

Media and Graphics Notes

Sermon Starter Video?	Yes
Sermon Notes?	There are several quotes and scripture verses throughout.
Other Notes	

Key Questions, Metadata and Outline

What is this sermon about?

This sermon is about John Wesley's advice to earn all you can as a person of faith.

Why is this sermon important?

It is important because too often there is a separation between our work and faith.

What is the context of this sermon?

This sermon is the second in our annual stewardship series. This sermon and worship series have been developed using the resources from Jim Harnish which were published by Abingdon Press in 2015.

What are the next action steps?

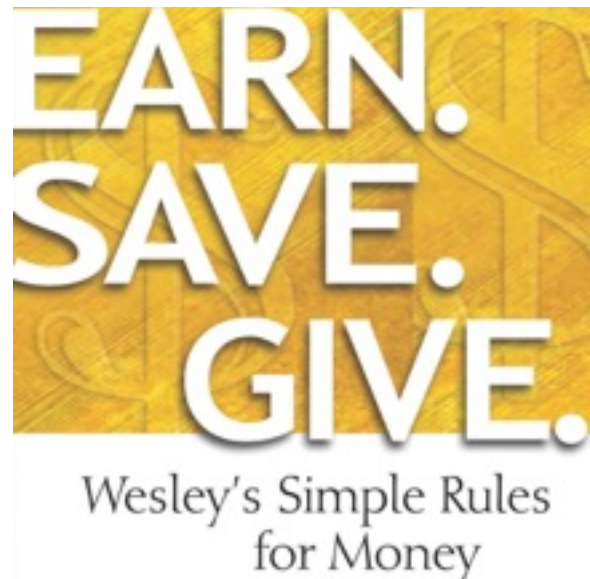
- See money as "the excellent gift,"
- Consider your calling, and
- Make decisions about how you manage your earnings in ways that are consistent with your commitment to Christ."

What is the good news (bottom line)?

The good news is that God has a calling for you. Earn all you can by honest work, common sense and without paying more than it is worth.

Metadata

1. Topic(s)
 1. Give
 2. Changing Lives
2. Sermon Books of the Bible
 1. Luke
 2. Proverbs
3. Tags



22nd Sunday after Pentecost
Earn. Save. Give. - Money – The Excellent Gift
First United Methodist Church of El Dorado
Text Online at <http://j.mp/1IHxgyP>

October 25, 2015
Luke 12:42-48
Preaching Target Word Count: 1,949
Audio Online at <http://j.mp/1LYRVRC>

1. sermon, worship, church, Methodist, UnitedMethodist, UnitedMethodistChurch, FirstUnitedMethodistChurch, ElDorado, Kansas, GreatPlains, AnnualConference, GreatPlainsAnnualConference, earn, gain, salary, JohnWesley, stewardship

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Good News

Call to Action

God's Calling for First UMC - People

Commitment Logistics

All Church Survey

Annual Giving Commitment

Earn All you Can.

Invitation

Closing Prayer

Luke 12:42-48, CEB

The Lord replied, “Who are the faithful and wise managers whom the master will put in charge of his household servants, to give them their food at the proper time? Happy are the servants whom the master finds fulfilling their responsibilities when he comes. I assure you that the master will put them in charge of all his possessions.

“But suppose that these servants should say to themselves, My master is taking his time about coming. And suppose they began to beat the servants, both men and women, and to eat, drink, and get drunk. The master of those servants would come on a day when they weren’t expecting him, at a time they couldn’t predict. The master will cut them into pieces and assign them a place with the unfaithful. That servant who knew his master’s will but didn’t prepare for it or act on it will be beaten severely. The one who didn’t know the master’s will but who did things deserving punishment will be beaten only a little. Much will be demanded from everyone who has been given much, and from the one who has been entrusted with much, even more will be asked.

Response to Scripture

One: The Word of God for the People of God.

All: Thanks be to God!

Introduction

Sermon Starter Video

Play sermon starter video.

*** Start Sermon Timer ***

Series Review

Today we are in the second week of Earn. Save. Give. During this series, we are taking a closer look at a sermon which John Wesley, the Christian evangelist and founder of the Methodist movement, gave in which he said the important thing isn’t money itself but how we use it. Wesley’s surprising advice still rings true today: earn all you can, save all you can, give all you can.

Today, we focus on Earn all you can.

Sermon Notes and Scripture Study

I invite you to open your bulletin to a place where you can take notes during the message today. Today, I hope that you will hear:

- Something new or find new questions
- Perspective on your life or something in your life that gives additional meaning to the message today.
- Guidance about how to live as a disciple of Jesus.

I invite you to write down some of the things that you hear in the sermon today and take your bulletin home as a tool to grow in your faith outside of worship. You can reflect on what you heard today, pray for people of our congregation and read scripture to prepare for worship next week.

Opening

Prayer

Will you pray with me? O God, use these words to speak good news so that as individuals and as a congregation we will fear nothing but sin, desire nothing but you and live as part of your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Surprised by Scripture and the Preacher

“When was the last time you were surprised by what the preacher had to say?”¹

Example - Sleeping Congregant

A colleague tells the story of “an guy in the first congregation [he] served who had been in church all his life. He sat in the back row and went to sleep during the sermon every Sunday morning. One day on the way out of worship he explained his behavior.

“Well, Preacher,” he said, “I listen to the first part of your sermon and when I know I can trust what you’re going to say, I figure I can get in a good nap.” It became [my colleagues personal challenge to surprise that guy with something he didn’t expect just to keep him awake.”²

“The Use of Money” - John Wesley’s Surprising Sermon

“I suspect that many of John Wesley’s most faithful followers were a lot like that man. ... His sermon “The Use of Money” must have come as a surprise to some of the early Methodists. It still has the power to take us by surprise.”³

Wealth and Money are Not Inherently Evil

“[One of the surprises in this sermon] came when Wesley contradicted the assumption that wealth and money are inherently evil. ... Wesley acknowledged the long tradition of

“poets, orators, and philosophers, in almost all ages and nations, to rail at [money] as the grand corruptor of the world, the bane of virtue, the pest of human society.”

¹ James A. Harnish. “Earn. Save. Give. [Large Print].” iBooks. <https://itun.es/us/cjv93.l>

² James A. Harnish. “Earn. Save. Give. [Large Print].” iBooks. <https://itun.es/us/cjv93.l>

³ James A. Harnish. “Earn. Save. Give. [Large Print].” iBooks. <https://itun.es/us/cjv93.l>

That's what his hearers expected him to say. It's what they would have heard before. Given the fact that most early Methodists came from the lower economic classes in British society, they also would have believed it because of their experiences with the wealthy upper classes.

It must have come as a surprise, then, to hear their spiritual leader call money "an excellent gift of God." Wesley raised the bar on the spiritual importance of money when he called it

"[Money is] a most compendious instrument of transacting all manner of business, and (if we use it according to Christian wisdom) of doing all manner of good."

Transition

... Financial wisdom is not a contradiction of ... faith, but an expression of it."⁴

The First Rule of Christian Wisdom

"Wesley's affirmation of the use of money set the stage for what may have been the biggest surprise of all. Wesley declared that it was the "bounden duty" of Christian disciples to practice what he called the "first and great rule of Christian wisdom," namely "Gain [earn] all you can."

My guess is they didn't see that one coming.

... Like the ancient Hebrew proverbs, this simple, clear, and memorable word from Wesley created a new opportunity for [people] to discover a more meaningful connection between their work, their money, and their faith."⁵

Transition

"Wesley, having surprised us with his affirmation of the spiritual value of money, went on to define three practical guidelines for the way faithful followers of Jesus can gain or earn all they can.

Gain All You Can by Honest Industry. Use all possible diligence in your calling.⁶

The first is this:

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⁵ James A. Harnish. "Earn. Save. Give. [Large Print]." iBooks. <https://itun.es/us/cjv93.l>

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Gain all you can by honest industry. Use all possible diligence in your calling.

All Followers of Christ have a Calling

“Don’t miss Wesley’s use of the word calling. ... All disciples are called to use their gifts in ways that accomplish God’s best purpose for their lives and help fulfill God’s life-giving purpose in the world.

... All followers of Christ [are invited] to listen for God’s calling based on their unique abilities, opportunities, and passions.”⁷ As an example, I know that many of you understand your career as a calling as clearly as mine has been to be a preacher.

God’s Intention in Our Lives

“Seeing our work as a calling from God puts the challenge to “earn all you can” in the context of the larger purpose for our work. Wesley’s instruction is not merely to earn money for its own sake but to earn it for the higher purpose of fulfilling God’s intention in our lives.”⁸

Wesley’s Understanding

“Wesley, because he believed that every person’s work can be a calling from God, challenged Christians to “use all possible diligence in your calling.” He says this:

“Lose no time. If you understand yourself and your relation to God and man, you know you have none to spare. If you understand your particular calling as you ought, you will have no time that hangs upon your hands. Every business will afford some employment sufficient for every day and every hour. ... Never leave anything till tomorrow, which you can do today. And it as well as possible. Do not sleep or yawn over it: Put your whole strength to the work. Spare no pains. Let nothing be done by halves, or in a slight and careless manner. Let nothing in your business be left undone if it can be done by labour or patience.”

Wisdom from the Proverbs and Jesus

Wesley reflects the wisdom found in Jesus’ words from the scripture passage today which commends the “faithful and wise managers.”⁹

The Lord replied, “Who are the faithful and wise managers whom the master will put in charge of his household servants, to give them their food at the proper time? Happy are the servants whom the master finds fulfilling their responsibilities when he comes. I assure you that the master will put them in charge of all his possessions.

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Gain all you can, by common sense

The second guideline Wesley gave about how to earn all you can is this:

Gain all you can, by common sense.

“Wesley urged his followers, “You should be continually learning, from the experience of others, or from your own experience ... to do everything you have to do better today than you did yesterday.”¹⁰

Wise and Foolish

“... The wisdom in [many of Jesus’ stories about money] is that it’s foolish to live as if we are defined by how much we own, but it’s wise to keep a wider perspective on our earning.

It’s foolish to think we have all the wisdom we need inside our own experience, but it’s wise to be humble enough to gather wisdom from others.

It’s foolish to assume that the point of earning money is simply to accumulate more money, but it’s wise to use our wealth for a larger purpose than our own satisfaction.

It’s foolish to manage our money with no reference to God, but it’s wise to earn all we can through diligence to our calling.”¹¹

Gain all you can without paying more for it than it is worth

This brings the third of Wesley’s guidelines about how to earn all you can:

Gain all you can without paying more for it than it is worth

“Wesley’s instruction to “gain [earn] all you can” might sound familiar to those of us who have been conditioned by the mindset of an upwardly mobile, high achieving, success driven, consumer oriented culture. But when we slow down in our race for success long enough to think about it, we know that in that culture, earning all you can becomes a very complicated deal. There is both a good side and a shadow side to this principle.

That’s why Wesley challenged us to earn all we can without paying too great a price for it. He spelled out this third principle in specific terms that are just as applicable now as they were to the first people who heard them.”¹²

Earn all you can, but not at the expense of your health

“Wesley warns us not to “begin or continue in any business which necessarily deprives us of proper seasons for food and sleep.” Similarly, the Hebrew sages taught in Proverbs 23:4:

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¹¹ James A. Harnish. “Earn. Save. Give. [Large Print].” iBooks. <https://itun.es/us/cjv93.l>

¹² James A. Harnish. “Earn. Save. Give. [Large Print].” iBooks. <https://itun.es/us/cjv93.l>

“Don’t wear yourself out trying to get rich; be smart enough to stop.”

While the danger of laziness as described in the Proverbs is always present, the more present danger in our time is probably the temptation to overwork, driven by compulsive consumerism and relentless greed. ... In the long run, a balanced life is more productive than a life driven by endless work.”¹³

Earn all you can, but not at the expense of your soul

“Wesley said, “We must preserve, at all events, the spirit of [a] healthful mind” by not participating in any “sinful trade.” He defined “sinful trade” as anything “contrary to the law of God, or of our country,” which in Wesley’s case included paying “customs” (taxes) to the king. He went on to name any kind of work that “is not consistent with a good conscience.”¹⁴

Earn all you can, but not at the expense of your neighbor.

“At the center of both the gospel and Wesley’s theology are the first “great commandment” to love God and the second commandment to love our neighbor. Wesley said that obedience to the second commandment prevents us from doing injury to our neighbor in “substance” (anything that unfairly affects another’s economic stability), “body” (anything that injures the neighbor’s health), or “soul” (anything that contributes to another person’s sin).”¹⁵

Earn all you can in ways that honor God.

“Wesley called his followers to do their work in the spirit of Christ. “If you act in the Spirit of Christ you carry the end you at first proposed through all your work from first to last ... continually aiming, not at ease, pleasure, or riches ... but merely at the glory of God. Now can anyone deny that this is the most excellent way of pursuing worldly business?”

Conclusion

John Wesley affirmed that providing for our own basic needs and those of our family is “a good answer as far as it goes; but it does not go far enough.” He challenges us to live with a deep connection between our work and our faith so that the ultimate purpose of our earning is to do the will of God.

Good News

The good news is that God has a calling for you. Earn all you can by honest work, common sense and without paying more than it is worth.

¹³ James A. Harnish. “Earn. Save. Give. [Large Print].” iBooks. <https://itun.es/us/cjv93.l>

¹⁴ James A. Harnish. “Earn. Save. Give. [Large Print].” iBooks. <https://itun.es/us/cjv93.l>

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Call to Action

God's Calling for First UMC - People

God has a calling for us together as First United Methodist Church in the year ahead. With your support, we will make places for new people to follow Jesus by engaging in the spiritual practices to worship, grow, give, serve and share.

We will create movement in our discipleship pathway by removing congestion in our programs and ministries. We plan to:

- Improve the experience of God in worship
- Create new small group opportunities throughout the week
- Equip you to pray and study the scriptures on your own
- Create additional opportunities to serve outside the church
- Design intentional next steps for people to grow in love of God and neighbor

Commitment Logistics

As we look forward to the way that God will be at work through our congregation in the year ahead, I want to invite you to take action in two specific ways this week:

All Church Survey

First, if you have not already done so, please complete the all church survey that you find in your bulletin. Please take it home with you and complete the survey online or on paper and return to the church office. There are important questions that will have an impact on our direction as a congregation in 2016, including a possible change to our Sunday morning schedule.

Annual Giving Commitment

On November 8, you will have the opportunity to make an annual giving commitment to support God's work through this church. Will you please take time this week to pray about this question:

"What percentage of your income is God calling you to give in the year ahead?"

Ask God for wisdom in the use of money.

Earn All you Can.

This week, I hope that you will:

- See money as "the excellent gift,"
- Consider your calling, and
- Make decisions about how you manage your earnings in ways that are consistent with your commitment to Christ."

Invitation

What is the calling God has on your life?

How will you use it to earn all you can?

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Closing Prayer

[Text here]

Amen.