9

⁹ Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.



In this series “Pursuing the Kingdom,” we are examining Scripture to learn how the Kingdom of God differs from the Kingdom of This World. Today we examine how the economy of God’s Kingdom works compares to that of our world. Our country calls everyone to use their time, ability and resources to contribute to its economy. God also calls us to give of our time, talent and treasure to His economy to contribute to the Kingdom’s advancement and health. If you believe God and commit to follow Him, you soon see that your life, values and priorities are significantly different from those who do not follow Jesus as Lord.

John, a financially-blessed and generous man, proposed to Pastor Chip Ingram that he join him to help meet the needs of hurting people. John would fund the venture by giving Ingram \$5,000 (in \$50 bills) to distribute, as the Lord led him and on John’s behalf. Then when Ingram ran out of money, meet him for lunch, tell him the stories of the people he helped and account for how much he gave. At that time, John would replenish the money. Ingram accepted the offer. It turned into an exciting adventure. He never felt any obligation: John blessed him with lunches and Ingram blessed John by the stories of the many people so blessed. At each lunch, John would proclaim, “Praise the Lord!” and say “Let’s do it again!” to start the generosity cycle all over again. It also led them to become the best of friends. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CmhqptFt3q> This is a picture of God’s economy and the relationship we will enjoy when we are generous. He wants us back in right relationship with Him and to be His representatives to make the *invisible* Christ *visible* through our generosity.

God’s economy is based on different values: while our culture is acquiring and accumulating, God’s economy is all about giving and sharing. In His sovereignty God has chosen to accomplish His mission through us as co-workers in His service, (1 Cor 3:9). God’s Plan for generosity is based on three key Scriptural principles. **1. God owns what I have.** While many governments say they own everything and capitalism says the individual owns everything, Biblical Christianity says that God owns everything, (Ex 19:5)-- ‘the earth is the Lord’s and everything in it’ (Ps 24:1). He not only created it all, He sustains and holds it all together (Col 1:17)/ Everything: the air we breathe, the food we eat, the talents we have, the gift of life itself – belongs to God. We are fooling ourselves if we think otherwise, (Ps 49:16). **2. God provides what I need.** God promises to meet all our needs, (Phil 4:19). God owns everything, and He gives to us freely. He *gave* His one and only Son, (John 3:16). In 1 Chronicles 29, as David rejoices in the people’s generosity, he also celebrates God’s provision for the funds to build the Temple, (v. 14-16). Without His generosity to us, we would have no opportunity to give at all. God has given us eternal life through the death and resurrection of His Son; His friendship; this life to the full; talents, abilities and spiritual gifts; an amazing body and mind; His created earth with resources to enjoy and use; time, family and much more. He simply asks that we manage it well, (Gen 2:15). But note also that the promise does not cover all our wants. Our line between wants and needs has grown blurry, (James 4:3). Scripture does not clearly support the view that God wants everyone to be rich, nor that God wants anyone in poverty. Why then are there so many people with unmet needs? **3. God’s Plan for Generosity – God blesses others by what I give.** God gives to us, not necessarily equally: He wants us to share generously what He has given. We are His co-workers, and when we fail to do our part, God’s economy begins to break down. When too many have the means but do not choose to be generous, the world’s economy starts to operate. Last week, statistics showed the ways in which honouring God’s starting point for giving, a 10% tithe from Christians, would affect our entire world’s needy. Applying those ratios to CSC itself suggests an additional availability of: \$10 million for our mission as a church; \$5 million for facility needs; \$15 million to support the church and like organizations committed to the same mission and needs.

This is how God’s Plan works in practice. **1. God gives to us** – time or money or talent – as a deposit on account. **2. God wants to give through us:** He prompts us to transfer from our account into the account of others. **3. When we respond, God provides compensating deposits** into our account, *so that we can give more*, (Luke 6:38). Note - this is not a ‘give to get more’ scheme. God blesses generosity, but not always materially: some of His gifts are much more profound, (2 Cor 9:11). As we trust God’s Plan, our mindset changes and we ask, “Jesus, what do you want me to do with all you have entrusted me?” Do we trust enough to BE, DO, and GIVE as He calls us? Even more, can GOD trust US to use it for His intended purposes? (1 Cor 4:2) Are we faithful with what God has entrusted us? Alan Redpath, former pastor of Moody Bible Church, spoke of two women discussing an expansion of the facilities: was it needed; should God’s resources be invested here. One complained of high costs created by setting greater goals, wanting to reach more people and building more facilities. The other reflected and replied: “We had a little son who cost us a lot of money from the start; when he went to school, the costs increased; later college, driving and dating cost a small fortune. In his senior year, he died. And since his funeral, he hasn’t cost us a penny.” As long as our church is living and growing, it will cost us and need us to serve and give. When the church dies for want of support, it won’t cost us anything: but its influence and impact also cease. Only a living church is a light to our world. If C.S. Lewis is correct about the truth of Christianity, we need to make a decision. And if we accept Him, we need to seek FIRST His Kingdom, Matt 6:33: to read His word, step out in faith to do as He calls, learn what matters in this life, invest in the church He is building, serve and give sacrificially and generously. Pastor Henry’s prayer for us is that generosity becomes a part of our way of life, which we excel in generosity, (2 Cor 8:7).