

Rooted: How Does God View Money?

10.31.2021

Rooted

Colossians 2:6-7 (NLT) - And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow Him. Let your roots grow down into Him, and let your lives be built on Him. Then your faith will grow strong in the Truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.

Describe

Rooted Equation: $L + (B/P/C) - (E/S) = MI$

Life + Bible & Prayer & Community – Enemy & Strongholds = Maximum Impact (A Rooted Life)

A life of Purpose & Significance

A life of that counts

Hebrews says – let's throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles

And let's run the race God has set out for us

So it's a pretty simple equation

Add the things that grow your roots

Bible & Prayer

Subtract the things that damage your roots

The work of our enemy & the strongholds in your life

And the result – a rooted life

Maximum impact

Pretty simple formula

But today's topic kinda messes that up

So far, we've talked about adding Bible & prayer & community to your life

We've talked about the work of our enemy & strongholds in your life

And the last couple weeks

We've talked about making the most of your life

By the way, let's talk about strongholds for a second

If you're not part of a Rooted Group

You may not know what I'm talking about

What we do on Sunday morning

In this series

Is kind of like a screen door on a house

You can see a little bit of what's going on inside

But you can't really see all of it

And you can't fully enjoy it

Like if you see people having a party inside a house

You can see through the screen door

And you can hear them a little bit through the screen door

But the only way to participate in the party

You've got to go beyond the screen door
To go inside the house with your friends
Or go inside the house and make some friends
So inside the Rooted groups
And through the reading in the devotionals
We've talked about strongholds in our life
But those are kind of private conversations
That you don't just have in a big room like this
So those of you guys who are not part of a group
You're just getting the screen door view
We'll be starting another Rooted group or two in January
We'd love for you to come inside the house with your friends
Or come inside the house and make some friends

**So take your Life + Bible & Prayer & Community – Enemy & Strongholds =
Maximum Impact**

A Rooted Life

Pretty simple formula

But today's topic kinda messes that up

Because this week goes over here

When you get this area right

It's a part of making a maximum impact for God

But this week also goes here

Because when you don't
It can be the biggest stronghold of all

Today's topic can be disorienting

Like you're not sure what it's going to be like on the other side of today's
message

I mean, if you ignore me

Things will be just like they are now

Some of us are coming into this conversation today with this topic as an area that
you've given over to God

Some of us are coming into this conversation today with this topic as a
major stronghold in our life

And some of us will leave later, sadly, in exactly the same place

But for those of us willing to go through the disorientation of new perspectives

It will get out of the way here

And add fuel to the fire there

I have four daughters

Ages 22, 21, and my twins are 15

All told, I have 71 years of parenting experience

That's pretty good, since I don't look a day over 65!

When I think back over the years of parenting

One of the most disorienting seasons for my kids

Has been the dreadful day...

When they had to lose the pacifier

The passy!

The pacifier's an amazing little invention

One of my kids – I won't say which one

But one my kids

Addict maybe too strong

But she was very fond of this deal

So at night – as a baby – she'd sleep with a pacifier

And then when she was sleeping and all relaxed

What happens?!?

My people

When she was sleeping and all relaxed

Her pacifier would fall out

And that little sinner would wake me up out of a deep sleep

Screaming that she wanted me to get up out of bed and put it back in

Think of the gall

She's laying there

It's literally right beside her

But she'd scream for me to come

I'm down the hall

She'd scream for me to wake up

Get out of bed

Walk down the hall

To put it... it was right there!

I can't tell you the number of nights I'm feeling around her bed

Half asleep

Her screaming in my face

And I'm wondering to myself if duct tape is abusive

I mean, just a couple of strips would hold that little sucker in
"Little sucker" – see what I did there?!?

So as she got older

We'd roll up the little receiving blankets

True story

I'd watch her sleep

She'd start to relax and drift off

And the passy would start to ease out

And she'd turn and catch it

They got their daddy's brain

I remember, with this one particular unnamed child

As she became a toddler and didn't want to give it up

I began to imagine worst case scenario

I mean everybody knows that they give them up eventually, right?

But I began to imagine worst case scenario:

The dentist would always give you these horror stories

So I'm picturing teeth sticking straight out

I'm picturing her as a young adult

Stressed out working on some big project

Pulls out her desk drawer to get a little hit off the passy

Joins a pacifier anonymous group

I mean, this girl's never gonna give this up

And when the day finally came time

She grieved

My little toddler grieved it

Because she couldn't imagine life would be better, with less of that treasured item

With giving it up

It was disorienting

That's kind of the picture we get with the Apostle Paul

He had devoted his entire life to being a dedicated Pharisee

Philippians 3:4b-6 - If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee;

as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

If anyone else is committed to a certain way of life

I'm more

I'm more committed

And Jesus comes along

And changes everything

Philippians 3:7-9a - But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him

This picture you're getting

Is not Jesus saying

"OK, Paul – you've got this great religious life – and I just want us to tweak around the edges a bit to make you into something a little different... a little softer... a little more graceful"

No

Paul says what I was spending my whole life chasing

Is now – to me - garbage

The King James Bible actually translates that word "dung"

It's now garbage

Trash

Because I've found something else that's better

The Christian life

Was never designed to be a few tweaks around the edges of your life

It affects your Sunday morning sometimes

Maybe you cuss a little less... maybe

You know – God is so excited that you give Him the time of day

No

“I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things.”

“All things”

The life Jesus calls us to is disorienting at times

Because we can't imagine life would be better, with less of the things that we cling to

Today's topic can be incredibly powerful

When we submit it to God

And allow Him to utilize it to make a significant impact in our life

And in the world

But left unchecked

This area of our life can be a significant obstacle to our faith

The strongest stronghold

That keeps us a prisoner to our own sinfulness

We see this exact picture in the 10th chapter of Mark's Gospel

It says:

As Jesus started on His way, a man ran up to Him and fell on his knees before Him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” – Mark 10:17

What do we know about this guy already?

He’s either really broken

Or he’s a poser

Right

If I run up to you and fall on my knees in front of you

I’m either desperate for your help

Or I’m theatrical

I don’t think this scene is any different

So Jesus gets to the heart of it:

“Why do you call Me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. – Mark 10:18

Jesus is essentially asking:

Do you think I’m God?

Or just good

And man, that’s a big question for us today

Especially here in the Bible belt

Am I God?

You *should* run up and fall to your knees

That makes sense if you realize I’m God

That would be an appropriate response

But if you just think I'm good

A good teacher

You're just being a hypocrite

An actor

Theatrical

And Jesus says, I'm just gonna need to know

And it's interesting – very interesting

The way He finds out

So Jesus tells him to keep the commandments

To follow the law

And he says I do that

I've always done that

That's not true – he's posing again

But Jesus lets that slide

And verse 21 says:

Jesus looked at him and loved him. – Mark 10:21a

Why does Mark include that?

Matthew and Luke tell this story but don't include that part

Why does Mark tell us this?

Because he wants us to know that everything Jesus is getting ready to say

Comes from a place of love

Not judgment

Jesus wants something *for* this young man

Not *from* him

It says:

Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” He said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in Heaven. Then come, follow Me.” At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. – Mark 10:21-22

Jesus knew that money was a stronghold in this young man’s life

And because of this stronghold in his life

He walked away from an opportunity to know Jesus

To walk with Jesus

To learn from Jesus

And Jesus *knows* its about the money for this guy

Because it says:

Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!” – Mark 10:23

Jesus doesn’t say being wealthy is bad

Jesus says that being wealthy is more difficult, spiritually

Now remember, Jesus doesn’t need anything *from* this guy

But He wants so desperately something *for* him

In fact, Jesus doesn’t say give the money to Me

He just says give it away to someone in need

Jesus understands that money won't do what it promises

And it will leave him always wanting a little more

The Bible tells us:

Anyone who loves money never has enough. – Ecclesiastes 5:10a (NirV)

And Jesus knows that's true

But if we were honest

Many of us don't believe that

We would say – sure I'm not satisfied now

With my income now

But if I had a little... bit... more

That would be enough

Jesus knows you'll never get there

Jim Carrey once said, "I think everybody should get rich and famous and do everything they ever dreamed of so they can see that it's not the answer."

Jesus knows it's not the answer

There's not an income that's high enough to satisfy

There's not a dollar figure that will ever be enough

You'll always be chasing a little more

This is the consistent message of Scripture

1 Timothy 6:6b-7, 9a (NirV) - You must be happy with what you have. We didn't bring anything into the world. We can't take anything out of it... People who want to get rich are tempted. They fall into a trap. They are tripped up by wanting many foolish and harmful things. Those who live like that are dragged down by what they do.

Listen, I think, if Jesus were standing here

He would look at us

With love in His eyes

And He would tell us

"I know the life I'm calling you to is disorienting at times

"I know you just can't imagine that life would be better, with less of the things you cling to"

Paul reminds us that Jesus told us plainly:

It is more blessed to give than to receive. – Acts 20:35b

But it's just so disorienting to think that way

Because our whole life

Our whole culture

Revolves around receiving

If we're good boys & girls all year

At Christmas we'll receive

On our birthday

We receive

As adults, if we work hard for 2 full weeks

We'll receive

I mean, giving's fine

But receiving

Life is made up... of receiving

The idea that having less would be more blessed is just so disorienting

We just can't imagine that life would be better

With less of the things we cling to

And claw for

And strive at

It's just so disorienting

Now let me stop here a second

If I were you

I think about these things

If I were you

I'd be saying

"Wait a minute

You just said *Jesus* didn't ask them for anything

But *you're* about to

You said Jesus just wanted something *for* him

But you're about to want something *from* me

I hear you – I'd be thinking the same thing

Let me answer that concern with three ideas:

First, I *am* going to talk about being generous

I am going to talk about giving to God's work in the world

So I can see how you might think that's just a ruse for me to get you to give to WellSpring

If you feel that way – I get it

So give to another church

There's a lot of great churches in Spring Hill

Station Hill Church

The Bridge Church

Find a brand new church and give to them

I remember starting out – they would love your help

Listen - we're all on the same team

Give to them

Keep coming to WellSpring

Be a part of things here

Put your kids in children's ministry here

We'll take care of them – love them – and give them the goldfish crackers for free

Don't give to WellSpring till you trust us

But don't allow skepticism about me

To cause you to be disobedient to Him

This is not about what we want *from* you

It's what God wants *for* you

Second – and I’ve not gotten our financial team’s approval for this

So they may fuss at me

First I tell you to give to another church

And now this

We’re finishing up October today

So for the next two months

November & December

If you give to WellSpring

And you get to January 1 and regret it

You did your part – but God didn’t do His

Let me know and we’ll give you your money back

Now – you gotta do it online or with a check

Don’t come tellin me about this big pile of cash you’ve been giving 😊

You know, anonymously

So 1 – give to another church if you don’t trust us

2 – If you give to WellSpring for the next two months and regret it, we’ll refund you

And 3 – you may be saying

I can’t give

My finances are so upside down

I don’t know where to start

If that's you – we want to help

We're doing Rooted now

But starting in January

We're going to have a class called "Rock Solid Finances"

Six weeks to help you get things in order

It's free – and you're invited

Just write "Financial class" on your card

Or go tell them at the information table

And we'll let you know the details

You'll never hear another pastor say these things

I'm saying them

Because I'm so confident that these words are true

This is just simply what the Bible teaches

It's more blessed to give than receive

And you won't know that unless you try it

So try it – I'm taking away all the obstacles

Proverbs 3:9 says:

Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce. – Proverbs 3:9 (NLT)

"The best part of everything you produce"

Other translations say firstfruits

It means you give to God up front – intentionally

Not just the leftovers – if you have any – at the end of the month

Verse 10 says:

Then He will fill your barns with grain, and your vats will overflow with good wine.

He will fill your barns

Honor the Lord & He will fill your barns

Now, listen to me

That's not the point

You don't give to God

So that you can get from God

That's not the point

Following Jesus is not allowing God to tweak around the edges

Following Jesus can be disorienting

It's dying to ourselves

Laying down our lives to follow Him

And anybody who tells you that you give to get

Is misleading you

False teacher – the Bible calls them

Charlatan – I would say

But anybody who tells you

That the Bible doesn't say anything about blessing

Is also misleading you

Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce. Then He will fill your barns with grain, and (He will fill) your vats with good wine.

You'd have to take a pair of scissors to your Bible to get it not to say that

Malachi 3:9-10a (NLT) - 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.

"All the tithe"

Some translations say, "The whole tithe"

Tithe literally means 10%

So God's saying

Some of my people are giving some

But not the whole tithe

They're giving some – but not 10%

So God says, I want to challenge you to do that

And then look what He says:

"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!"

"If you do"

I love that

If you do – this is what I'll do

And then God is going to tell us to test Him

This is the only time I'm aware of where God tells us to test Him

Try it! Put me to the test! Your crops will be abundant, for I will guard them from insects and disease. Your grapes will not fall from the vine before they are ripe," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies. – Malachi 3:10b-11a (NLT)

So Proverbs says He'll fill your barns

And Malachi says He will guard your crops from disease

Try it – put me to the test!

And this is unusual language – the Bible referring to God as the "Lord of Heaven's Armies"

It's the picture – when it refers to God like that

It's the picture that He's on the scene

He's at work in our lives

He has power that He brings to the table

We can trust Him

God is only referred to this way a few times

And each time - each time – He's asking us to do something scary

So put me to the test – says the Lord of Heaven's Armies – with your giving

Let me show you another example

Psalms 46 uses this language about God:

God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. So we will not fear when earthquakes come and the mountains crumble into the sea. Let the oceans roar and foam. Let the mountains tremble as the waters surge! – Psalm 46:1-3 (NLT)

Can I be honest?

If we have earthquakes

Oceans foaming and roaring

Mountains trembling and crumbling into the sea

I'm afraid

I know it says not to be

But I am

That's how Psalm 46 starts

And it continues like that throughout the Psalm

Things are bad

But we don't need to fear

And then it ends, starting in verse 10:

"Be still, and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world." The Lord of Heaven's Armies is here among us; the God of Israel is our fortress. – Psalm 46:10-11 (NLT)

It's like

When things are really tangible

And really scary

God breaks out the "Lord of Heaven's Armies" name tag

Puts it on

Tells us that it's going to be OK

Listen to me:

I know this talk is scary

But in Spring Hill, TN - in 2021

This is maybe the biggest stronghold of all

There are many reasons

And quite a few excuses

To not do this

I get it

And know that I don't know what any family gives to WellSpring

Except mine

I know what we give

I don't know what you give

I know this is scary

Disorienting

But because of the stakes

There are few areas

Where obedience

Will lead to more blessing

Than this one

So I'm just going to read this verse

And then I'm going to pray for us

And then you guys go home

And talk it over as a family

Pray about it

And do whatever God says

I won't know what you decide

Because it's not about me

But you'll know

And the Lord of Heaven's armies will know

For He longs to break this stronghold in our lives

And He longs to bless us when we're obedient

"Be still, and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world." The Lord of Heaven's Armies is here among us; the God of Israel is our fortress. – Psalm 46:10-11 (NLT)