**GREATER THAN**

Welcome back to our Greater Than sermon series

We instinctively seek-out greater things. We want better things, not worse things. We like to upgrade.

Better job, better clothes, better car, better relationships. We prefer greater things.

Last week Pastor Chris told us the world has a ranking system with three Categories: Sex, Money, Power

**SEX, MONEY, POWER**

The more you have of these things the more you are worth.

To the world the sexier you are the greater you are; the wealthier you are the greater you are;
the more powerful you are the greater you are.

But as believers we have to know that there are things greater than these

Last week Pastor Chris told us that Love is greater than sex. Check it out online if you missed it.

Today we are going to be talking about money.

**MONEY**

Money is good. If you don’t think money is good, we can take up a special offering; we would be glad to help you get rid of it.

Money is helpful. It makes it a lot easier to exchange goods and services. It’s easier to be able to pay for things with money than to have to carry around three chickens, a goat, and a sack of potatoes everywhere.

Money is flexible. If I have some money I could get a cup of coffee or I could get some gasoline.

Money is a means of communicating value. This thing is worth this many dollars, but that thing is worth twice as many dollars.

The world thinks money is GREAT.

The world tries to convince us that money is THE way of communicating value. How much money do you have? How much are you worth? How much do you get paid?
The more money you have the greater you are.

And so, the world really wants money. It really wants your money. But at the same time, it wants to convince you that it is going to help you keep more of your money (if you give it some of your money.)

This is the whole idea behind sales. Buy one get one FREE. 50% off. Two for the price of one!
I’m not sure I need this thing, or even want this thing, but it’s such a good value I’d be stupid not to buy it.

**3 SHOES FOR $99**

Here’s one I saw in town. Three shoes for $99. Why would I settle for two when I can get three!
The gimmick is that it is really difficult to buy three socks.

The world tends to over value money and it wants us to over value it too.

How can we tell what something is really worth? What is money itself worth?

**USEFUL, BEAUTIFUL, PERMANENT**

Here’s three more criteria for determining value: usefulness, beauty, permanence.

Usefulness – how useful is it? What can it do?

Beauty – how does it make you feel? Does it inherently bring you joy?

Permanence – how durable is it? How long will it last?

So let’s look at money and compare it to these three criteria.

We already talked about money’s usefulness. It is a means of exchange. It is flexible. You can buy a lot of different things with it. Money is useful.

Is money beautiful? Somebody put a lot of effort into designing what money looks like. And every year they’re updating the pictures on the back of the quarters… But no. Money is not beautiful. I doubt any of you have some money framed in your home just to admire how beautiful it is.

More and more often we don’t even interact with physical money. We just use our cards or our phones and move numbers from one place to another. We don’t even really see the money.

Now, some might argue, that if you’re broke and you have a bill due, that when you get the money you need, it is beautiful. But I would argue that it is the way you got the money that is actually beautiful; either a gift from a caring friend, or the reward of work and effort that you exerted. The money isn’t the beautiful part.

Is money permanent? NO!!!
That money talks, I’ll not deny, I heard it once: it said, “goodbye.” – Richard Armour

Money seems to disappear on its own, especially if you have kids.
It takes work to hang on to your money.

And even if you do manage to save your money and hang onto it, it still disappears.
Inflation – year after year the same dollar in your pocket is worth less and less.

Then there is no guarantee that what you use for money will still be used for money in the future.
Does anybody here pay for things in drachma? Dinar? Shillings?

Money is not permanent.

Let’s go back to useful. As I said, money is useful, but there are limits.

The world wants us to think that money is all powerful: if you have enough money you can do anything.
This is not true. There are several things that money can’t do. For instance, money can’t buy love.
As the Beatles said, “Can’t buy me love.” I prefer Huey Lewis.
“Don’t need money, don’t take fame, Don’t need no credit card to ride this train… That’s the power of love.” But they were both ripping off the bible:

**SONG OF SONGS 8:7 NIV** Many rivers cannot quench love; rivers cannot sweep it away. If one were to give all the wealth of one’s house for love, it would be utterly scorned.

Money is a way of communicating value, but it is an imperfect way to communicate value.
Things can be undervalued or overvalued. You are worth more than the money you have or the money you make.

There are other ways to express value: time, effort, love.

There are greater things than money.

**LOVE > MONEY**

Love is greater than money. Money is less than love.

Money is one way in which you can express love. We just celebrated Valentine’s Day. The world would have you believe that if you didn’t spend a lot of money on your valentine, you must not love them very much. But there are a lot of different ways to express love.

If I had a pie chart of all the different ways to express love, money would just be one tiny sliver.
Love is greater than money.

You might counter, aren’t there lots of ways to spend money other than in love? Yes. But all of the good and positive ways we spend our money can also be done in love.

How does love compare to the criteria?

**USEFUL, BEAUTIFUL, PERMANENT**

Useful – Is love useful? Yes. That’s a tricky question. Let’s come back to that one.

Beautiful – Is love beautiful? Yes. Love is beautiful, sometimes. But sometimes it can be painful.

Permanent – Is love permanent? Uhhhh, well sometimes.

It would help if we defined our terms. What do we mean by love? What is love?

Last week we came up with a definition for what real love is.

**GOD = LOVE**

The Bible tells us that God is love. Real love is the unconditional, self-sacrificing love that God shows us.

**JOHN 15:13 NIV** Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

Jesus death for us on the cross is the greatest expression of love. This is love and there is none greater.

So now let’s go back to our criteria.

**USEFUL, BEAUTIFUL, PERMANENT**

Is Love useful? Yes! Love saved you. Forever.

**JOHN 3:16 NIV** For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Because of God’s great love, we will not perish but instead have eternal life. No amount of money could do that.

Love isn’t just useful, it is necessary. It would be difficult, but a person could live their entire life without being exposed to money. A human can survive without money.
A person could not survive without love. From the very first moments love is required in order for a baby to be cared-for and protected in order to survive. And without God’s love that life would go nowhere.

**USEFUL, BEAUTIFUL, PERMANENT**

Is Love beautiful? Yes. God’s love is beautiful. Jesus’ death on the cross wasn’t very beautiful in the physical. But it was a beautiful expression of how much God loves us and what He is willing to do for us.

And Jesus’ death wasn’t the end-game. He died for us so that we could ultimately be with Him and share in his love. And that is beautiful.

But unlike other beautiful things, and unlike money, love is beautiful for everyone involved. For most things, it is beautiful for the person receiving it. But with love, it’s beautiful to express love as well as to receive love.

Is Love permanent? Yes. God’s love is permanent. Nothing will ever change what He did for us on the cross. When we share God’s love with the people around us that is permanent as well. When you share God’s love with the people around you, it is an expression of the eternal love He has for them. And even if they forget, the eternal God sees it and remembers. By sharing His love we become more like Jesus and bringing the eternal kingdom of God into this world.

Love doesn’t disappear, and it doesn’t lose value over time.

**LOVE > MONEY**

Love is so much greater than money.

What is the greatest commandment?

**MATTHEW 22:37-39 NIV** Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

God commands us to love not to give or have money.

**JOHN 13:34-35 NIV** “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

How much less meaningful and powerful would it have been if he had said, Give others money as I have given money to you. Everyone will know you are my disciples if you give them money.

Sometimes we may not have money, but we will always have love.

**LOVE > MONEY \*\*\*MUSICIAN\*\*\***

There are things that love can do that money cannot. Love can be given without diminishing. If I give you dollar, then I have one less dollar. But if I express love to you, I still have the same amount of love. In fact, now there’s more, because you received love and I still have love.

If you spend or give away other people’s money, they will usually be unhappy about it, and it might even be a crime. We don’t usually get to give away other people’s money. But you are free to give away God’s love. In fact, He encourages it. “As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” We love because He first loved us. In a minute we will dismiss, and when we do, we always encourage you to do three things. Connect with God. Connect with other believers. And connect other people to the love of Jesus. We are called to take Jesus’ love out into the world and share it with other people.

Finally, Love is something that we can give to God. Can you give God money? Kinda – sorta, indirectly… You can give to church, or to the least of these, but you can’t say, “Here, God. Here’s some money.” It all belongs to Him anyway.

But you can give God love. The greatest commandment is to love God. He wouldn’t tell us to do it if it wasn’t possible. You can give God love. That’s what worship is all about. You can express your love in prayer, which we are about to do. You can show God love daily in the way you live your life, as well as in the way you love others.

Love is greater than money. Have you been chasing after lesser things and neglecting greater things? Have you been pursuing lesser things rather than showing love to the people around you and to God?

At the end of each service we invite everyone to come forward and spend some time talking to God.
These altars are open I encourage you to let God you know you love Him. Talk to Him about turning from the lesser things to embrace the greater things. If you don’t feel valued; if you feel less than, come and receive his love.