



## Jesus and Rich Uncle Pennybags (A contemplative sketch)

*The following sketch was written by Matt Hummel and presented in worship by Matt Hummel and David Davenport.*

*\*Jesus rolls, lands on an Orange property owned by Pennybags.\**

**Pennybags:** And that's going to be \$220. Heheh, I have to say Jesus, you sure are bad at this game. You practically gave me that property and already I've swiped my money right back from you!

**Jesus:** *\*laughing along\** Well, Pennybags, you may be right, there. I guess I just prefer a simple deck in front of me. Having too many properties seems like too much to manage and for what gain? I'll tell you my favorite part is actually landing on the jail space, just - you know - "for a visit."

**P:** Well, you make for a quick game anyway.

**J:** I do have a question though. Can you tell me about this space here, the "Luxury Tax?" What is that? Is it like "Income Tax?"

**P:** *\*grunts\** Hardly, though they both amount to little more than blatant thievery of the highest order. But the "Luxury Tax" is far worse.

**J:** How's that now?

**P:** Well, the "Luxury Tax" is a simple flat-rate penalty on anyone who lands on the space. In the scheme of the game, I would say it does nothing more than prolong the game with an absolutely random bit of wealth redistribution. See, the "Luxury Tax" isn't really that much money - \$75 in fact. And it's so close to 'GO' that it's easily recoverable. And yet, for those with less than fortunate financial affairs *\*gesturing to Jesus\** it can be an overwhelming sum. What really ruffles my whiskers though is, there aren't even any standard rules as to what happens with that bit of revenue!

**J:** Is that so!?

**P:** Indeed! Sometimes it goes to the bank, but I've found it all too common that the "Luxury Tax" is distributed as a "free gift" to anyone who so happens to land on Free Parking! Can you imagine?! Abominable!

**J:** Well, that doesn't sound so bad at all. In fact, it seems to respond to the randomness of the tax quite well.

**P:** You've got that ponderous look in your eye. Mind if I roll while you theorize?

**J:** Go ahead. But, here now, would you consider that the "Luxury Tax" serves more like a gift to the good of all?

**P:** A gift?!

**J:** Consider it this way: The Luxury Tax could be seen as akin to a tribute glorifying the Lord God by seeing to his people in a way that only He wills.

**P:** You've intrigued me. And how do you mean? *\*Pennybags moves his token around the board\** It would make more sense for the Lord to be so attributed in a more standard way, something like a portion of the income tax—speaking of! *\*lands on Income Tax space, begins to break his collected \$200 from passing Go\**

**J:** Well, I would agree that setting aside a portion of one's earnings is certainly beneficial to the church that does God's will. Ultimately, giving to the church is an act of worship, not an economic endeavor. When we give, we are not simply adding to the church budget, we are giving up a gratitude offering to the Father Himself. Thus, we must all give "as unto the Lord." The ultimate goal in giving, an act which practically speaking serves to the good of others, is to please Him.

**P:** But there's the problem. The luxury tax is still just random. Anyone can land on it whether they've got something to give or not. And if it's an act of worship as you say, then shouldn't giving be as consistent as attending worship itself?

**J:** I understand where you're coming from. I'll try to illustrate better. *\*picks up the dice\** When I roll now, the random chance of my landing on "Luxury Tax" is not unlike the randomness of fortune itself. No one person is so fortunate as to have guaranteed funds, *\*rolls the dice, begins to move his token\** but yet everyone who is a disciple of the Lord is called to give whenever "fortune" so chooses. *\*lands on a "Chance" space, collects a card but doesn't read it\** The Lord never asks us to give what we do not have, yet we are always called to give.

**P:** I think I understand, but I think if anyone was listening to this little musing, then I could speak for them, saying that logic is fuzzy at best. I think when it comes to worshipping the Lord through giving, I'll just stick to what I've always done.

**J:** That's as good a resolution as any my friend. It's not a perfect metaphor after all! In your worship through giving, *"put [your] hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment... Do good...be rich in good deeds, and...be generous and willing to share. In this way [you] will lay up treasure for [yourself] as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that [you] may take hold of the life that is truly life."* (1 Tim. 6:17-19)

**P:** I will do that Lord. Now, uh, what's your card say?  
*\*Jesus reads the card, a large smile growing on his face\**

**J:** "Go directly to jail!" Well, at least I've made friends there with all my visits!