

**Money follows Mission**  
**Matt 6:9-15, 33-34 Matt 28:18-20**

Friends I don't know if you are a big 007 fan or not? But you have to admit that part of what makes the world's most famous spy so appealing is that He always has cool gadgets at his disposal to help him accomplish his missions.

Every time James Bond would be assigned a mission he would make a visit to the "Lab" where a scientist named "Q" would outfit him with all sorts of spy gadgets like a watch that would shoot a lazer beam, a pen that shoots a tiny rocket, ski poles with machine guns in them, a belt buckle that shoots a grappling hook and cable, or C4 plastic explosive disguised as toothpaste.

And then there were 007's cars – they could become a submarine; they were outfitted with missiles, oil slicks and computers and anything else that might be helpful on the mission.

And 007 would use these cars and gadgets on his mission and inevitably they would help him out of a sticky situation or even save his life while he was on the mission.

Because that's what they were for! James Bond didn't get these cars and gadgets just because they were neat technology, or because he was a gadget collector, or to use for his own personal means. No, he received them because he was a secret agent and he had a mission to accomplish for the British Government.

And friends, that mission was always of utmost importance – because there was always a super-villain was plotting to take over the world through some diabolical means and if that villain succeeded it would mean that millions of innocent people would be affected – and it was up to 007 to foil their plans and stop them.

And that exactly what James Bond would do...stop the villain or he was willing die trying – but he was never willing to never give up.

And friends, this is another aspect of what it means to be a steward.

Not only are we stewards of the money and possessions which God gives us, and so we give at least 10% back to God, but we are stewards of His mission as well.

In other words like James Bond, we have been given a mission - God's mission has been given to us...

Listen to how the scriptures tell us about this

<sup>18</sup>All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and **gave us** the ministry of reconciliation: <sup>19</sup>that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has **committed to us** the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup>We are therefore Christ's ambassadors.

So the mission of God is that he is “reconciling the world to himself in Christ” vs. 19 and we see that **WE** are included in this mission, its something God “gave us” and “committed to us” and as a result **WE** have a title – “Christ’s ambassadors”

So what we learn is that a steward is also someone who has been given a mission. And friends, that means you and I are agents of God’s Kingdom – call yourself agent “Double o’heaven” if you like! Only - don’t a secret agent about this.

Because we have very clear instructions on what our mission as agents of the Kingdom of God entails – they come to us from Jesus and we read them this morning in our second scripture reading. Jesus says...

“go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt 28)

So we have this mission, you and I- together as the body of Christ we are agents of the Kingdom and we need to disciple others to become followers of Christ.

And friends - this is an extremely important mission – millions of lives are a stake here! Because there is a super-villain, Satan, who wants to lead as many as possible away from being

followers of Christ so they will be destroyed along with Him on judgment day – misery loves company!

So, in light of this I want to focus on what it means for us to be faithful agents - or faithful stewards, of God's mission! Agents who won't give up.

Because we can easily become distracted, discouraged and defeated on this mission –so we need to be encouraged to continue on in it - to be faithful in it, so that when we've completed our life and we stand before Christ we will hear these words “*Well Done, good and faithful agent!*” (Mat 25:21)

Now, having said all this – one of the things which distracts, discourages and defeats us most often is the lack of money! Why is this?

Because we believe that money makes the world go 'round – and from simple observation that appears to be true.

In fact the wise teacher who wrote the book of Ecclesiastes sees this as well – He writes: A feast is made for laughter,

and wine makes life merry, but money is the answer for everything. (Ecc 10:19)

And it's easy for those of us who are on God's mission believe it too...if we only see with our eyes.

How often do we say “If we had the money we could...”

- Hire additional staff to run programs and reach people
- Give more to aid work or support new church plants
- Set up a benevolent fund
- Make our facilities more attractive and accessible

And on and on the list goes. If we only had the money... we could really make a difference and accomplish our mission.

And so we reveal that what we truly believe is that Money determines Mission. – You have a Mission for me then Show me the Money!

But friends the scriptures teach us that there is more to life than what we can see with our eyes and as agents on God's mission if we are to be faithful stewards of that mission thrn we need to believe that Money follows Mission - even if we can't see the money!

Here's what the scriptures say about it

<sup>1</sup>*Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. (Heb 11)*

<sup>33</sup>*But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well (Matt 6)*

This is reflected in how we are to pray – Jesus instructed his disciples to pray for God's Mission first!

*'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, <sup>10</sup>your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

and then for what is needed to accomplish it.

<sup>11</sup>*Give us today our daily bread...* our physical and material needs

<sup>12</sup>*Forgive us our sins...* our spiritual needs

<sup>13</sup>*And lead us not into temptation* our need for guidance

How often do we reverse this –we pray “Lord provide us with enough money to meet our budget, to pay our bills, Lord help us to grow spiritual, Lord give us discernment about what we should do ...” and then as an afterwards we pray “and Lord

help us to reach out into our community” (*I'm guilty of this, and after writing this message I was convicted that I need to change the way I lead us in prayer!*)

Friends, it's so easy for scarcity to become a distraction from focusing on our mission isn't it? When we can't see where the money will come from we end up focusing on the lack of money instead of seeing the mission opportunities around us, whether it is in our personal lives or in our life together as the body of Christ.

If money determines mission then when we have a small amount of money, we pursue a small mission, which in turn leads to small results and an even smaller amount of money. And the cycle continues until we abandon the mission and are simply concerned with our own survival – and our discipling efforts degenerate into membership drives so that we get more people to pay the bills and keep the doors open. And who wants to go to that kind of church?

But friends the good news is that money follows mission! Say it with me- Money follows Mission! The way to break out of

the vicious cycle of a scarcity and survival mentality is to rediscover God's mission and remember our calling to be agents of the Kingdom! Faithful stewards of the mission.

And this begins when you have realized that there is a scarcity of good deeds in your life. That you'll never be good enough to pay the debt you owe to God. It begins when you are able to admit that you aren't able to be that good person you strive to be! It starts when you receive forgiveness from Christ because you believe his death paid for your sin and God looks at his perfect life instead of your failures.

Friends, this life altering experience of being "born again" as Jesus calls it is the starting point for becoming an agent of the Kingdom, for being made a steward of God's mission.

And we need to be reminded of it- or perhaps experience it for the first time in order to move from thinking that Money determines Mission to sincerely believing that Money follows Mission!

Friends, it is time for us at Valleyview to remember we are agents on God's mission! That we are part of Valleyview; that we are active in Valleyview; that we come to Valleyview to be encouraged and trained to fulfill the instructions Christ gave us – to make disciples of all nations!

This is our Mission, we need to own it! – and friends we need to trust God that He will give us what we need to accomplish this mission – people, time, opportunities, and yes money!

And friends if we are truly committed to God's mission then "Money follow Mission" will also means that *our* money will go towards that *mission* – our time, our energy, and our resources will go towards that mission.

You know it would be silly to think that James Bond would set limits on his involvement once he began his mission – Success in his mission requires he uses of his considerable skills of heart, mind and strength. So to with us...

You can't be a good agent or a steward of the Mission of God without investing what God entrusts you with into the mission – in addition to giving God 10% back.

Friends it's a mistake to think that if you give God at least 10% as a thank offering that the rest is somehow yours to do with as you please – to be sure God expects you to use it to buy your daily bread – but if you take the mission seriously, if you recognize how important it is... then your money – in fact your life, will follow the mission!

And I know that's challenging to hear, perhaps a bit uncomfortable because we might feel that God expects too much from us! We may only want a little bit of God – but he's interested in being Lord over our whole life! Remember Christ committed his whole life and went through hell so we could become part of God's family!

So it's good to think about it this week, and listen for the Holy Spirit to speak to you about how you can spend your money in ways that can make you a good agent of the Kingdom!

Let me give you an example of how I've recently done this – As you all know I need to start to work out and lose some weight. I've had a bit too much daily bread! So, I could have decided to go and use my money to buy a treadmill and some weights and work out at home – nothing wrong with that. In fact for a while I tried to get my exercise by going over to Ambrose and playing some basketball and using their weight room.

But then I felt the Holy Spirit telling me that it would contribute more to God's mission for me to buy a membership at the WestSide Rec Center. Because this will put me in a place where I will meet the people who live around our church and I will get to know them, and in building relationships with them I will have opportunities to share the good news of Jesus with them. So this is how my money followed God's mission.

Maybe for you this means looking at where you purchase your groceries – because if you switched stores you could use grocery coupons that would support the local Christian School, or maybe you need to take your car to be repaired by a good mechanic who is a Christian because you want to support the

fact that he integrates his faith in his business practices – or maybe you need to take it to a good mechanic who isn't a Christian because you want the opportunity to get to know him and share Christ with him.

Or maybe you decide to invest more money in your RRSP because you'll get a larger tax refund and you plan to give that increase to support the church. You get the picture right? The point is to listen for what the Holy Spirit tells you to do with your money to follow the mission.

But whatever you end up doing – now you're thinking about how your money follows God's mission, and you're looking at how you can use all of what God has given you to fulfill the instructions which Jesus left us – go and make disciples!

So friends – let's make God's mission #1 priority and you watch... the money will follow. Amen