A black and white image of a city skyline, including skyscrapers and a bridge, is shown upside down at the top of the page. The rest of the background is a plain, light color.

MATTHEW

The Upside umog Kingdom

Matthew 17

Faith in God Can Move Mountains



Matthew 17:14-20

Faith in God can do the impossible

MATTHEW
The Upside down Kingdom



Faith in God can do the impossible

- Jesus chastised His disciples for having “so little” faith, just as He did when they were afraid of the storm.
- Jesus connected faith with healing. “Your faith has made you well.”
- In Nazareth, He only healed a few sick people. He did not do many miracles “because of their unbelief” (Matthew 13:58).



Faith in God can do the impossible

- A mustard seed was the smallest seed known to their culture.
- Ancient people thought of mountains as being rooted far beneath the earth.
- The phrase “moving mountains” was a typical Jewish rabbi’s way of saying “doing the impossible.”



Faith in God can do the impossible

- Jeremiah described the “man who trusts in the Lord” as a “tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream.”
- The man whose heart turns away from the Lord who is “like a shrub in the desert” (Jeremiah 17:5–8).
- The difference between the two trees is where they are planted, meaning what they have put their trust in.

A black and white image of a city skyline, including skyscrapers and a bridge, oriented upside down at the top of the page. The rest of the page is a plain, light-colored background.

What happened to Matthew 17:21?

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Matthew 17:22-23

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

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Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

- Jesus told them that nothing would be impossible for them if they only had the smallest amount of faith.
- Immediately afterward, He told them He would be delivered into the hands of men and killed.
- The contrast between these two stories would have been confusing to the disciples.



Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

- Jesus chose to empty Himself, take on the form of a servant, and humble Himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:5–8).
- It was also sign to them of their lives.
- They would do miracles, cast out demons, preach boldly but also face suffering, persecution, and martyrdom.



Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

- Peter who rebuked Jesus about saying He would suffer would later tell the religious leaders who killed Jesus that he would not stop preaching about Jesus (Acts 4:20).
- Paul would boast in His sufferings and weaknesses (2 Corinthians 11:21–33) and say he would rather die, but he would stay if God still had work for him to do (Philippians 1:18–26).



Matthew 17:24-27

God will supernaturally provide what we need

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God will supernaturally provide what we need

- Since the end of the Maccabean period, adult Jewish males paid an annual two-drachma tax for the upkeep of the temple in Jerusalem, based on Exodus 30:13.
- The funds raised by this tax were so enormous that the temple leaders had to create new things to spend the money on.



God will supernaturally provide what we need

- The tax was not compulsory, but most people paid it.
- There were a few Jewish sects (Sadducees and Essenes) who refused to pay it.
- Tradition also said that those living off of charity, as Jesus and His disciples did, did not have to pay the temple tax.



God will supernaturally provide what we need

- When it comes to the temple, God is the king, and Jesus and His disciples were His sons. They didn't have to pay the temple tax.
- Misconception #1 - Jesus wasn't talking about whether to pay taxes to government (earthly kings).
- The Bible speaks to that in Matthew 22 and Romans 13.



God will supernaturally provide what we need

- Misconception #2 - Jesus wasn't talking about the tithe or the command to give generously to God's work.
- The temple tax was based on Exodus 30 and was a one-time offering the people of Israel at that time made to the tabernacle.
- Only later, in the second temple period, did the religious leaders start requiring this "tax" annually.



God will supernaturally provide what we need

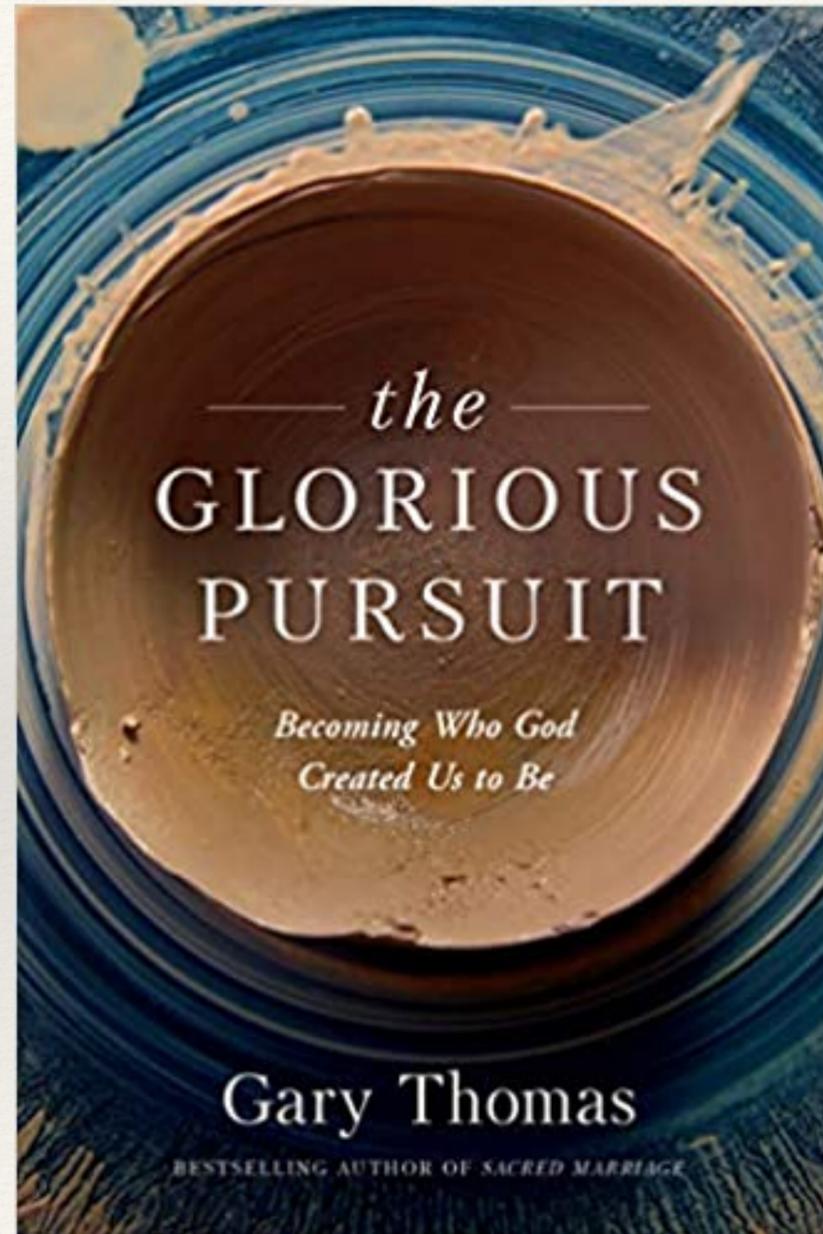
- Jesus didn't have to pay the tax, and yet paid it anyway so as "not to give offense to" the religious leaders (verse 27).
- Biblical principle: This is similar to what Paul said about eating or not eating meat that has been sacrificed to idols (Romans 14).
- You may have the "right" to do it, but it's not hurting you not to do it. So just don't do it (1 Corinthians 8:7–13).



God will supernaturally provide what we need

- But Jesus didn't just tell Peter to pay the tax out of their common purse, which they probably could have done.
- He told Peter to go fishing. He found a shekel (four drachmas, enough for two Jewish males) in the first fish he caught.
- It would have also been significant to Peter because redefined his life and promised to make him a "fisher of men."

Glorious Pursuit



William Law



William Law was an eighteenth century Anglican writer:

“Women and men should earnestly pursue humility, patience, generosity, faith, compassion, courage, kindness and forgiveness with the same intensity that those in the world pursue wealth, fame, worldly achievement, and physical beauty.”

Christian Virtues

- Chief among the virtues is humility - Jesus left His position beside the Father and humbled Himself, a suffering servant for the human race.
- Other virtues of Jesus include surrender to the will and purposes of God; detachment from our dependence on the world; love that is clear of self-interest; chastity that springs from a purity of heart; generosity; and keeping vigilance over our souls.
- Also, patience with others; discernment to perceive God with the eyes of the soul; thankfulness, gentleness, and fortitude to continue.

Humility

- John Calvin - called humility the “sovereign virtue” and “the mother and root of all virtue.”
- Jonathan Edwards - called humility “the most essential thing in true religion.”
- Andrew Murray - considered humility the “root” of our spiritual life.
- We don’t become humble as much as we learn to practice humility.

Humility

- Change your focus - changing our focus from ourselves to the grandeur of God's greatness
- Adopt a posture of receiving - turn to God and confess you need help
- Expect growth through experience - "The older you grow, the more you see, the less reason you will find for being proud" - J.C. Ryle
- Adopt a self-emptying spirit - the spirit begins in prayer
- Practice humility toward others - practice selfless living

Surrender - Detachment

- Surrender is an act of the will, accepting physical circumstances or situations God has ordained and looking for His good purpose in them.
- Detachment means to stop finding our meaning and security in people things, positions, money, and power so they longer lure us into actions we know are unwise or unprofitable.
- Surrender is what we submit to, detachment is about what we yearn for.

Generosity

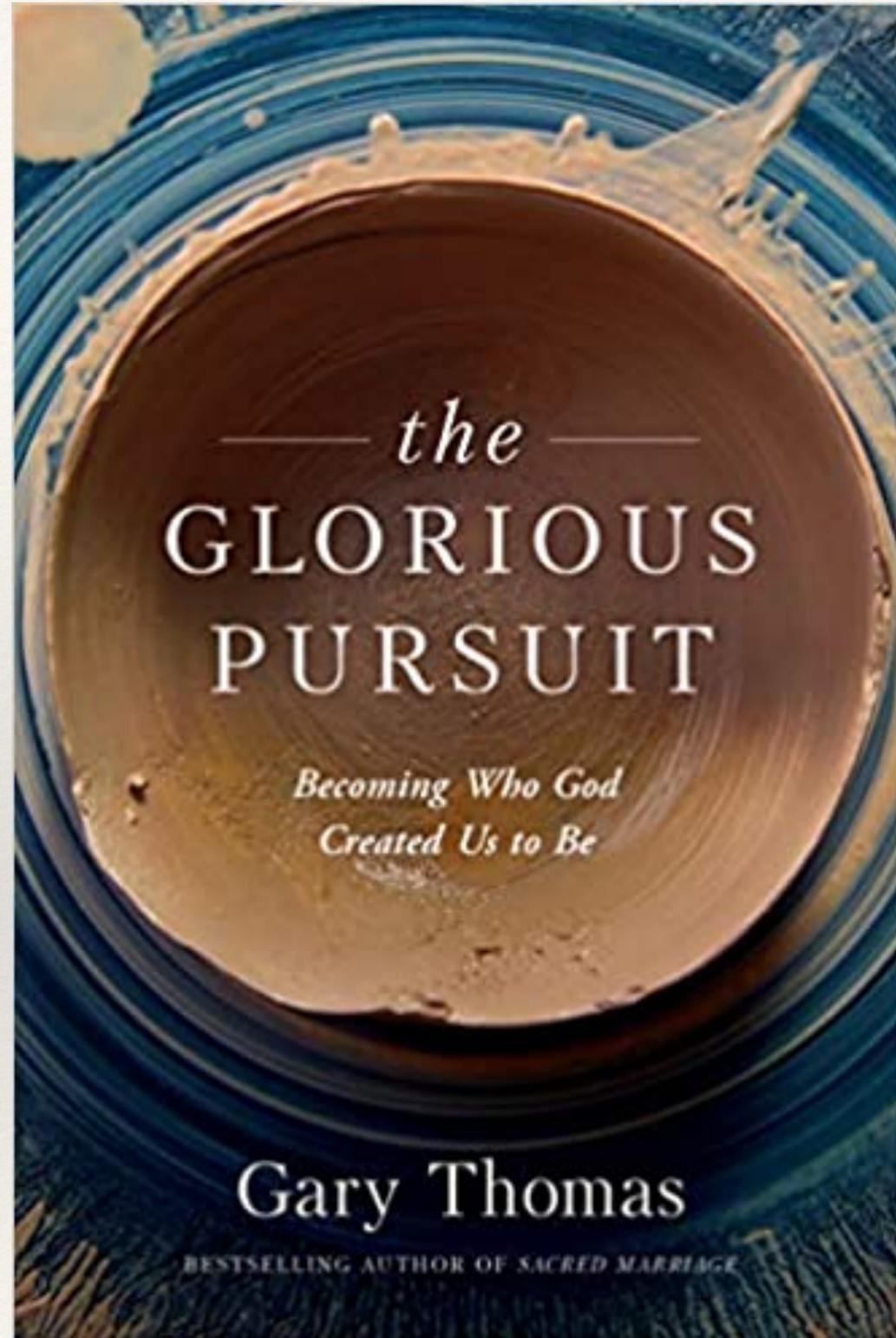
- Possessions are necessary so it is not sinful to desire things
- Realize that possession overpromise and underdeliver
- Consider the temptations of wealth
- Adopt an eternal perspective
- Experience the internal joy of giving

Other Christian Virtues

- John Owen calls vigilance “a moral sensitivity to the weakness and corruption within us.”
- Impatience is an addiction to comfort, ease, and our own will.
- Holiness awakens every fiber of our being, including that element commonly referred to as discernment — a clearer eye with which to see the truth about people and situations.
- Thankful Christians have cultivated a view of God’s goodness in which they believe that He can work through all things.

Other Christian Virtues

- We will make mistakes. We may even be humiliated. That's why we need the virtue of fortitude to soldier on.
- Neuroscience and Scripture both teach that what we *do* influences who we *are*, just as who we *are* influences what we *do*. This dichotomy makes obedience an essential, even foundational virtue, for obedience solidifies all the other virtues
- Penitence is being willing to exchange my old view of the things that I think will give me inner life for the things from God that really will give life.



the
GLORIOUS
PURSUIT

*Becoming Who God
Created Us to Be*

Gary Thomas

BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF SACRED MARRIAGE