



ENOUGH "Repositioning Your Dream"

(Biblical Text: Matthew 6:19-33)

Dr. Michael F. Gardner, Senior Pastor
Old Mission Church, Fairway, Kansas

About twenty years ago, I was appointed to a Church where the situation was not good – conflicted, deep in debt, had a half-finished building, and were out of room. So, I met with the Lay Leader, so we could come up with a plan. Dr. Bob was smart. He could see where the conversation was going. He said, *"Mike, is there some way we can do this without talking about money?"* *"Sure! Just write the check."* *"Would you be serious?"* *"I am serious, Bob. But we won't ever be the Church we can be until we talk about money."*

But we don't like to do so, not in Church, and certainly not as it applies to our personal lives. We'd rather focus on spiritual issues, or Bible history, even social issues, as long as the preacher separates his or her opinion from what we believe, anything but money. And that's too bad, because...

Our lives, like it or not, revolve around money. Whether we are living paycheck to paycheck, or are planning for retirement, balancing the checkbook, or buying groceries, paying the mortgage, car payment, taxes.

Sometimes we say, *"Money is the root of all evil."* That's not what the Bible really says. I Timothy 6:10 says, *"The love of money is the root of all evil."*¹ Money is important. It can do amazing things. Money is not the problem. How we use it often is. So is when we value it above everything else.

Adam Hamilton, in his book, Enough says: *"For most of us, the American Dream has to do with a subconscious desire for achieving success and satisfying the desire for material possessions. We measure our success by the stuff that we possess."*²

I used to say in marriage retreats, *"There are two kinds of people - keepers and throwers-away. And they usually marry one another!"* Now, I've been married longer, and I know we are all keepers. We just keep different things!

Some of what we keep is "junk" and some of what we keep is "stuff." Do you know the real difference between "stuff" and "junk?" Here it is!

"Your stuff is junk and my junk is stuff." Think about it. **It's true for us!**

¹ I Timothy 6:10. New International Version.

² Adam Hamilton, Enough: Discovering Joy through Simplicity and Generosity

Ann likes old quilts, dishes and family heirlooms. I like, and collect, old Bibles, old cars, vintage guitars, tube amps, pottery, rare wood carvings, collectible pocket knives, rare books, paintings with mountains, tools...

The voice of Ann, which sometimes sounds a lot like the voice of God, asked me this recently, *“When is enough, enough?”* **It is a God kind of question.**

Remember what Jesus said in our text? *“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be yours as well.”*³ (Matthew 6:33)

And it’s not a word for just me. It’s for all of us. We want the latest gadgets. We replace our cars when they are not worn out. We look in our stuffed closets and can’t find anything to wear. We indulge in retail therapy, Black Friday sales, *Ebay, Craigslist, Etsy*, and then watch *Antiques Roadshow*.

In Adam’s book he talks about how the American Dream turned into our American Nightmare. We struggle with *“affluenza”* - the need for more and newer and better stuff - and our *“desire to acquire.”* And that’s not all.

He says we also struggle with *“credit-it is.”* The amount of consumer debt is staggering tripled in twenty years. You’ve heard it - *“Some things money can’t buy. For everything else there’s Mastercard.”* But Mastercard is not money - not for you or me! **It’s nothing but debt for us.**

Credit card debt in 1990 was about \$3K, but today, it's over \$10K. People take 60-72 month car loans that leave them owing more than the car is worth. The average American house has nearly doubled in size since the 60’s, with 30-40 year mortgages which people have no intention of every repaying. The average college graduate is \$20K in debt. And Dave Ramsey says, *“the number one cause of divorce in America is financial issues.”* **Why?**

Adam says it’s because we regularly commit 3 of 7 deadly sins – *“envy,” “greed,” “gluttony”* (*desire more and more.*) He missed the worst – *“sloth”* (*Latin, acedia*) which means to not give a care for anyone but me and mine.

But Jesus said, *“What does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?”* (Mark 8: 36) **The Good News is that we don’t have to live that way.**

We can reposition our dream. We can experience financial and spiritual freedom. If we will let him, God can teach us to live with simplicity; below rather than above our means, and with a generosity that puts God first!

³ Matthew 6:33, The New Revised Standard Version, copyright © 1989 by the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA.

I am not suggesting we never buy anything for ourselves. I am suggesting that, with the help of God, we can stop thinking we need more and more and more – and we can start honoring God with our giving and in living.

Jesus tells us in our text that God will provide for us, if we honor him. Luke 6:21-32 says, ***“So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ Your heavenly Father knows that you need them.”*** What would it mean for us to really “lean in” to that promise?

(Hold up the “Enough” cards/key tags.) I invite you to do something simple. Over the next four weeks, put one of these cards in your wallet on your key ring. Read the verse that is printed on the back and ask God to help you remember that God will give you all you really need, not more “stuff.”

And begin to pray over Luke 6:19-21 from our Bible lesson today. ***“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”***

Christians almost always get what Jesus said backwards. We say: ***“If everyone just had their hearts in the right place, we wouldn’t need to talk about money.”*** ***But that’s not what Jesus said!*** He said, ***“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*** He knew - our hearts follow our money.

Next Sunday and the Sunday after, not today, we’ll ask you to estimate your giving and offer it to God for the coming year. **Good thing it’s confidential.**

Hardly any of us do what the Bible says – give 10% to God. Most Christians would die from embarrassment if people really knew how little they give. If we are not giving 5% we are probably not doing our fair share to meet the financial needs of our ministry. **But truth is - we are the ones missing out!**

As you pray about your giving, let me share with you what Ann and I have experienced in our lives for more than 30 years. God has so arranged it so when we give at least 10% income to God - ***we are able to do more and have more than we could possibly have had on 100% if we had kept it all. It’s true!***

Whatever you give, I invite you to give your 10% or your 5% or whatever your offering may be, first, rather than last. I think you’ll be amazed at what will happen if you are obedient to God. Remember Jesus words: ***“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be yours as well.”***