



On Divine Loan: God Owns Everything

(1 Chronicles 29:10-16)

In 2015, CBS News cited a survey by the American Psychological Association that showed “three out of four adults claimed feeling stressed about money, while one in four adults said they experienced extreme stress over money.” In 2017, the American Psychological Association reported that money continued to be a major source of stress to many Americans. This report noted that the “future of the nation” was listed as major source of stress at a slightly higher percentage of 63% over money which was 62%. While these are US surveys, it is not improbable to think that similar conditions also affect Canadians today. If you are stressed, worried, or anxious about money, let’s learn from the prayer of David in 1 Chronicles 29:10-16 and how the invisible realities in his prayer give us Godly perspectives over money and possessions.

Context of 1 Chronicles 29:10-16

David was already an old man when he made this prayer. Previously, he wanted to build the temple but God did not permit him (1 Chronicles 22:6-9). If you go back 5 chapters, you will read in 17:1 the following — “After David was settled in his palace, he said to Nathan the prophet, ‘Here I am, living in a house of cedar, while the ark of the covenant of the LORD is under a tent.’” In these verses, we catch a glimpse into David’s heart. He could not be at ease thinking that while he lived in palace of cedar, the ark of God remained in a tent.

The Word of God came to the prophet Nathan that David was not to be the one to build the temple but one of his sons according to the succeeding verses of chapter 17. But this did not prevent David from preparing for its building. He took the lead in giving generously from his personal possessions great amounts of gold, silver, bronze, and other treasures for the building of the temple. This is described in 1 Chronicles 29:1-5. The people followed David’s example and gave joyfully and wholeheartedly. Verse 9 says, “The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the LORD. David the king also rejoiced greatly.”

The invisible reality of God’s ownership of all things (vv. 11-12)

In praising and thanking God for what had been accomplished — that is, people gave abundantly and joyously for the building of the temple — David attributed such giving to their recognition of God’s ownership. It was clear to David that God is the source of all things. He prays, “all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours” and “both riches and honor come from you.”

Take a moment and reflect upon this truth — God owns everything, and He is the source of wealth. Stress, worry, and anxiety take hold of us because in our human eyes, we see ourselves as owners. On the human level, and in our naked eye, we consider ourselves as the owner of bank accounts, cars, businesses, and homes registered under our names. But in the invisible reality, God is the owner of all these things. If we will apply this truth in our lives, our mindset must be as good stewards and not owners of the material blessings God has loaned to us. This attitude will help us be spared from the grief and pain arising from the love and greed over our money and possessions. Remember that “No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money” (Luke 16:13, ESV).

The invisible reality that it is from God’s hands that we give and live on (vv. 14, 16)

As a human parent, you would do everything so that your dependent child would have food, clothing, and shelter. That’s a picture of the invisible reality of our utter dependence on God. It is by His grace that we are able to give and live on.

If your child gets you something for a present, and he uses every penny that you gave him to get you that present, how would you feel? Wouldn’t your heart be filled with delight and affection for such child? Wouldn’t you want bless that child more and more?

On Divine Loan: God Owns Everything (cont'd)

That's our reaction as human parents. But suppose that your child tells you, "Dad, you gave me \$20. Since it is your birthday, you can take this penny. This is my gift for you!" Wouldn't that break your heart? It's not because you need money but you are grieved because of what you see in your child's heart.

In the matter of giving tithes, for instance, what we are giving as tithes comes from God's hands. When we give today, is our giving marked by joy and abundance? The matter of God providing for our basic needs is never an issue. If we are honest with ourselves, what many of us struggle with is we want more than just the provision for our basic needs. We need to guard our hearts against it, for we may be having issues in loving money and possessions.

The invisible reality of the transient nature of man's life (v. 15)

David described himself and God's people as strangers and sojourners before God. In the ancient time, foreigners were allowed by the ruler of a kingdom to live among the local inhabitants under his protection. In this regard, the foreigner was allowed some limited rights such as the right to reside temporarily. He was like a guest who was completely dependent upon the ruler of the land.

David lived a full life. As he praised God for what the Lord had accomplished, he also recognized the reality that man's life is like a shadow. It is transient, it is temporary, and we cannot expect much in long continuance. *"Our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no abiding."* When you experience body pains or you go through sickness or you are in your fifties, you can easily relate to this truth. You look at your face, and you see wrinkles; you look at your tummy, and you cannot see anything beyond it like your feet.

How about us who are followers of Christ? We, too, are strangers and sojourners before God. The apostle Peter wrote: *"Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul"* (1 Peter 2:10-11, ESV).

Since the nature of our time on earth is transient, do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, says our Lord. Travel light. Loosen up and let go of your attachment to money and to material things. You won't bring them with you. They are not yours in the first place. Do not be blinded by, or fixated on, what He loans to you.

Review (Knowledge)

Please take a few minutes to read the summary above. What is the highlight of last Sunday's sermon for you and why?

Sharing/Discussion (Practical Wisdom)

1. Please read Psalm 24:1 and 1 Corinthians 10:26. How would knowing the truth that God owns everything change our mindset and attitude towards money and possessions? How about in our giving? What are some practical things we can do to be reminded of such truth?
2. Please read Psalm 144:4 and Hebrews 11:13. How would knowing the truth that we are exiles and sojourners on this earth shape our approach in handling money and possessions? What does "travel light" mean to you?
3. Is giving an act of faith? Why?

Prayer

Take time to pray for one another.