

Proverbs 10-11 - Wisdom and Wealth

To read:

1. Matthew 6:19-34
2. Luke 16

I. Introduction

A. Having finished a stint in Psalms at the end of last year, we are going to spend the next three weeks in Proverbs

1. A year ago, last January, we finished Proverbs 9 and the first section of the book of Proverbs
 - a. Proverbs 1-9 is made up of a related series of longer discourses where a chapter takes and develops one theme of wisdom
 - b. This had the benefit of making each chapter more-or-less topically homogenous and, at least in my mind, must be easier to preach through
2. As we go into the second section of Proverbs, in chapter 10, the longer discourses give way to more isolated proverbial statements
 - a. The bulk of this section of Proverbs is made up of 'two-liners', a proverb which compares and/or contrasts two things and calls us to think about their relationship
 - b. But these two-liner proverbs often appear to have less topical homogeneity in their organization - one verse may talk about one topic, while the next verse may discuss a significantly different topic
 - c. I am convinced that there is organization and thought into how these proverbs are organized, but I'm not always sure what it is, which makes it a little harder for me to discern how to organize a sermon
3. As we move into Proverbs 10-11, though, we have decided to pull out three distinct topics and cover these in three weeks
 - a. A large number of the proverbs in chapters 10-11 deal with the topic of wealth and money and this is the first topic we will cover this week
 - b. Another topic you will find repeatedly in chapters 10-11 is words and speaking, which we'll cover next week, and then the third topic, a little more of a 'catch-all' topic, will be wickedness and righteousness
 - c. So, this week, I want to look at Proverbs 10-11 and try to understand what it is teaching us about wealth and money - how do wisdom and wealth intersect and where does that lead us?

B. This morning, I'm not going to read our passage here at the beginning

1. Since we are covering these two chapters topically over several weeks, I'm going to jump around in Proverbs 10-11
2. So, it makes the most sense, I think, to reference the verses as we go
3. And, in my evaluation, this is really how the two-liner proverbs are supposed to be used - we take each one and meditate on it, form connections to other proverbs and try to understand how these are teaching us wisdom

1 C. We're going to look at the intersection of Wisdom on Wealth in Proverbs 10 and 11 in three points this morning

1. First, we're going to observe and try to understand the teaching of Proverbs 10-11 - what is it saying about wealth
1. Then, we're going to how the wisdom of Proverbs 10-11 is pointing us to Christ
1. Finally, we're going to look at ourselves and think through how we can apply this wisdom

1 II. Wisdom and Wealth (what statements about wealth does Proverbs 10-11 make?)

- 1 • This morning I've tried to identify 8 principles that represent the teaching of our passage on money and organize them into a short paragraph of 8 points - (1) *Worldly riches are not ultimate* (2) *and riches can be dangerous.* (3) *This does not mean that we should not work hard* (4) *nor should we foolishly squander our money;* (5) *instead this calls for generosity.* (6) *Our desire toward money should be changed* (7) *so that instead of seeking money we should seek righteousness* (8) *because ultimate riches come from God Himself.*

1 A. Worldly riches are not ultimate

1. Multiple verses in Proverbs 10-11 call us to consider the end result of seeking riches, in fact, perhaps the bulk of the verses about wealth call us to consider whether riches will really benefit us in the end, for example:
 - 1 a. Consider Proverbs 10:2 - *Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death.*
 - 1 b. Or again, Proverbs 10:16 - *The wage of the righteous leads to life, the gain of the wicked to sin.*
 - 1 c. More broadly, Proverbs 11:4 - *Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.*
 - 1 d. And Proverbs 11:7 - *When the wicked dies, his hope will perish, and the expectation of wealth perishes too.*
2. Solomon calls us to compare two different pursuits - riches and righteousness - and to determine which is ultimate
 - a. Solomon clearly considers righteousness to be the wiser pursuit - riches may profit for a lifetime, but their benefit and joy will surely end at death; righteousness, on the other hand, will be of value for eternity
 - 1 b. Paul might say something similar, and he does in I Timothy 4:7-8 - *Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.*
3. So riches are not ultimate - they have no lasting benefit, they cannot save from death and are of no value in the next life

2 B. And riches can be dangerous

1. Not only does Solomon want us to see the relative worthlessness of wealth, but also to see the danger that wealth can be
 - 1 a. So, he says, in Proverbs 10:15 - *A rich man's wealth is his strong city; the poverty of the poor is their ruin.*
 - b. Now, at first glance, Proverbs 10:15 appears to laud wealth - wealth can be a stronghold to the rich while the poor suffer ruin - but actually I think Solomon is calling us to see that wealth is dangerous
2. So, Solomon calls a man's wealth his strong city and this is a negative description in the Proverbs
 - 1 a. Consider Proverbs 18:10-11, which uses the exact same phrase - *The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe. A rich man's wealth is his strong city, and like a high wall in his imagination.*
 - b. Proverbs 18 is making the same contrast between righteousness and wealth and calls God Himself the true stronghold for the righteous while wealth becomes an imaginary stronghold for the wealthy
 - c. Solomon is saying that wealth is dangerous - it can tempt us toward placing our trust in money instead of in God; it can call us to pursue riches instead of righteousness; it can pull our joy toward money and away from Christ
 - 1 d. So, Proverbs 11:28 says - *Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf.*
 - e. Riches are incredibly dangerous because where your treasure is, there your heart will be also
3. But, Solomon is an equal opportunity warner - wealth is dangerous to everyone, to the rich and to the poor
 - a. Riches are a danger to the wealthy but also a danger to the poor - the wealthy can be tempted to rest and trust riches and therefore chase riches, but the poor can be tempted to covet and desire riches and therefore chase riches
 - b. Wealth and poverty are both dangerous - they aren't sins in themselves (and I'll stress that again, they aren't sins in themselves), but they are situations where we can be strongly tempted to pursue riches instead of righteousness
4. Not only are riches not ultimate, they can be very dangerous and we should consider and act on this

2 C. This does not mean that we should not work hard

1. As we move into our second sentence, I'm starting with a caveat - if riches aren't ultimate and can be dangerous, then we probably shouldn't be chasing after them, but that can lead to a very wrong conclusion - that we don't have to work hard to provide for ourselves and others
 - a. Solomon never suggests that the danger of riches means we shouldn't work hard or make money
 - 1 b. Instead he makes statements like Proverbs 10:4-5 - *A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. He who gathers in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who brings shame.*
 - c. Working hard is a consistent Biblical principle - we are encouraged to work hard and provide for ourselves
2. So, we can't use these warnings about riches to be an excuse for laziness
 - a. We should be people that work hard, making money through hard work that benefits others is a good thing - making money isn't bad, that is not the take away from Proverbs 10-11
 - b. In general working hard to make money is a good thing - now, it isn't an ultimate thing, it is not something that should crowd out other good things or become the focus of our lives, but it is a good thing and we shouldn't choose laziness over working hard and making money
3. Choosing laziness over making money is not a path to pursuing righteousness instead of riches, riches may be dangerous, but sloth is sin - working hard is good

2 D. Nor should we foolishly squander our money

1. A second caveat - just because riches are not ultimate does not mean we should foolishly squander our money
 - 1 a. As you go through Proverbs, there are many warnings about foolishly wasting money, consider Proverbs 11:15 - *Whoever puts up security for a stranger will surely suffer harm, but he who hates striking hands in pledge is secure.*
 - b. Foolishly putting your money or possessions up in pledge for a stranger is just wasting your money
 - c. Foolishly squandering money is bad - riches may be dangerous, but the answer is not to throw them away
2. Instead, we should handle money wisely in order to preserve its value, recognizing that it does have real temporal value
 - a. Foolishly squandering money is, by definition, foolishness - one type of foolishness, chasing after riches, cannot be overcome with a second type of foolishness, throwing away money
 - b. The danger of riches does not call us to use money foolishly, to throw it away - using money foolishly is likely to lead only to poverty, which Solomon would say is dangerous as well, and it is not done to the glory of God
3. So, if the danger of riches doesn't mean we shouldn't work hard or squander our money, what does it mean?

2 E. Instead the relative worthlessness and potential danger of riches calls for generosity

1. Consider Proverbs 11:24-26 - *One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered. The people curse him who holds back grain, but a blessing is on the head of him who sells it.*
 - a. In three back-to-back proverbs, Solomon points us to the right way to handle money - be generous with it
2. In verse 24, Solomon tells us that there is a greater richness in giving away riches so that those who are generous are actually growing richer themselves while those who fail in generosity eventually find themselves in want
 - a. By being generous with their riches, the rich are storing up real treasure for themselves in the future - there is a treasure that is greater than money, a treasure that generosity can start to take hold of
3. In verse 25, Solomon suggests that the one who is generous now may receive generosity in the future
 - a. Riches can be flighty, here one day and gone the next, but the one who was generous with their riches will find many who will care for them in their day of need
4. And in verse 26, Solomon condemns profiteering - storing up treasure in order to benefit yourself - calling us to see the unkindness of building up wealth at other's expense
 - a. Profiteering is the opposite of generosity - it is looking to build up yourself and your own wealth by manipulating and harming others, and those who hold back grain in the day it needs to be sold are rightly hated
 - b. But the one who does not hold his wealth so tightly so that he can sell his grain to those who need it will be blessed - Solomon calls for a spirit of generosity, not just in giving money away, but in all the ways that we handle money
5. If wealth is ultimately worthless and potentially dangerous, then we shouldn't hold on to it - we should have it in our hands loosely, ready to give it away, not foolishly by squandering it but by blessing others
 - a. In fact, this is why we should work hard as well, we can work hard, make money and then hold it loosely ready to bless others - working hard is a great good, grasping on to treasure is a great evil
 - 1 b. There is no real or lasting benefit to holding on to riches, so let them flow through your hands loosely, as Jesus would say, Luke 12:32-34 - *"Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

2 F. Our desire toward money should be changed

1. But how can we become people who instead of grasping on to riches freely give them away - Solomon would suggest this can only happen through a heart-level change, a change in our desires and our attitudes
2. Consider how he contrasts desires in the following verses
 - 1 a. Proverbs 10:3 - *The LORD does not let the righteous go hungry, but he thwarts the craving of the wicked.*
 - 1 b. Proverbs 11:6 - *The righteousness of the upright delivers them, but the treacherous are taken captive by their lust.*
 - 1 c. Proverbs 11:23 - *The desire of the righteous ends only in good; the expectation of the wicked in wrath.*
3. Solomon sees that the wicked are driven by their desires, they are taken captive to their lusts and their lusts and desires will fail and lead to destruction in the end
4. So the desires of the righteous must be different than the desires of the wicked - they need to have a new heart and a new purpose
 - a. This doesn't mean that the righteous don't have desires - Solomon doesn't suggest that those who are righteous must become emotionless
 - b. The righteous just have different desires, a changed attitude - they no longer need to run after riches because there is something infinitely more valuable that they are after
 - c. They can let riches flow generously through their hands because they not only know, they feel the worthlessness of riches and their worthlessness is eclipsed by something much greater

2 G. So that instead of seeking money, we should seek righteousness

1. This brings us right back to where we started - if the righteous' attitude is changed so that they don't pursue riches, what do they pursue - what is the greater treasure?
 - 1 a. Listen again to Proverbs 10:2 - *Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death.*
 - 1 b. And again Proverbs 11:4 - *Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.*
 - c. The orientation of the desires of the righteous are turned away from riches and toward righteousness
2. And Solomon wants us to consider that righteousness and riches are exclusive, even contradictory pursuits - you cannot pursue righteousness and riches at the same time
 - 1 a. Consider Proverbs 11:16 - *A gracious woman gets honor, and violent men get riches.*
 - b. Solomon asks us to compare two lives and consider which was better - you can pursue riches but you will end up being marked by violence, or you can pursue graciousness and be marked by honor
 - c. Solomon is calling us to consider who stores up riches - is it not often the wicked, the violent, the strong man - and therefore to see that riches are no infallible mark of righteousness and often point the other way
 - d. So riches aren't something to be pursued, they are not ultimate, they will not lead to honor and eternal life - all too often they will lead to wickedness, to violence and to death
 - e. Now I'm not saying you cannot have wealth and righteousness at the same time - it is possible for one to have riches and pursue righteousness - but you cannot pursue both at the same time (hear that carefully, *repeat*), you cannot seek riches and seek righteousness, they will simply come into conflict too many times - they are opposite pursuits
 - 1 f. Jesus will say the same thing very plainly, Luke 16:13 - *No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.*
3. And righteousness is infinitely preferable to riches
 - 1 a. As Solomon says in Proverbs 10:16 - *The wage of the righteous leads to life, the gain of the wicked to sin.*
 - 1 b. Or again in Proverbs 11:18-19 - *The wicked earns deceptive wages, but one who sows righteousness gets a sure reward. Whoever is steadfast in righteousness will live, but he who pursues evil will die.*

2 H. Because ultimate riches come from God Himself

1. Righteousness is the greater desire of the righteous that crowds out a desire for riches, but righteousness itself is, in a way, only a means to an end, not the final goal
 - a. The righteous loves righteousness because he loves the One who is perfectly righteous
 - b. In other words, the desire of the righteous does not end in themselves, it does not point toward their own righteousness, their self-righteousness - the desire of the righteous is for God Himself and the reward that He gives
2. So Solomon calls us to look toward a final reward
 - 1 a. Proverbs 11:31 - *If the righteous is repaid on earth, how much more the wicked and the sinner!*
 - i. Solomon knows that righteousness and wickedness will eventually be repaid - even if the wicked appear to flourish now and the righteous appear to be pursuing vanity, this will not last forever
 - ii. Eventually their wickedness will be paid back to them and the righteous will reap the harvest of their desires
 - b. Now Proverbs 11:31 seems to be suggesting that this repayment will happen in this lifetime
 - i. And in many ways, this is true - this is good, deep observational wisdom
 - ii. Wickedness will bring sorrow and hardship to this life even if it appears that you have everything
 - iii. While righteousness will bring joy and happiness in this life even if it appears that you have nothing
 - c. But Peter will quote this verse at the end of I Peter 4, and when he quotes this verse he calls us to look past this life and toward a final reward, a final repayment
 - i. The wicked and the righteous may not appear to receive their due in this life
 - ii. But at the final judgment all the books will be set right and the righteous will rejoice in the treasure that they have been seeking while the wicked will find that their treasure has been worthless all along
 - d. Solomon is telling us that the way to be delivered from the bondage of riches is to take our eyes off of the current situation and look toward the final reward - riches may look profitable now, but righteousness will profit for eternity
3. And Solomon calls us to consider the ultimate source of all riches
 - 1 a. Proverbs 10:22 - *The blessing of the LORD makes rich, and he adds no sorrow with it.*
 - b. The riches of this world are tinged with the pursuits and desires of this world, they are stained by the fall so that pursuing them may bring a temporal joy and fulfillment, but they will always reap sorrow and destruction in the end
 - c. But there are greater riches that do not belong to this world, riches possessed by God Himself, and if God shares His riches with you they are without stain and without sorrow
 - d. The one who is blessed by God is truly rich beyond the imagination of the rich of this world - the riches of this world are such fleeting, sorrowful things - they capture men and put them in bondage and lead them to death
 - e. But God's promise and God's treasure are eternally joyful since they spring out of God Himself, the source of all joy - so pursuing God in righteousness will always be a sound investment, pursuing God even at the cost of everything this world offers will leave you with the ultimate treasure - God's Himself

1 III. The Wisdom and Wealth of Christ (how does the wisdom of Proverbs 10-11 point us to Christ?)

1 A. Christ is Wisdom (Jesus is the embodiment of the wisdom of Proverbs)

1. Whenever we study wisdom, we need to make sure to bring it to Christ because He is Wisdom incarnate
 - a. I have been reading an excellent book on God's wisdom revealed in reconciliation, and I like what the author says:
 - *In the incarnation of the Son, God ... brought the fullness of divine wisdom among us. ... God had shared his wisdom with his people through his judges, prophets, and kings; through poetry, wisdom sayings, and stories; through crafting his creation wisely. But these means ... were insufficient. They were unworthy of the intimacy with which God sought to share himself. Or rather, they were preparatory for God's great purpose of sharing his wisdom ... with us. The work of Christ, therefore, is not merely a wise work, a work that bears in it the characteristics of wisdom. Rather, this is the work of Wisdom himself ... this is the great and decisive revelation of divine wisdom, the source of all wisdom. Here there is no mediation, no loss of content: Wisdom itself is active in Christ, not merely crying in the streets but conversing with the people, healing the sick, and bearing the cross. It is by the standard of incarnate Wisdom in the person and work of Jesus the Messiah that we judge every form of human wisdom; it is with this plumb line that we determine the relative straightness or crookedness of the philosophies and heritages of the lands.*
 - b. If Christ is Wisdom incarnate, then we need to take our understanding of wisdom and measure it against Jesus Christ
2. First, we see that Jesus never pursued or stored up earthly riches
 - a. Proverbs teaches us that riches are not ultimate and are not to be pursued, and as we look at Jesus' life, there is no hint that He ever pursued worldly riches and He warned others about the danger and deception of riches
 - 1 b. He even testified about Himself that He didn't have a place to call His own, Luke 9:57-58 - *As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."*
 - c. It wasn't that Jesus couldn't have pursued the riches of this world, in fact they were all offered to Him as Satan himself stood on the mountain and offered Him all the kingdoms of this world, but Jesus refused
 - d. Jesus wasn't captured by the riches of this world, He understood their futility and the much greater benefit of seeking His Father's will and rejoicing in God's riches - He knew that pursuing riches was contrary to pursuing God
3. So, Jesus did the exact opposite: He set aside all the riches of heaven in order to pursue His Father's will
 - 1 a. This is at the center of Paul's glorious statement in Philippians 2:5-7 - *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.*
 - b. Christ had every good thing as His own, but instead of grasping what was rightfully His, He set it aside to serve us
 - 1 c. He was infinitely generous with His riches, II Corinthians 8:9 - *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.*
 - d. He is the epitome, the summit and glory, of generosity - He gave up His riches so that we could be made rich
4. So we can see that Jesus desired His Father's will above all earthly goods
 - a. Proverbs calls us to see the infinitely greater worth of seeking God's will over riches, and Jesus does exactly this
 - 1 b. We can see this in His exchange with the disciples after the incident with the Samaritan woman in John 4:33-34 - *Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." So the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.*
 - c. Jesus desired and sought His Father's will in everything and this was His treasure and provision - He didn't need to seek the paltry things of this world because in serving His Father, He was gaining the ultimate treasure
5. But Jesus didn't refuse to work hard - He worked hard to pursue the ultimate treasure
 - a. Now, this is one place where I think looking at Jesus really helps us understand wisdom, because there is no record of Jesus ever having a job and He went around calling men to leave their jobs - if we thought that working hard to make money in this world was the end and goal of wisdom, then Jesus seems to have failed here
 - b. But Jesus did live out the wisdom of Proverbs perfectly, because diligence and hard work doesn't only or even perhaps primarily apply to making money - the greatest work is to be working for the Kingdom of God
 - 1 c. And Jesus did this perfectly, He came to work hard to bring His Father's purposes about and to establish His Father's kingdom, so Jesus says in John 5:17 - *But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working."*
 - d. Jesus didn't have a 'job' but He work hard, He was diligent in pursuing His Father's desires
6. And this was because Jesus saw a final reward that was greater than all the treasures of this earth
 - 1 a. So Hebrews 12:2 says - *[We should be] looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*
 - b. Jesus refused the riches of this world and worked hard to please His Father not because He refused reward, but because He saw a better reward - as Proverbs urged, He had His eyes on the final treasure that God bestowed
7. Jesus perfectly lived out the principles of Proverbs and in Him we can see the full meaning and purpose of Wisdom
 - a. So, however we apply these truths, we need to apply them in light of Christ, embracing His wisdom as our own

2 B. Christ is Wealth (Jesus is the goal of the wisdom of Proverbs)

1. Not only is Jesus the embodiment of wisdom, He also is the goal and treasure of wisdom
 - a. As we study Proverb we should hear Proverbs calling us to take hold of Christ
2. And Proverb's teaching on wealth is no different because Jesus is the ultimate treasure
 - a. Proverbs 10-11 calls us to weight the relative value of different treasures and to pursue the one that has the greatest and longest benefit - and as we meditate on this wisdom, it should lead us to the feet of Christ because He is the greatest treasure, the treasure for which we should joyfully renounce all other treasures
 - 1 b. Paul rejoices in this truth in Philippians 3:7-8 - *But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ!*
 - c. When Paul really understood Jesus, He saw in Jesus the best treasure a man could ever hope for - He saw in Christ the treasure that Proverbs wanted us to take our eyes off of the world so that we could see it - Jesus is true worth
3. And, glory of all glories, Jesus came to share His treasure with us
 - a. We already partially considered this because Jesus embodies generosity - but now we want to rejoice in the fact that we can be the recipients of His generosity - if Jesus is the ultimate treasure, He came to share that treasure with us
 - 1 b. So, as we read a minute ago, Paul says in II Corinthians 8:9 - *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.*
 - 1 c. And he says again in Ephesians 2:4-7 - *But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.*
 - d. Jesus is the ultimate treasure, the treasure that will satisfy for eternity, the treasure that will eclipse and blot out all the treasures of this world and He came so that we can take hold of that treasure
4. So pursuing Christ in righteousness will always profit infinitely more than pursuing the treasures of this world
 - 1 a. This is what Jesus spent His time teaching, consider His words in Luke 12:32-34 - *"Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*
 - b. Proverbs is calling us to see that which is truly wealth and to run to it, not pursuing other things - and Jesus is true wealth, pursuing Him even at the cost of the world will always be profitable

1 IV. Wisdom and Us (how should we emulate the wisdom of Proverbs 10-11?)

- As we finish this morning, I want to take a few minutes and think about what this practically means for us, three things:

1 A. Cultivating a heavenly mindset

1. I am convinced that the main point of the teaching on wealth in Proverbs 10-11 is to have our eyes set somewhere else
 - a. We should learn to value things rightly, which means our eyes won't be on the treasures of this world, instead our gaze will be drawn somewhere else - our eyes will be dazzled by a greater treasure
 - b. Our attitude toward money (and everything!) in this world should change - not that we are particularly waging a war against money, but that our desires are so enamored with something else that the wealth of this world simply cannot hold our attention
 - c. Our minds are filled with something greater than this world could ever offer, and our passions and our pursuits are so directed by this other-worldly vision that we can't pursue wealth in this world
- 1 2. And this is exactly what Paul would call us to do, Colossians 3:1-4 - *If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*
 - a. Our minds, our desires, our awe, our passion, our pursuits should all be directed toward Christ not on things of this world - we should be so in love with Him and so convinced that He is the greatest treasure that we can't be drawn away by the treasures of this world
3. So we should cultivate this mindset in ourselves - we should be training ourselves to value Christ, to be in awe of Christ
 - a. Ultimately, this is a heart-level change that must come from the Holy Spirit working in us, but there are things we can do to encourage this spirit in us, by putting Christ in front of our eyes all the time
 - b. The more Christ is in front of your eyes, the more time you have to develop and grow your taste for him
 - c. So spend intentional time reading God's Word and time meditating on the glories of Christ
 - d. Spend intentional time in prayer, in communion with and treasuring Christ
 - e. Memorize God's Word so that your mind is filled with bright and glorious images of Christ
 - f. And let these things dazzle you so much that the things of this world grow strangely dim

2 B. Cultivating a generous attitude

1. Proverbs suggests that if we are not captured by the allure of worldly wealth, then our response to wealth will be generosity - inasmuch as we have wealth, we will be quick to share, we will serve others with our wealth
2. And Paul would call us to develop this same attitude in honor of Christ
 - a. We've read II Corinthians 8:9 several times this morning, about how Christ became poor so that we can become rich
 - 1 b. Paul continues his thought in II Corinthians 9:6-11 - *The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. As it is written, "He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.*
 - c. Christ's generosity toward us should lead us to being generous with the resources that He has placed into our hands
3. In fact, this will be Paul's explicit command to those who have wealth
 - 1 a. I Timothy 6:17-19 - *As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.*
 - b. If we have wealth, we should be generous and ready to share, testifying that we are taking hold of something better
4. If our desires are so filled by something greater, then money won't stick to our hands
 - a. Our other-worldly, even foolish generosity will be a testament to that which is true riches
 - b. When money flows through our hands to serve others, we show the world that we love Christ, so cultivate this attitude - consider how you can show generosity to those around in honor of what Christ has done for you

2 C. Cultivating a kingdom work-ethic

1. Proverbs, while warning of the dangers of wealth, upholds the great value of hard work
2. And our pursuit of a greater treasure should make us the most dedicated workers, because we work for our true Master
 - 1 a. In fact, this command appears all over the New Testament, consider Colossians 3:23-24 - *Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.*
 - b. Whatever we have been given to do in this world, we should do it well and with passion because we aren't doing it for ourselves, we are serving Christ with our work and looking toward His reward
3. But our work should not be for ourselves, but for others - our work should be for the purpose of generosity
 - a. Most of the commands to work hard in the New Testament are paired with generosity
 - 1 b. Paul tells the elders in Acts 20:35 - *In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'*
 - 1 c. And our generosity starts close to home, as Paul commands in I Timothy 5:8 - *If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*
 - 2 d. And then, we can share our abundance with those who have needs, as Paul says in Ephesians 4:28 - *He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.*
 - e. We should work hard for the glory and honor of Christ and then we should use the fruit of our labors to bless others
4. But Christ-honoring work is not limited to making money, because we aren't working for worldly riches
 - a. Christ's example shows us that working for worldly goods is not ultimate, there are greater things we can work for
 - 1 i. So Jesus calls for labor for the Kingdom of God in Luke 10:2 - *And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.*
 - 1 ii. Col 1:28-29 - *Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.*
 - b. A man's labor is not measured by how much money he makes, but by how much he serves the kingdom of Christ
 - i. Now, I'm not saying making money isn't serving the kingdom of Christ - it depends on why we are making money and how we are using that money to serve Christ - making money is a good and necessary thing in this world and can assuredly be done in service of Christ and Christ's people
 - ii. But all sorts of other work are valuable as well - wives and mothers may not 'make money', but they assuredly work hard and serve their families and serve Christ
 - iii. Those who serve the church should work hard in service of Christ, whether they receive worldly reward or not
 - iv. Our concept of work should not be money driven, it should be kingdom driven - how can I work hard to serve Christ's kingdom today? How much money someone is able to make is an irrelevant consideration.
5. So we should be cultivating this attitude - a desire to work hard in honor of Christ to advance Christ's kingdom