

# Trusting God Before Money

*By Bobby Schuller*

Well last week, as many of you know, I was supposed to be here with you, and I was in the hospital on Sunday morning with Cohen. Hannah was in France and that sounds horrible when you say it that way. She had been planning a trip for gosh nearly a year, right, with her mom and her sister-in-law, and the three of them were going to have a girls trip. Her mom paid for it. Part of that was just a bonding trip. Part of it was Hannah's birthday.

And so it was a one week trip and I was like I've got this. I can watch the kids on my own for eight or nine days or whatever it is. You go have fun! And on Monday, the day she left, Cohen had a seizure. Then on Tuesday, he had a seizure, and actually I didn't tell Hannah so I'm like I'm just going to tell her when she gets home. I don't want to ruin her trip, because Cohen has seizures from time to time.

But then on Wednesday morning, he just woke up with all sorts of weird things in his body. He couldn't stand, couldn't sit up, was slurring his words, almost like he'd had a stroke. So we were basically.. then I did, you know, I called Hannah later that week and let her know. So Cohen and I were basically in the hospital and it was such a bummer and of course here's Hannah, I know it had to be a taint on her trip, and it was one of these things.

And then you know we hate to miss church, but most of all, we just want our son to be well. And so we have just been praying and believing that he would be well. So one of the problems was we think that maybe his brain bled a little bit when he had a seizure because it causes your blood pressure to go up, so that could be causing what was.. a new part of his brain in the MRI we found called the Basal Ganglia, it was affecting some of his motor skills.

So he's totally back to normal, but we're still concerned about why that's happening and the key is to just kind of control his seizures. But just want to thank you guys for praying for us and remembering our family. This church has been incredibly supportive of us through this trial.

But Cohen, we went to Disneyland yesterday. Actually, it was interesting. Cohen's whole life really is about going to Disneyland. That's the most important thing, like that's the next; he just wants to know like when is the next time I'm going to Disneyland. And it's hard being stuck in a hospital for three days with a six-year-old boy and trying to keep him entertained.

One of the things I did is they had this wagon, and so I tried to do a makeshift virtual Disneyland ride, and the way that I did it is I like sat him in the wagon and I got my laptop out on the other side of the wagon, and there's these point of view videos of like Disneyland rides where someone goes through a whole ride with a camera like you're on it. And

so we're doing Pirates and It's a Small World, and I put it on and then I just wheel him around in this hall, back and forth in a circle, and he was like totally into it, like he was actually on the ride. But thank you guys.

And that's actually a good place to begin because we're beginning a series called Winning the Worry War. God doesn't want you to feel worried. And I think that very often, that the two most common things we worry about are health and money. Money meaning our jobs, our business, or things that we really need in life and the only thing between us and that thing is money. And then health. I'm not feeling well, or my kids aren't feeling well. Evelyn Freed told me that being a parent is a lifelong sentence when I joked about not worrying about my kids once they're adults. She just laughed at me. So you just always worry about your kids, I guess.

And so we have all this stuff in our life that causes us to worry, and the first thing I just want to point out, I think all of us know, is that worry poisons everything. If you're at a party and you're worried, the party's not as good. If you're in Paris and you're worried, your trip to Paris is not as good. If you're in church and you're worried, your worship, your experience with God is not as good.

We have these experiences in life where we're worried about tomorrow, we're worried about what's going to happen, worry about our kids. And especially when they're adult children, if they're going through marriage problems, or they have health issues, or they struggle with

things like depression or anxiety or drugs. I mean these are the types of things we can't sleep at night.

And here is the thing about worry is very often worry is motivated by love, isn't it. It's because we care so much, because we love these people, because we want to enjoy our life. But worry, we all know worry is a bad thing. It's not something that's helping us, it's not something that makes us more responsible, it's something that clouds our vision, it clouds our thinking, and so the first thing we have to recognize is that if there is a way to not be a worried person, it's worth whatever it takes to be a peaceful, clear minded person, right? It's worth paying the price, if there's a price to pay, to not be worried, it's worth getting there, isn't it.

And friends, as I prayed and thought about how to talk about the series, I just realized that I've said don't worry too many times, and too much that comes across as try harder, when in truth there's one thing and one thing that's going to take away your worry, and that's the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit. Spending time with the Lord. Spending time in prayer. Knowing God. Being with Him. And that's not what we want to hear, because I don't have time for that! I don't have time for a quiet time. I don't have time to pray. I got to work! I'm worrying about this stuff, and I can't be lazy and just sitting around praying all the time.

So this is how we feel, this is what we think. What we don't recognize is, and I'm going to talk about this today, that even the secular world has realized the value of thinking, and you'll hear secular people

say this a lot, meditating now. It's becoming very popular in business, of learning. Look, these are Biblical things that have real world wisdom, and I wanted to let you know that there is a way to live worry free, not all the time, but most of the time, that you can be a peaceful person, you can receive the peace that only Jesus can give, and this is the answer. The answer is not trying harder, the answer is training. As an athlete trains, we have to be diligent about our spiritual health.

So this is going to be the cornerstone of this whole series. I'm going to talk about this today. You've seen me do this before. It's not original. I saw another pastor do it and he stole it from another pastor, but it's so useful. Imagine.. hold on one second. This is a treasure chest and there's real treasure in there. So imagine this is your life, right? Almost like in the shape of a flower or a fountain. And imagine the small bowl is you. This is your walk with God. This is your education, this is your learning, this is your thinking, this is you and the Lord together.

And then this next little bit bigger bowl, this is your family. This is super important, as well. This is your kids, it's your spouse, it's your parents, it's your close friends, it's your community, your life, love. This is what you experience in relationships.

And then finally, this is your world. This is what you do, this is your work, this is your church, maybe your ministry if you're in ministry. This is the stuff that you do in life that matter. This is your legacy. This is your achievements, your victories, your education.

And the kingdom of God is like this. As in Psalm 23, our cup is meant to overflow, so that through spending time with the Lord we're filled, right? So that as that fills on the inside of us through prayer and through life with God, it overflows naturally and loving, life-giving ways to our family, and as that spills over, everything in our broader world becomes blessed, right? So that the more God pours into us, eventually just begins to spill over into everything we do! We become smarter, wiser, sharper, more relaxed and less worried.

You want to live a worried free life? This is the only way. This is the only way. It doesn't come from trying harder. It doesn't come from self-medicating. It doesn't come from withdraw. It doesn't come from watching more TV or having more fun, because even when you do those things, you're just burying them. It's this: knowledge and experience with the Holy Spirit. Spending time with the Lord. And no matter where you are, if you're here in this place, receiving, being poured into by God every day, you won't be afraid when you hit these crazy, scary times in your life. You'll have a sense of not necessarily clarity, but trust, faith. That God's going to do this. God's going to get me through this. God's in control. And that's why our personal walk with the Lord is the most important thing in our life.

I didn't think through this water thing when I put this altogether. I hope this plate is going to work. I didn't do it well in the first service. Can

I have a drum roll please? I'm serious. (DRUM ROLL) No, don't clap, I messed up. I failed again. One more time.

What I actually wanted to show was what many of us do is this, right? It's like this is the most important thing: my job, my ministry, my legacy, my investments, my education, and my neighbor who always puts his trash can in front of my yard, right? And this is our spiritual life. It gets the leftovers. Our family, we still make it a priority, but the most important thing is my broader life and this is precisely what happens. It's just this.. right? And the thing about.. I know everybody's just watching this water. I'm not really getting across anyway. See? When you don't think about it, it's easy.

You see the thing is many of us, we pour into our broader life, and this is so important. The reason we do that is because the world we're in is so competitive isn't it. We look at everybody else achieving more, doing more, succeeding more, and so we want to take the fast road. We do that by neglecting our spiritual life. And we do that by neglecting our family and friends, in part so that our broader life can be a success.

But if I've learned anything being a pastor and being in touch with so much pain is pouring your life into that plate first is setting up your life for one of regret and pain. And also, it's not going to be a success. That the true success comes from learning, from thinking, from spending time with the spirit and allowing that as like a garden grows, over time naturally and in a healthy way to spill over into your life.

And so today we're going to talk about, and I know I'm already halfway through my sermon, but we're going to talk about the money bit. We are all worried about money, most of us, even if you've got it, we're worried about it. And I want you to learn today that God cares about your money situation. I don't think God wants people to be poor. I don't think He wants everybody to be rich, either. Although I think some are supposed to be rich and are called to be that way. But that the greatest way you can be wealthy is to attain treasure in heaven.

Now I can almost hear the eyes rolling when I say that. When I say the greatest way to be wealthy is to attain treasures in heaven. You can almost hear people be like whatever, okay, great. It's one of those. Terrific. The truth is that treasures in heaven are truly the best way to be wealthy, and that if you attain treasures in heaven, you're going to see victory in every aspect of your life, not just your bank account.

And although treasures in heaven don't always lead to success in say your bank account, they lead to the success of even when you don't have much, being at peace, being full of joy, having a life of purpose and victory. My guess is that for some of you, some of your best days and most enjoyable days in life, you didn't have that much money. Is that true for anybody here? Anybody go to college?

In Matthew chapter 6, Jesus is teaching us this. In Matthew 6 He says "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for

yourselves treasures in the heavens.” It’s a bad translation, by the way. Every Bible does this. It should be the heavens. We’re going to get to that, why that’s important. The reason we don’t understand treasures in heaven is because we don’t understand what the heavens are.

So “store up for yourselves treasures in the heavens where moth and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is within you is darkness, how great is that darkness? No one can serve two masters. 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 both God and money.”

Now you’ll see later that this is not saying that you can’t have money, it’s saying you can’t serve both God and money. You either serve money or money serves you. And Jesus wants to teach us that becoming the kinds of people who store up for ourselves treasures in heaven, that whenever we have money, that money is in service to our purposes, and the purposes of the Lord.

Now quick question, who here likes treasure? Whoever is not raising their hand is just either bored or lying. Everybody loves treasure, everybody has treasure. I know I’ve told this story, but I just think it’s hilarious. I’ve loved treasure when I was a kid. It was the most amazing

thing in my life. My dream was to have gold doubloons. Never happened, but I did get a number of various treasures. This is my treasure box from when I was a kid. You can see here I've got a pearl from Sea World, a two dollar bill, those are very rare, you know. I've got a sock rock that I found on Catalina Island. Let's see here, buffalo head nickel. I have a coin from a distant nation that I've never been to called Canada. And some gold cufflinks that my grandpa gave me, which are actually gold. And a picture of Bobby. There he is, right there. Look at that guy. Cute kid.

And this is my treasure box, right? And I loved the idea of treasure, of finding treasure. Actually once my dad, when he, you know, my parents were always so sweet and they always wanted me to spend time with them. And one weekend my dad wanted me to go fishing, but my mom insisted that I go spend the weekend with her. And so when he came back from the fishing trip, he showed me this picture. He said Bobby, 'we found a cove and look what we found. All this treasure.' And I said 'well where's the treasure?' And he's like, 'oh, what do you mean? It's back at the cove. I don't really know where it is.' And I said 'well why didn't you bring it back?' And he goes, 'I never thought of that. If only you'd been there.' Dad. Dad's do that kind of thing.

I had that picture forever. I used to stare at it at night. This is for real. I used to stare at it at night, and go one day, I'll find you and I will bring you home. And one day I was on a boat on a ride called Pirates of the Caribbean and I looked to the left. So all of us have treasure, right?

And I think the reason I bring that up is I used to think as a kid that treasures in heaven meant when I die I'm going to get a big pile of gold like that based on merit. That the better I act, I'm going to have like the bigger pile of gold. Maybe like a pearls and crowns and some trophies in there, helping an old lady walk across the street, turning the other cheek or something I'll get another doubloon. And what you realize as you become an adult, you're like that is stupid. Like if heaven is, you know, you have everything in heaven; if the streets are paved with gold, why do you want a room full of pavement, right? I mean it's not going to do anything, you don't want it, it's like you know what, I'd rather just have treasures on earth. Can I have those? That sounds awesome.

And so what I realized is that the reason, and by the way that's not true. You don't get a pile of gold. When Jesus is talking about treasures in heaven, He is talking about something that's accessible now. Something I can use today. Something that when I get it, I can't lose it. Something that can't be stolen. Something that no court can take from me. Something that can't be inherited. Something that gives me power. Something that gives me something valuable today. Something I can access at any time. Treasures in heaven are spiritual treasures and they're the most important thing.

God isn't telling us be poor. God is telling us be wealthy in spirit. And this is something the secular world is starting to understand. In seminary, they teach us that there's common grace and special grace,

right? So special grace is the saving grace that only believers can receive, but there's common grace – gifts from the Lord that anybody can attain. And I think treasures in heaven, some of them, anybody can attain. There's some treasures in heaven anyone can attain. So what are treasures in heaven? I'll tell you, just hold that thought.

First of all, in Greek it doesn't say treasures in heaven, it says treasures in.. you guys remember? The heavens. The heavens. That's because in a Jewish first century cosmology, the heavens spanned from what we think of as paradise. Heaven where I go when I die, that span all the way down to the very air around me. John Ortberg was talking about this last time he was here. You see it when Paul talks about the three heavens. This has messed up a lot of people. Like what is that about? Can we bring the scripture up real quick? When Paul says "I know a man" and he's talking about himself, but, "I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body, I do not know. God knows. And I know that this man, whether in body or apart from the body, I do not know but God knows, was caught up" to where? Paradise.

So what's the third heaven? Its heaven. It's what we think of as heaven. And so many people have read this scripture and are like, oh are there like three types of heaven, like third heavens for like Hannah and first heavens for guys like Bobby? Is that like you know they get in but

they're in the lower one. You know? You guys know it's true. She's the good one.

No, the cosmology, the first century Jews, the third heaven is what? Its paradise. It's where we go when we die. The second heaven is, in the Jewish mind, is the stars in the sky. It's the stars and the planets. It's the sky above. And then the first heaven is the very air around us.

And the reason this is important is because in this understanding, we live in a world; it's a spiritual world with angels and demons and the Holy Spirit. And in our active world, stuff is coming in and out. That's why Jesus says whatever you bind in heaven will be bound on earth. Whatever you loose in heaven will be loosed in earth. What's He talking about? It's the exact thing. That parallel world, that side by side with it. I know that sounds very abstract, but this is important because when you put treasures in heaven, it's not just something you get when you die, and it is, its eternal life, but it's also something you use today! It's things like knowledge, wisdom. Right?

What does Proverbs say. Wisdom is calling out on the streets, right? Its things like favor with God. Favor with people. Peace, courage. These are treasures in heaven. That no matter how much you get sued, no matter how much you go through, no matter how much people backstab you, no matter how much the economy changes, these treasures cannot be taken from you. We spend so much of our time trying to attain money and so little time attaining the wisdom that leads

to money. We spend so much time trying to beef up our portfolio and so little time building up our spiritual portfolio, building up virtue, courage, resilience, wisdom, favor, and a deep abiding relationship with the Lord.

You want to stop worrying? Hang out with the Lord. It's just like when you were a kid. When you got scared at night as a child, what'd you do? You went into mom and dad's room, right? You got close to your parents. We are not God's adults. We are God's children. When we worry, we need to go spend some time with dad. We need to get in His presence. We need to be with Him. We need to recognize He's always with us. He'll never leave us or forsake us. This is the only antidote to worry. This is it.

And the more I tried to think what's an easy to deliver it? This is it. You have to pray. You have to pray. You have to, have to pray. You have to read the Bible, you have to study, you have to memorize scripture, you have to make your relationship with the Lord the most important thing in your life. Don't feel guilty for not praying, but look at that opportunity. It's like what if somebody was like right over there in that field, there is a treasure chest and that field is for sale for a thousand dollars. I know you're like Irvine, no way. But just.. whatever. It's right there. You just buy that field. Nobody knows it's there. Sell everything, go buy it and you'll be wealthy. That's what Jesus says. That's what the kingdom of God is like. When we see it that way, we'll see, we'll never want to walk away from it ever again.

This is true even of physical riches, friends. Did you know, probably the greatest businessmen who's ever lived, Warren Buffet, spends 80% of his time thinking and reading? The guy has hundreds of thousands of employees, trillions of dollars in assets under management, and if you look at his calendar, I read in one interview, sometimes he'll have a haircut on Tuesday. He just reads and thinks. He's storing up for himself in the realm of common grace, spiritual treasures that have made him immensely wealthy. We can't take those worldly riches with us, but that's why you see that knowledge is behind almost all material wealth on earth. That's why like so many ultra wealthy people, when they go through those experiences and lose everything, they almost always become wealthy again like five/ten years later. There's only one group that's not that way. You know who it is? People who win the lottery. People who didn't earn it.

Actually, did you know a study recently showed that a majority of people who win the lottery go bankrupt within three to five years? The lottery is not from God. Don't play the lottery. It's a curse. Ninety-nine point ninety-nine-nine percent of people fail, and the ones that win, it's the worst thing that ever happened to them because they have their eyes fixed on treasure, not wisdom. They have their eyes fixed on money, not on what it takes to achieve and to succeed and to live a life of victory.

I got this one story from a guy named Jack Whittaker who said – Jack Whittaker who won \$315 million dollars in a lottery in West Virginia

in 2002 tells Time Magazine I wish that I had torn the ticket up. Since winning, Whitaker's daughter and granddaughter died due to drug overdoses. Just eight months after winning, he was robbed of half a million dollars. He says 'I just don't like Jack Whitaker. I don't like the hard heart I've got,' he said. 'I don't like what I've become.'

Look, being wealthy can be a huge blessing, but be spiritually wealthy before that. Learn, grow, read, study, have healthy eyes. Make the most important thing in your life your relationship with Jesus Christ. When you die, you won't care about your money. You'll care about your relationship with God, and you'll care about your family and your friends. That'll be it. You know it and I know it.

So follow Christ and grow and then build into your life the things you need, so that you don't have to worry about money, and you'll know that good things are coming.

I think I'm going to wait until next week, but one of the things I'm going to try and encourage you to do, I have another ten minutes, but to do this, I'm out of time. I get up every morning at 5:15. I'd mentioned this a few sermons ago. Hannah and I get up at 5:15 every morning to pray and to think and to plan out our day. And I am not a morning person. But I learned that I'm not a morning person because I go to bed too late. You go to bed early enough, you'll be a morning person.

And I want to encourage you that this could be something.. I was like Lord, should I share this with the church? Nobody will do this. Yes,

I'll be like Isaiah just preaching to ears that won't hear, and eyes that won't see. Because I would tell you, back when.. but I will share this, I think next week, I'll bring this back and share with you a method that I use on Sunday morning. Would that be useful? Of what I try and do in the morning, what's been useful for me and hopefully it can be useful for you.

But you don't have to get up in the morning, but there has to be something in your life where you're reading. You're reading the bible, you're reading nonfiction books, you're praying, you have maybe a mentor or you're apprenticing to something, and it's in that personal growth that you invite not only more financial success in your life, but most important you begin to grow in virtue, grow in heart, grow in courage, and it's in that space that worry diminishes because you grow in your faith and trust with God. And so we just ask for that.

And I just want to proclaim over you that any worry or anxiety that's in your life, I'm going to believe that Jesus is going to break those chains in your life. That every time you step into that space, that you ask Lord, break these chains of worry and fear in my life, that He's going to meet you there. I'm going to pray that over everyone.

Lord, in Jesus' name, we thank you that you command us to not fear and to not be afraid. Lord, we take all of our worries, worries about our children and our grandchildren, worries about our own health, worries about family and friends and our jobs and money, and all these

things, we just give them to you. We ask, Lord, that what the Psalm 23 says would be true. That in being shepherded by you, we just lack nothing. And so I pray that, Lord that chains of despair and fear would be broken over everyone under the sound of my voice. We love you Lord, and it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.