

Elon Musk Pushes Back at Pope With Bible Verse in Wealth Debate

Pope Leo XIV made headlines after criticizing Tesla CEO Elon Musk's ballooning wealth and potential to become the world's first trillionaire. In his first media interview, the pontiff told Catholic news site Crux that CEO compensation has spiraled out of control compared to ordinary workers.

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"CEOs that 60 years ago might have been making four to six times more than what the workers are receiving ... it's now 600 times more than the average workers are receiving," he said, according to CNN. The pope pointed to Musk's proposed \$1 trillion pay package, adding, "Yesterday, there was the news that Elon Musk is going to be the first trillionaire in the world. What does that mean, and what's that about? If that is the only thing that has value anymore, then we're in big trouble."

Musk's Scriptural Clapback

Musk did not let the critique go unanswered. On Sunday he fired back on X with a pointed passage from Matthew 7:3-5. "Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye?" Musk wrote.

The irony was not lost on many observers. The world's richest man quoting the Bible to rebuke the pope himself added a dramatic twist to a growing clash over wealth and power.



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Musk bolstered his argument by sharing hedge fund manager Kyle Bass' remarks on Vatican wealth. Bass claimed the Catholic Church controls nearly \$2 trillion in assets, 200 million acres of global land, and more than \$100 billion in investments, while enjoying tax exemptions across the world.

Vatican's Finances Under Scrutiny

The Holy See has long faced speculation about its fortune. The Apostolic See Heritage Administration reported a \$52 million profit in 2023, with assets increasing by \$8 million. The pope's personal net worth has not been disclosed, though researchers in Rome have estimated it near \$1 billion. Newsweek reported that the Vatican itself is currently running a deficit.

Pope Francis, who died in April, had attempted to bring reform and transparency to the church's financial dealings, but secrecy and speculation continue to shadow its reputation.

Tesla's Pay Plan and Market Momentum

At the center of the storm is Tesla's \$1 trillion compensation plan. The package would pay Musk over the next decade if Tesla reaches ambitious targets in earnings, vehicle deliveries, robotaxis, and humanoid robots.

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A separate filing with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission showed Musk spent nearly \$1 billion to buy million Tesla shares, pushing his net worth to over \$430 billion. That purchase helped Tesla stock climb 4.5 percent in 2025, with retail traders on Stocktwits showing "extremely bullish" sentiment.

What the Bible Says About Wealth and Hypocrisy

The debate between Musk and the pope raises larger questions about how Christians should view money. Scripture does not condemn wealth outright but warns of its dangers. First Timothy 6:10 declares, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil." At the same time, the Bible commends hard work and wise stewardship, showing us that most importantly, this is an issue of the heart.

Musk's chosen verse strikes at another issue: hypocrisy. In Matthew 7, Jesus warns against judging others while ignoring one's own faults. By using this passage, Musk suggested that the pope should examine the church's wealth before condemning the riches of others.

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The spectacle of a tech mogul invoking the words of Christ to challenge the head of the Catholic Church shows how faith, finance and power remain deeply entwined. Whether Musk's retort will spark deeper reflection or simply fuel more controversy remains to be seen.

James Lasher, a seasoned writer and editor at Charisma Media, combines faith and storytelling with a background in journalism from Otterbein University and ministry experience in Guatemala and the LA Dream Center. A Marine Corps and Air Force veteran, he is the author of *The Revelation of Jesus: A Common Man's Commentary* and a contributor to *Charisma magazine*.