

Upside Down Generosity Series

JESUS & MONEY

- 1 Turn the World Upside Down**
Luke 4:14-30 • Jesus' Unexpected Message Of Justice

Jesus' message of good news is for those on the fringe of society. It is turning the world upside down.
- 2 Supply & Demand Upside Down**
Luke 9:10-17 • Feeding of the 5,000

Jesus turn our world upside down because he is a generous and extravagant provider who can and does provide in the face of seeming scarcity.
- 3 Safety Net Upside Down**
Luke 12:13-48 • Parable of the Rich Fool, Worry, and Stewardship

Jesus wants to turn our idea of safety upside down so we won't worry about worldly things and possessions, but rather focus on an abundant life.
- 4 The Money Broker Upside Down**
Luke 16:1-15 • Parable of the Shrewd Manager

Jesus turns the way we see money management upside down because worldly wealth stewardship is a test for bigger and more important things.
- 5 Blessing Upside Down**
Luke 18:18-30 • The Rich Young Ruler

Jesus wants us to turn out lives upside down by asking us to give up things that take center stage in our life (money) over Him.
- 6 Swindler Turned Upside Down**
Luke 19:1-27 • Zacchaeus

Generosity and joyful giving (and creating economic justice) are evidence of an upside down life transformed by Jesus.

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1 Turn the World Upside Down

Luke 4:14-30 • Jesus' Unexpected Message of Justice

Main Idea

Jesus' message of good news is for those on the fringe of society. It is turning the world upside down.

Potential Hook/Intro Ideas

Campaign Announcement Speech, Coronation of a King, or the start of a military campaign. A stated mission to make a change.

Main Points

- Jesus brings a message of good news but not necessarily for those that expected it
 - He's always been about the poor, weak, oppressed and powerless
 - He wants us to engage with His heart for justice
- In Jesus, God's plan for the world is fulfilled (shalom, restoration of right relationships)
- Jesus stops short of Isaiah 61:3 about God's vengeance. He then tells of Elijah and Elisha's ministry to the gentiles. Jesus wants the crowd to know his message is for all people!
- Jesus' life and message was always meant for the whole world
 - How have we let His message be just for us?

Application

Jesus invites us to be a part of his mission to turn the world upside down. As we engage in what that looks like over the next six weeks will you be open to learning how that might look for you? What do you need to do to be ready to hear what Jesus has for us?

Where do you hope to see this kind of turning upside down around you?

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2 Supply & Demand Upside Down

Luke 9:10-17 • Feeding of the 5,000

Main Idea

Jesus turn our world upside down because He is a generous and extravagant provider who can and does provide in the face of seeming scarcity.

Potential Hook/Intro Ideas

Scarcity in *Money Ball* movie (Min. 1-7)

Main Points

- The disciples are coming off their mission from Jesus around the countryside.
 - They are tired, excited and want to spend time with Jesus.
- This passage is about God/Jesus as provider. Jesus is especially trying to teach the disciples about this.
- The need is overwhelming; how do the disciples react? How do they look at the need?
 - How do the disciples react to the resources available? How does Jesus respond to the needs and available resources? How do people experience Jesus here?
- Jesus is lavishly generous and extravagant!
 - He provides where there seems to be a terrible situation and little resources.
 - And there is more than enough left over even.

Application

Jesus invites us to be a part of his mission to turn the world upside down. As we engage in what that looks like over the next six weeks will you be open to learning how that might look for you? What do you need to do to be ready to hear what Jesus has for us?

Where do you hope to see this kind of turning upside down around you?

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Safety Net Upside Down

Luke 12:13-48 • Parable of the Rich Fool, Worry, and Stewardship

Main Idea

Jesus wants to turn our idea of safety upside down so we won't worry about worldly things and possessions, but rather focus on an abundant life.

Potential Hook/Intro Ideas

Fools Gold—It isn't worth what it seems like. It gives a false sense of security and is definitely the wrong thing to invest in.

Main Points

- This passage starts with a man just wanting his fair share. But Jesus warns that seeking after and investing in worldly wealth is dangerous because it will not save you. What does it then mean to be rich towards God?
- Jesus then tells the disciples to not run after things to meet their earthly needs. These the Father will provide. He instead wants them to focus on things that will last forever. But again, what is that?
- Jesus then re-emphasizes the need to be ready and to not waste time on worldly things. For God (the master) could return at any point and take account.
- God is looking for those who will be faithful with both worldly things and heavenly things now. For when He returns those who have been faithful will receive even more.
- Jesus didn't come to "fill our barns" with more stuff, and settle our petty disputes, he came to show us how to live an abundant life and be obedient to the Father.

Application

What do you need to start pursuing instead of worldly wealth? How do you need to handle the worldly wealth you currently have or will have to do this?

What does faithfulness in stewardship of what God has given you look like? What is one step you can take this week?

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4 The Money Broker Upside Down Luke 16:1-15 • Parable of the Shrewd Manager

Main Idea

Jesus turns the way we see money management upside down because worldly wealth stewardship is a test for bigger and more important things.

Potential Hook/Intro Ideas

Extravagant use of wealth in *The Great Gatsby*.

Main Points

- In this story the Master is exacting interest in a manner that gets around the ban of doing so. The manager, once informed of being fired re-negotiates with the debtors to remove the interest hoping to make friends with them. The manager cannot now return to the debtors to add the interest back on as that would be admitting to wrong doing. This is why the manager was do clever.
- Jesus' story here is one of a warning and teaching to his followers. He is saying that pagans know how to use their money well and wisely and his followers should as well.
- He wants His followers to use their wealth just as wisely as the world, but for spiritual purposes.
- Wealth can be used for many things.
- God uses it to see if we can be faithful.
- Since we don't own any of our wealth (it all comes from God) what we do with what we have been given is reveals our character (much like the manager).
- If we aren't being faithful to steward wealth well then it has become our master. For it is not ours, but all comes from God.
- God wants us to be faithful with what He has given us so that He can give us more important things to steward. And if we are unfaithful we prove ourselves unworthy of greater stewardship.
- Faithfulness with money and other things is no accident. It arises out of who we are.

Application

How can you be a better steward of what God has given you? How can you invest in better things than your own comfort and even just acquiring more wealth? This week, start thinking about how to better invest your worldly wealth. What does it look like for you to be wise about Kingdom investments too?

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5

Blessing Upside Down

Luke 18:18-30 • The Rich Young Ruler

Main Idea

Jesus wants us to turn out lives upside down by asking us to give up things that take center stage in our life (money) over Him.

Potential Hook/Intro Ideas

Bribe scene in *Titanic* for a spot on a life boat. What can your money buy you? What is it really worth? Jesus turns the whole idea of blessing and riches upside down.

Main Points

- Jesus mentions the commandments that have to do with the young man's relationship with others.
- Not the ones that have to do with his relationship with God.
- This "good" Jewish boy had everything except he had something in his life that was more valuable to him than God. Money.
- It wasn't about giving his money away. It was about destroying his idol.
- The rich, like this young man, find it difficult to fully rely on God when they have earthly riches to rely on.
- This really shows your heart. Where do you think your most valuable treasure is?
- This reverses what the Jews of the day thought. Being rich was a sign of blessing from God. Their question is then more, "how can anyone be saved if the rich cannot?" Jesus is saying salvation is a miracle of God and wealth cannot save you and in fact can get in the way.

Application

Confess where money and possessions have been an idol in your life. Confess where it has come between you and God. Jesus' cure for the idol is to give it away and rely on Jesus. What can you give away to become more reliant on Jesus?

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6 The Swindler Upside Down

Luke 19:1-27 • Zacchaeus

Main Idea

Generosity and joyful giving (and creating economic justice) are evidence of an upside down life transformed by Jesus.

Potential Hook/Intro Ideas

The end of *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. The Grinch is changed completely and undoes all the harm he did.

Main Points

- Zacchaeus being a tax collector is important because he made his living by taking extra taxes from people (not to mention he's working for the enemy)
- And yet, he is very excited to spend time with Jesus.
- The evidence here of Zacchaeus' life transformation and new life in Jesus? It's his making right the economic wrongs he committed and his generous and joyful giving away of wealth.
- Jesus then tells a parable to illustrate further that those who have been given much will be expected to steward it well.
- If you did the "Blessing Upside Down: Rich Young Ruler" study: This story contrasts really well to the Rich Young Ruler. Zacchaeus has a completely different reaction to Jesus.

Application

It's now time to put this into practice. God's expectation of stewardship and investing what He has given us well and the fact that generosity is the evidence of God's work in our lives.

Give them a practical way to give generously to some kingdom initiative (InterVarsity or otherwise).