

Whatever we think of it ...

- Money drives, inspires, motivates, and corrupts
- And yet it is a taboo subject in church
- ... which is weird because we spend a lot of our lives earning ... spending ... and worrying about money



So we shouldn't be surprised

That the Bible has LOADS to say

- 2000+ verses to money
- Jesus talked more about money than almost ANY other topic ...
- 11 of 39 parables relate directly to £££ ...
- As well as historic incidents with Jesus ...
- As well as Jesus' teaching ...
- And not even counting texts about giving to the poor

... isn't this just a bit OTT?

Isn't money just a tool? ...

- Money is an index to a person's true character
- We can gauge a person's character by their attitude to money

So ... why DON'T we talk about money in church?

- Don't want to upset anyone
- Don't want to appear a hypocrite
- ... And well, it's just a bit awkward really
- But if we are serious about Christian living then we deal with awkward stuff

Let's talk about money ...

Is the Bible against money?

- The Bible is not “against money” or financial prudence
- Eg women paid for Jesus, or Lydia in Philippi or even Abraham
- BUT, a life focused on chasing security, generating income, protecting ourselves ... anxiety
- ... Is a pale imitation of life in all its fulness
- Money IS a tool ... but we are shaped by our tools

Let's Read ..

The rich young ruler

The guy who turned down Jesus



The rich and the kingdom of God – Luke 18, 18-30

¹⁸ A certain ruler asked him, ‘Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’

‘Why do you call me good?’ Jesus answered. ‘No one is good – except God alone. You know the commandments: “You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honour your father and mother.”

‘All these I have kept since I was a boy,’ he said.

When Jesus heard this, he said to him, ‘You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.’

When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was very wealthy. Jesus looked at him and said, ‘How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.’

Those who heard this asked, ‘Who then can be saved?’

Jesus replied, ‘What is impossible with man is possible with God.’

Peter said to him, ‘We have left all we had to follow you!’

Truly I tell you,’ Jesus said to them, ‘no one who has left home or wife or brothers or sisters or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age, and in the age to come eternal life.’

Let's run thru that again

- An important question – a standard response – another question
- But Jesus sees the smokescreen ...
- For us too, it's easy to leave our money and possessions out of the conversation when we come to God
- Jesus' invitation to "give it all away" is followed by a "yer wot?" moment

What stands between YOU and God?



“Where your treasure is there your heart will be”

- This command to give it all away is not a universal command
- It shatters his lack of understanding of the 10th commandment – “do not covet”
- And coveting is so easy we can just fall into it

Jesus

- Is **not** saying you need to be poor or seeking to find fault
- But he **does** invite us to enter a trusting relationship with HIM at the centre
- He **does** say surrender your whole self to God



“Where your treasure is there your heart will be”

- What we do with “wealth” ... money, power, talent, influence ... shows where our heart really is
- Our rich young ruler becomes speechless but doesn't walk away ... He looks in the face of God. And God speaks

Camels and Needles?

The situation for anyone with wealth seems hopeless!

But Jesus replies that God's will will prevail



What does it mean
for us?



Good stewardship – is tough

- Some of us here are in different situations
- Yet we all need a healthy attitude to whatever money we have
- A few feel called to live entirely by faith – a specific calling
- Being prudent, looking after our affairs isn't wrong – great good is done with money

Good stewardship V Bigger barns?

- Where does “being prudent” go too far ... bigger barns?
- There is creeping tendency to look after ourselves more and more simply because we can – we don’t notice the change
- God wants us to loosen our grip on those things that we rely on and yet make us anxious



**There has to be a line in
the sand ... but where?**



***How much should I give or
keep – and how will I know
when I get to the “the line”?***

What I learnt
on a rainy afternoon
in Skegness



Malachi 3 .. This is what the Lord says

‘Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me.

‘But you ask, “How are we robbing you?”

*‘In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse – your whole nation – because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. **Test me in this,**’ says the Lord Almighty, **‘and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.***

Give the Lord your first-fruits And see if you are not blessed – said to be the only place in scripture where God says “test me and see”

- **Give the Lord your first fruits and see!**
- **A promise of abundance - an invitation to test**
- **May not be financial**



It's about generosity as God shows generosity to us

Well what about the other questions:

1. Is it just tithes or is it “tithes and offerings”?
2. Do we tithe before tax or after?
3. Does the money all go to the local church?



Do I talk about this ... Or not? ...

If you are a visitor ... feel free to check your email

1. How much and how we give is a question of conscience and prayer
2. But the local church still has to function and in the NT the local church was the focus for giving
3. This church is likely to be around £10,000 under budget

BUT

What if we can't give as much as we would like to give?





- “Time and money” are in fact the same currency
- Maybe we can offer time?
- Or maybe we can offer money?.....

Where are we headed? What about the church plant? How do we better serve the

people here? What is God saying? How can we be sure?

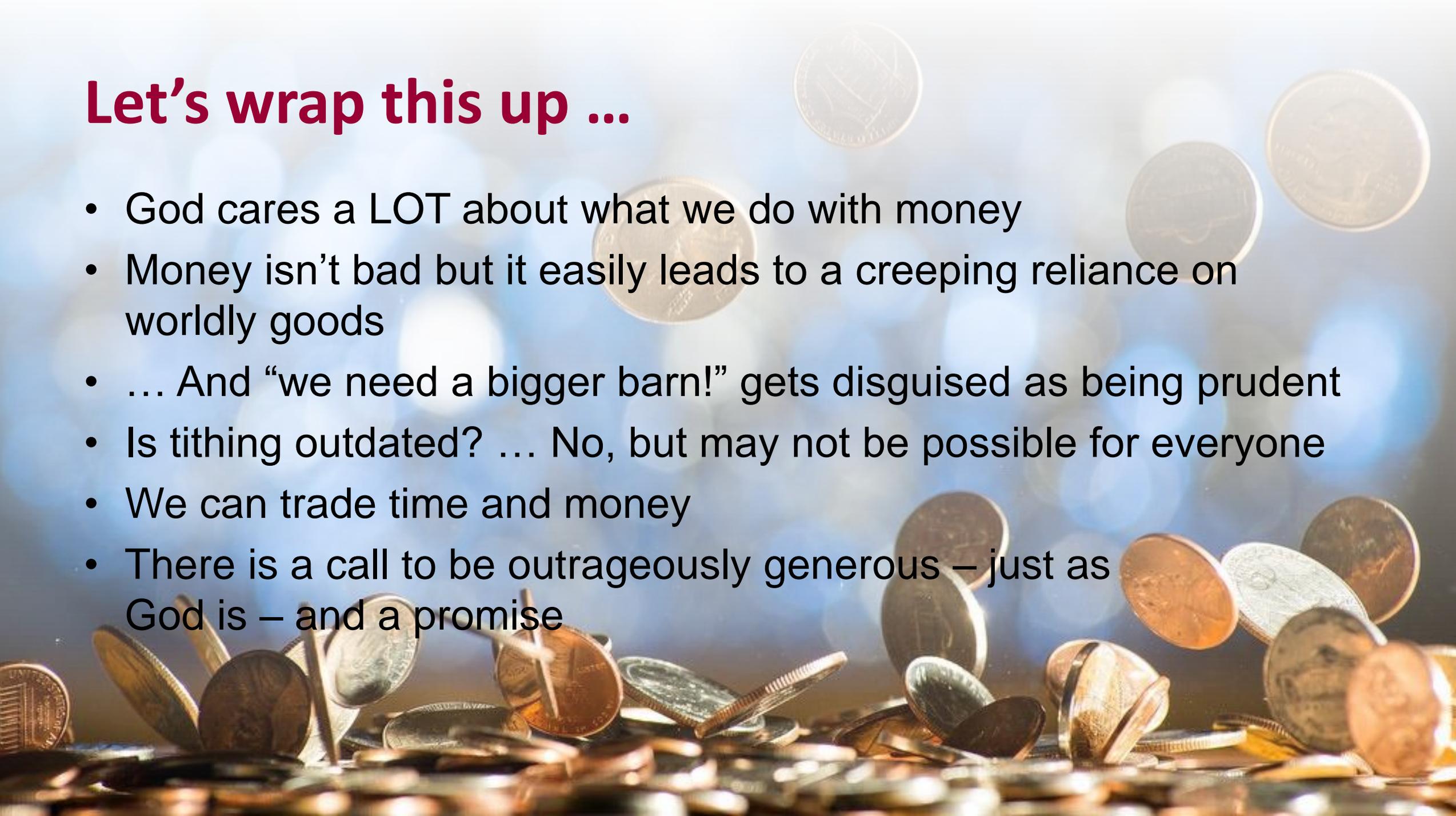
A Vision for Lymm Baptist Church

What's the plan for this building? When does this all kick off? What will my role be?

How does that change things here? Is it a church plant or a new service?

Let's wrap this up ...

- God cares a LOT about what we do with money
- Money isn't bad but it easily leads to a creeping reliance on worldly goods
- ... And “we need a bigger barn!” gets disguised as being prudent
- Is tithing outdated? ... No, but may not be possible for everyone
- We can trade time and money
- There is a call to be outrageously generous – just as God is – and a promise



And finally ... HOW do we give?

Our attitude with which we give is as important as what we give ...

1. Jesus: Acts 20, it (REALLY IS) more blessed to give than to receive
2. Paul: 1 Cor 6, "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver"

GIVE HILARIOUSLY!

*In the end discipleship is not about rules
it's about our hearts*

*Be generous to others
as God has been generous to you!*

