

Media and Graphics Notes

Sermon Starter Video?	There is a sermon starter video
Sermon Notes?	There are several passages of scripture for the screen throughout the sermon.
Other Notes	

Key Questions, Metadata and Outline

What is this sermon about?

This sermon is about God's wisdom in the use of our finances.

Why is this sermon important?

This sermon is important because when it comes to managing our money, what most of us need is the wisdom that only God can give. John Wesley condenses that wisdom to three rules on the use of money.

What is the context of this sermon?

This sermon is the first in our annual stewardship series. It is the day after the Lord's Acre event.

What are the next action steps?

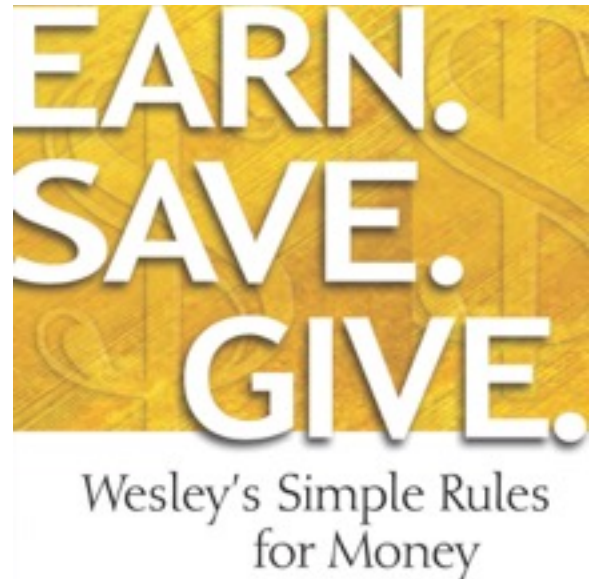
- Complete the all church survey
- Ask God for wisdom in the use of money

What is the good news (bottom line)?

The good news is that God will give us wisdom when we ask. God continues to be at work in each our lives and in our life together.

Metadata

1. Topic(s)
 1. Give
2. Sermon Books of the Bible
 1. 1 Kings
 2. 1 Timothy
 3. James
 4. Luke
 5. Matthew



21st Sunday after Pentecost - Laity Sunday
Earn. Save. Give. - If You Could Ask for Anything
First United Methodist Church of El Dorado
Text Online at <http://j.mp/1W1KCjL>

October 18, 2015
1 Kings 3:1-13
Preaching Target Word Count: 1,949
Audio Online at <http://j.mp/1PzR4Nf>

- 6. Proverbs
- 3. Tags
 - 1. sermon, worship, church, Methodist, UnitedMethodist, UnitedMethodistChurch, FirstUnitedMethodistChurch, ElDorado, Kansas, GreatPlains, AnnualConference, GreatPlainsAnnualConference, give, JohnWesley, generosity, stewardship, wisdom

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1 Kings 3:1-13, CEB

Solomon became the son-in-law of Pharaoh, Egypt's king, when he married Pharaoh's daughter. He brought her to David's City until he finished building his royal palace, the Lord's temple, and the wall around Jerusalem. Unfortunately, the people were sacrificing at the shrines because a temple hadn't yet been built for the Lord's name in those days. Now Solomon loved the Lord by walking in the laws of his father David, with the exception that he also sacrificed and burned incense at the shrines.

The king went to the great shrine at Gibeon in order to sacrifice there. He used to offer a thousand entirely burned offerings on that altar. The Lord appeared to Solomon at Gibeon in a dream at night. God said, "Ask whatever you wish, and I'll give it to you."

Solomon responded, "You showed so much kindness to your servant my father David when he walked before you in truth, righteousness, and with a heart true to you. You've kept this great loyalty and kindness for him and have now given him a son to sit on his throne. And now, Lord my God, you have made me, your servant, king in my father David's place. But I'm young and inexperienced. I know next to nothing. But I'm here, your servant, in the middle of the people you have chosen, a large population that can't be numbered or counted due to its vast size. Please give your servant a discerning mind in order to govern your people and to distinguish good from evil, because no one is able to govern this important people of yours without your help."

It pleased the Lord that Solomon had made this request. God said to him, "Because you have asked for this instead of requesting long life, wealth, or victory over your enemies—asking for discernment so as to acquire good judgment—I will now do just what you said. Look, I hereby give you a wise and understanding mind. There has been no one like you before now, nor will there be anyone like you afterward. I now also give you what you didn't ask for: wealth and fame. There won't be a king like you as long as you live."

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 ***

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.

Ask for Anything

“If you could ask God for anything in absolute assurance that you would receive it, what would your request be?”¹

“Happiness”

“A quick glance at the American pop culture scene suggest that money would be at the top of our wish list, followed in quick succession by a relentless desire for something we hope will result in “happiness.” It seems that the American dream has been commoditized to consist of wealth and possessions, with the operative word being *more*. We work more hours and pour more human energy into an insatiable desire for more money, more success, more comfort, and more of everything that money can buy.”²

Hunger for Deeper, Stronger, Longer-Lasting

“But there is more to our story.

Now and then in the congested traffic of our hyperactive lives, there are quiet moments when we are haunted by a hunger for something deeper, stronger, higher, and longer-lasting than accumulating more wealth and possessions.”³

¹ James A. Harnish, *Earn. Save. Give. Wesley's Simple Rules for Money* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2015), 7.

² Harnish, *Earn. Save. Give.*, 7-8.

³ Harnish, *Earn. Save. Give.*, 8.

“Somewhere along the way, often when we least expect it, we surprise ourselves with an honesty that asks for something else altogether; something no amount of money can buy.”⁴

Transition

“If you could ask God for anything in absolute assurance that you would receive it, what would your request be?”⁵

.....
[Pause]
.....

Scripture Reflection

Solomon’s Dream

“That’s exactly what happened for Solomon.
Following the death of his father, King David, he had a dream in which God said

.....
“Ask whatever you wish, and I’ll give it to you.” (1 Kings 3:5).⁶
.....

Solomon’s Response

“Unlike most of us, Solomon was wise enough to know what he needed most.
He prayed,

.....
“Please give your servant a discerning mind in order to govern your and to distinguish good from evil, because no one is able to govern this important people of yours without help” (1 Kings 3:9).
.....

Wisdom

Solomon asked for a discerning mind.
Some translations use the phrase *understanding heart*.
The writers of the Old Testament Proverbs called it wisdom. They said, in Proverbs 4:7:

⁴ Harnish, *Earn. Save. Give.*, 8.

⁵ James A. Harnish, *Earn. Save. Give. Wesley’s Simple Rules for Money* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2015), 7.

⁶ Harnish, *Earn. Save. Give.*, 9.

**“The beginning of wisdom: Get wisdom!
Get understanding before anything else.”⁷**

Using our Wealth and Possessions

“Solomon knew that what he needed more than anything was wisdom, the kind of divine discernment that goes beyond accumulating knowledge and enables us to use the knowledge we have gathered.

What he needed, and what we need, is an understanding heart that knows what to do with the wealth and possessions we have accumulated.

It’s the divine insight to know when enough is enough.”⁸

Personal Story - Amazon Wish List

I will tell you that I don’t always have wisdom when it comes to possessions that I accumulate. It is way too easy to buy things on your phone. One click opens the app, just a few more to find what you need and it’s on the way to your door. The ease and the speed with which I can buy things means a challenge for our monthly budget at times. Recently, I have worked to add the discipline of just adding it to the shopping cart on my phone, then coming back to make purchases on the computer.

Many times, I will realize that I don’t really need the item which I had added, or I may not need it right away - next day shipping included at no charge.

Reflection Question

I wonder, do you ever need wisdom when it comes to wealth and possessions? knowing when enough is enough?

.....
[Pause]
.....

God is Pleased

“The Hebrew storytellers said that God was pleased with Solomon’s request and gave him all that he asked for and more, saying:

.....
“Because you have asked for this instead of requesting long life, wealth, or victory over your enemies—asking for discernment so as to acquire good judgment—I will now do just what you said. Look, I hereby give you a wise and understanding mind. There has been no one like you before now, nor will there be anyone like you afterward. I now also

⁷ Harnish, *Earn. Save. Give.*, 9.

⁸ Harnish, *Earn. Save. Give.*, 9.

*give you what you didn't ask for: wealth and fame. There won't be a king like you as long as you live.*⁹

Wisdom and Wealth

Choose Wisdom

“The Hebrew sages were clear that, given the choice between wisdom and wealth, we should always choose wisdom. [Hear these words from Proverbs 3:13-16:

Happy are those who find wisdom and those who gain understanding.
Her profit is better than silver, and her gain better than gold.
Her value exceeds pearls; all you desire can't compare with her.
In her right hand is a long life; in her left are wealth and honor.

“These early sages were convinced that some of the most important choices we make are not between good or evil but between what is wise and what is foolish.

The words *wise* and *wisdom* appear 111 times in the Proverbs;
the words *fool* and *foolish* appear 77 times (NRSV).¹⁰

Jesus and Wisdom

Jesus drew on this wisdom tradition in painting the contrast between wise and foolish servants (Matthew 24:45-51), bridesmaids (Matthew 25:1-13), and builders (Matthew 7:24-27).¹¹

Parable of the Rich Fool

Then, there is the parable of the rich fool which we find in Luke 12:16-21. Hear these words:

⁹ Harnish, *Earn. Save. Give.*, 9-10.

¹⁰ Harnish, *Earn. Save. Give.*, 32.

¹¹ Harnish, *Earn. Save. Give.*, 32.

Then he told them a parable: "A certain rich man's land produced a bountiful crop.

He said to himself, What will I do? I have no place to store my harvest!

Then he thought, Here's what I'll do. I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. That's where I'll store all my grain and goods.

I'll say to myself, You have stored up plenty of goods, enough for several years. Take it easy! Eat, drink, and enjoy yourself.

But God said to him, 'Fool, tonight you will die. Now who will get the things you have prepared for yourself?'

This is the way it will be for those who hoard things for themselves and aren't rich toward God."

Transition

This is how it goes in our lives, isn't it?

We have to make responsible decisions about our finances with the uncertainty of what the future will hold.

How do we make wise decisions about our finances?

Money Matters

Good and Evil

"Questions regarding how much money we want, have, or need are critically important to the way we live. There is no inherent goodness in poverty or inherent evil in wealth. Scripture is clear that

"the love of money" – not the money itself – "is the root of all kinds of evil" (1 Timothy 6:10).

How we earn, save and give really matters."

"There is more to our relationship with money than merely balancing our accounts, paying our taxes, and counting our earnings and losses. The temptation to become "rich in things and poor in soul" is always with us."¹²

Spiritual Element

"The Bible is clear that there is a spiritual element in our relationship with our possessions.

Jesus personified wealth, saying,

"No one can serve two masters... You cannot serve God and wealth" (Matthew 6:24).

¹² Harnish, *Earn. Save. Give.*, 11.

Paul warned Timothy,

“Some have wandered away from the faith and have impaled themselves with a lot of pain because they made money their goal (1 Timothy 6:10).”¹³

“How we use our money is no small matter. It goes all the way to the heart of our relationship with God and our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ.”¹⁴

Transition

This is the focus of our worship series and we look to the founder of Methodism, John Wesley for guidance.

Earn. Save. Give.

Key Quote - Peter Storey

“John Wesley (1703-1791) provided practical wisdom for Christians in the use of their money.”¹⁵

The Use of Money Sermon

In his classic sermon, “The Use of Money,” Wesley defined some basic practices regarding money that are just as practical today as they were when he first taught them. ... In modern language, Wesley’s rules for money were simple:

Earn all you can.
Save all you can.
Give all you can.”¹⁶

Purpose of Sermon Series

“The purpose of [this sermon series] – as well as the goal of Wesley’s teachings on money – is not fund-raising to support the ministries of the church, although that is a by-product of spiritual growth in financial stewardship.

The goal is to enable [us] to discover wisdom that will guide [us] in how we use our money, so we may continue to grow into the likeness of Jesus Christ.”¹⁷

¹³ Harnish, *Earn. Save. Give.*, 10-11.

¹⁴ Harnish, *Earn. Save. Give.*, 11.

¹⁵ Harnish, *Earn. Save. Give.*, 12.

¹⁶ Harnish, *Earn. Save. Give.*, 12-13.

¹⁷ Harnish, *Earn. Save. Give.*, 14.

Wisdom as a Church

This is important as individuals and it is important as a church.

We seek to be wise in the use of our money as a church.

As we look back over the past year, you can see how your generosity has made some incredible things possible.

In 2015, your annual giving commitment made it possible for us to:

- Launch two new adult Sunday School classes
- Launch a series of courses based on our Discipleship Pathway, including: The Parenting Children Course, Revival: Faith as Wesley Lived It, The Alpha Course and Invitation to the Old Testament.
- Increase the offering received every week by 2.5%
- Continue to build strength in FirstKids Serve
- Expand hours for our staff
- Share Easter with over 130 people with our Easter Egg Hunt in Gordy Park
- Host over 70 children at Vacation Bible School
- Host over 100 people at a free outdoor movie this summer
- Welcome five students as new members through confirmation

Thank You

Thank you for being a congregation that is making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Thank you for making it possible for us to be part of God's work changing lives, developing leaders and sharing Christ.

You are

- committed to God's work.
- faithful to God's call in our lives.
- and active in our community.

Conclusion

Good News

The good news is that God will give us wisdom when we ask. God continues to be at work in each our lives and in our life together.

Commitment Logistics

As we celebrate the work that God has done through our church this year and seek God's wisdom, I want to invite you to take action in two specific ways this week:

All Church Survey

First, 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. What percentage of your income is God calling you to give in the year ahead? Ask God for wisdom in the use of money.

Invitation

"We join generations of Christians before us, Methodist and otherwise, who have proven the wisdom of Wesley's words to Earn. Save Give. and we can claim the promise that comes in James 1:5:

"Anyone who needs wisdom should ask God, whose very nature is to give to everyone without a second thought, without keeping score. Wisdom will certainly be given to those who ask."

Closing Prayer

Dear God, Thank you for the way which you have been at work in our congregation this year. Give us wisdom in the use of money as individuals, families and as a congregation. Guide us we pray. In Jesus' name, Amen.