

28 July 2013

## Desire not earthly treasures but riches in Christ (Money, Money, Money Pt 2)

This is our second study on the topic of money and riches. In our first study we covered two points; (1) the love of money is the root of all evil, and (2) there is uncertainty in riches. This study will follow on from the previous and cover three points; (1) treasures of wickedness profit nothing, and (2) there is no satisfaction with money or what money can buy, and (3) desire not the treasures of the world but riches in Christ.

Let us add a little detail to our points:-

### 1. Treasures of wickedness profit nothing

Prov 10:2 *Treasures of wickedness profit nothing; but righteousness delivereth from death.*

See also Prov 15:6.

Both our verses for this point are from Proverbs, both point out the folly of gaining money by wicked, illegal means. Prov.10: 5 states that righteousness delivers us from death, and for today refers to the believer who is imputed with the righteousness of Christ (see Rom.4: 22-24), and does not see death (see Rom: 5: 21), whereas the treasures of wickedness profit nothing in this life, neither gets a person to heaven. Prov.15: 6 reads; *In the house of the righteous [is] much treasure: but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.* In this proverb there is a comparison with the house of the righteous (a saved man), with a wicked (an unsaved man). The latter part of the verse suggesting that the wicked acquire their wealth unlawfully. These verses remind me of the boys in the movie *Oliver Twist* where they earn their keep by stealing.

Have you ever sat down with a youngster and instructed them not to steal? Did they ever listen or did *they* know best? Although most young adolescents know not to steal, they often go through a phase of taking some money from Mum, Dad or their siblings. The law of the land stipulates that stealing is wrong and there is a commandment in Scripture that says, *thou shalt not steal* (see Ex.20, 17 & Deut.5: 19). Whereas in the world you might get a warning for a first offence, then a smack on the hand for a second, then jail-time for a third, or whatever is the process, in Scripture the law requires the thief to pay back double (see Ex 22:7).

Many movies have their foundation in crime, where the wicked steal from others, but as we know from the Scriptures, riches acquired by ill-gotten gains will perish (see Eccl 5:13 & 14), they profit nothing. One movie that I remember was the *Italian Job* where the thieves stole gold and then one of their own stole from the rest of the group, then the group stole the gold back. Such ill-gotten gains are the result of the root of all evil, which is the love of money, that we looked at in our first point of our previous study. The wicked lust after money and so spend their time seeking ways to gain more. The Scriptures use a term *filthy lucre* (see Tit.1: 7), where *lucre* means profit, and hence carries the meaning of ill-gotten gains. Bishops and deacons are not to desire or be greedy of filthy lucre (see 1Tim.3: 3 & 8), lest they fall into the condemnation of the devil (see 1Tim.3: 6).

I am sure today there are Pastors and teachers who have succumbed to this device of the devil. A device that is so powerful, that it lures men away from focusing on the truth of eternal riches in heaven, where they desire earthly treasures which have no profit in this life or in heaven. So let us remember that treasures of wickedness, filthy lucre, profit nothing for the saved man or the unsaved, and let us pray for those who are snared by this device of the devil.

### 2. There is no satisfaction with money or what money can buy.

Isa 55:2 *Wherefore do ye spend money for [that which is] not bread? and your labour for [that which] satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye [that which is] good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.*

Lust is centred in a man's heart (see Rom.1: 24) that is where his desire for something takes place. Lust can be for a person (i.e. concupiscence, see 1Thes.4: 5), or for money (see 1Tim.6: 9), or for idols (see Col.3: 5), or for food (see Deut.12: 20 & Ps.78: 18). Our point suggests that when a person lusts after riches there is no satisfaction from their desire for more money, nor the things that money can buy.

Why is gambling addictive? It is not like cigarettes where a physical substance such as nicotine stimulates the body to desire more and more, or like drugs where once the body is hooked there is a physical withdrawal period that takes place because of a physical desire that has been created. But rather, when it comes to money, concupiscence or idols, there is no withdrawal period, there is no pill that can be taken to cure the lusting. It is a spiritual lust, there is no satisfaction, the person tormented has to battle spiritually with the device. Therefore, the unsaved is unable to combat the device of lust, because they are not spiritually minded (see Rom.8: 5, 6). Hence, why most rapists who lust after the flesh will continue to re-offend and those who lust after money and steal will often re-offend. The only way to cure such a lusting is to get saved, be cleansed by the blood of the Lamb, and then die daily to the lusts of the

flesh and the lusts of the eyes (see 1Jn.2: 16). Therefore, for a man of the flesh, for an unsaved man, who only knows his desire, his wanting, his lusting, when he sees TV programmes satisfying people's lusts, he only has it confirmed that such desires are what this world is all about, and so he constantly strives to get a better job, to earn more money, to put more money in the bank, into bonds, into houses, into businesses, because that is his reality (see Eph.2: 3). But there is no satisfaction of such desires. And if that man then gets saved, and is not taught, counselled or instructed from the word of God to die to his lusts, they will prevent him from growing in his faith, because as we mentioned in our previous study, man cannot love or worship both God and mammon. And there are believers today, who have carried their lusting for money, idols, or the things of the flesh with them when they get saved and never died to them, never taken them to the cross of Calvary and asked the Lord to help them leave those lusts at the grave and to walk in newness of life, to walk in the spirit and not fulfil the lusts of the flesh (see Gal.5: 16). Hence, why Pastors and teachers are not to lust for filthy lucre, or have inordinate affections as do Sodomites. So if a person claims to be Christian, yet spends their day justifying their sodomy, or their filthy lucre acquired at the expense of their flock, and do not call their behaviour sin, but rather say it is acceptable to God, then point them to 2Pet.2: 6. It is quite possible that those who say they are believers yet refuse to give up their sin but rather call it good, are either deceived, or have believed in vain, or are a minister of Satan and they know that such desire, such lusting can cripple the body of Christ, the church, for there is no end of satisfaction with money, there is no end of desiring what money can buy, its treasures, its possessions or its status.

So when you meet folk who are caught up in lusting for money don't think ill of them, but rather have compassion on them, for they know not how the devil has deceived them, and soon, he (Satan) may use his devices of lusting after money, the flesh, idols or food to chip away at *your* walk with the Lord. Therefore, let us remember that the love of money is the root of all evil, it is so powerful that the Scriptures specifically say, there is no satisfaction from the desire of more money or the things which money can buy.

### 3. Desire not the treasures of the world but riches in Christ

Heb 11:26 *Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.*

So a person becomes a believer, they place their trust in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, but what happens to the natural, worldly lusts? They are now a new man, a new creation, all things are new (see 2Cor. 5: 12) and their desire is to now serve or yield themselves unto God and not the natural things of the flesh (Rom.6: 13). How do they put such doctrines into practice when the devil attacks with one of his devices? Read the Scriptures of truth, pray and as mentioned in our previous point, die to those things of the flesh; i.e. we are to crucify the lusts of the flesh (see Gal.2: 20). Then, we are to fill that void of lusting for money and other lusts of the world with a desire for riches in Christ.

Our verse, Heb.11: 26, is looking back at the example of Moses (verse 23 & 24) who gave up the pleasures of sin for a season (verse 25) and all the treasures of this world, to serve God and suffer affliction with his people (verse 25). Even though Christ Jesus is not mentioned in Exodus, Hebrews records that Moses esteemed the "reproach of Christ", as greater riches than the treasures of Egypt (verse 26). And Moses feared the Lord more than he feared Pharaoh, and we know that with the fear of the Lord is our treasure (see Isa 33:6). Paul also gave up the treasures of this world, he was reproached for Christ, he was crucified with Christ and walked that path daily, despite losing all of his Pharisaical friends. Hence Paul died to his old man and showed by his actions that he desired the riches in Christ more than the treasures of this world.

I remember a preacher that came out to New Zealand with his family of 12 children and his wife, and he gave up a full-time job of 20 years to go into the ministry full-time. He is one of many men that followed in the footsteps of Moses and Paul and obeyed the Lord, leaving behind his old life to follow the Lord Jesus Christ - see Matt.4: 18, 19.

So a man is to forsake the treasures of this world to serve the Lord and look to the riches of Christ in heaven. But the Lord Jesus Christ also says, that we are to take up our cross and follow him, and if we simply follow him without taking up our cross, then we are not worthy of Him (see Matt.10: 38). And if you think about your new birth, your new creation in Christ, the only way you can stop looking back and desiring the things that you previously desired, is to take up your cross daily, and die to those things which are not of God.

So if your weakness is loving money or the treasures of this world, then crucify the lusts thereof daily, and ask for help to desire the riches in Christ.

Let us pray especially for the young and those who are babes in Christ (see 1Pet.2: 2) that they would desire not the treasures of this world, but the riches in Christ.

Having said what we have said, let us say it again. In this our second study on the topic of money and riches we have covered three points; (1) treasures of wickedness profit nothing, and (2) there is no satisfaction with money or what money can buy, and (3) desire not the treasures of the world but riches in Christ.