

Walking in the Light: Battle (Part 2)

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On Sunday we explored the theme of Jesus & money. Money can be a touchy subject. Some people don't want to talk about it at all and others obsess about it — whether we have it or not. Stephen outlined 4 aspects to consider:

1. The Old Testament's teaching on tithing
2. The Social World of Jesus
3. The Teaching of Jesus
4. Christian Responses today



The practice of tithing reminded Jews of their theology of creation and the reality that the earth was the Lord's and everything it. The social world of Jesus was an agrarian culture with an economy based on bartering goods. Jesus was an artisan with a skill, possibly wood-craft or metal work who lived in Nazareth which was near a big city with opportunities for work. The small offering made by his parents at his birth suggest he was neither wealthy or destitute. He was educated enough to read and learn though this did not mean he was "well educated". Interestingly, Jesus always seems to relate money matters to God matters. His world was different in many ways to the Western world especially.

Stephen sketched out Jesus' basic teaching in Luke 12 and Matthew 6 on money, wealth and possessions and summarised the way of Jesus in 6 words:

- **Stewardship**
- **Justice**
- **Generosity**
- **Simplicity**
- **Contentment**
- **Sacrifice**

Ultimately, wealth and possessions are issues of the heart. Jesus offers very challenging teaching that strikes at our very core motivations and desires. His teaching on money assumes that we are worshippers who have been caught up in a vision of Jesus's worth and beauty. With captivated hearts, generosity, justice and kingdom lifestyles flow. Stephen held up Mary at Bethany, who poured out expensive perfume on the feet of Jesus, as an example of a true worshipping heart.

If we become a people who practise the way of Jesus

In word and deed,

Then the river of God's blessing will flow

Unhindered and free.

Questions to consider:

- How would you describe your relationship with wealth, money and possessions?
- What challenges you most about the teaching of Jesus?
- What could it look like to practise generosity and mercy as a church?