

I Tim 6:10

Dec 28, 2008

What good is money?

SUBJECT: Finances
TOPIC: What good is money?
PROPOSITION: I propose to discuss some of our attitudes of trust towards money. Money seems to be far more important than it deserves.
OBJECTIVE: My objective is to help us refocus our on God rather than on money.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Last week, we got some Chinese food for dinner. We wondered with the economy as bad as it is, was it a wise move to go out to dinner. But we decided it would be OK. Two of the three fortune cookies gave financial advice and of course all three had lottery numbers.
2. Finances and sex account for more arguments between husbands and wives than anything else – by a huge measure. Men and women are individuals with individual thoughts and ideas. It is impossible to agree about everything, and let's face it; it takes money to live. The difficulty comes in priorities. I think it is more important to spend money on this and Janet thinks it is more important to spend money on that. The disagreement can become a fight and cause hard feelings. As a Christian, just what should be my take on money? How should I feel about it? If I always want more, am I being greedy? If I have a lot, am I being generous enough?
3. I went to visit a brother and sister in Christ, a family I love dearly. As we visited, I noticed all the nice things they had in their nice house and I wished I had enough money to have a place that nice. Was that wrong? Was that being jealous or envious? My brother retired last year – I would like to be able to retire and can't afford to. How should I feel about his good fortune? How do I? A friend used to

stay: “I wish I had his money and he had a feather. Then we would both be tickled.” I don’t want that. I just want a little more.

4. God says: “. . . the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil.” If my car is undependable and I would like to have a car that I can trust to take me anywhere I want any time I want but I can’t afford it, is that being greedy? What if I have day dreams of having enough money to be able to do anything I want any time I want? If I want to have enough money to go and visit Katmandu or Kalamazoo or if I money enough to buy five hundred acres and raise Zebras and Kangaroos, is that wrong?
5. Last year Steve Diggs came for a visit and talked about our finances. Did you come to the classes? Did you pay attention? Did you do what he suggested? I’m not here to make a plea that you buy his book or follow his principles. I do, however want to take a fresh look at the attitudes we have towards our money. I’m not going to tell you how to invest or where to. I just want you to think about money differently than maybe you have or do.
6. With these thoughts in mind, I would like to take a look at our finances. I think all of us would like to be able to be completely free from financial worries. We would like to know that our views on money and God’s views on money are the same. So if you wanted to title this sermon, let’s call it: “What good is money?” I have a purpose for this lesson. I propose to discuss some of our attitudes of trust towards money. It seems to me that money receives far more attention and importance than it deserves. My objective is to help us refocus on our God rather than on money.

DISCUSSION: In considering how God wants us to look at money, we should consider:

- I. Money is only grease.

1. Money is only grease!!? What exactly does that mean? If you talk to John or Joe they will tell you that before you hitch up your tractor to your trailer, you grease the fifth wheel. You grease it because that is what the entire trailer swivels on when you turn. What happens if there is no grease? It will still swivel, but it is much harder. It takes more effort and more energy. And it wears out faster.
2. How does that apply? If you don't have enough money, then there is a lot of friction. Friction between husband and wife, friction between you and the people you owe money to. There can be friction between you and our Lord. You may just blame Him for your financial situation.
3. If you suddenly lost your income, you would still be able to live, just not as well as you wish. You may have to give up a car, maybe all the cars. You may have to take a lower paying job. You may have to ride a bus to work. You may need to sell your house, or even move in with someone else. You may have to change the kinds of food you eat; you may have to use the food bank. You may even – oh horrors – have to ask the church for help. But you would still be able to live.
4. For most of us, it's the stigma of financial difficulties which we fear. Those of us who have actually been in financial straights understand that God loves us either rich or poor, and this church loves us either rich or poor. Nobody wants to be classed among the poor. We keep in touch with God, we keep in fellowship with our brethren and it will work out. It may not work out as we wish, but it will work out. It will work out as God wishes.
5. Phil 4:11"Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. 12 I

know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.” Heb 13:5 “Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"” And of course we can’t forget 1 Tim 6:10 “For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”

6. So remember that money is only grease – it’s only a lubricant to make life easier. I and of itself, money is nothing.

In considering how God wants us to look at money, we should consider:

II. Money is not bad.

1. Money is neutral. It is not good, neither is it bad. Not only is money not bad, there were so many rich people who had been blessed by God that the Hebrews even believed they had to run hand in hand. Matt 19:23 “And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 "Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." 25 When the disciples heard this, they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?"”
2. Think for a moment of the wealth of: Job, Abraham; Isaac, and Jacob. The wealth of Solomon is still legendary. The leaders of the people during Jesus time, the teachers, rabbis, and the Sanhedrin were almost uniformly rich men. If you were rich, you had been blessed by God. But, that’s not the way which God sees it.

3. Money, like so many other things on earth, is neither intrinsically good nor intrinsically bad. Money is a tool, a means to an end. If we have it, we have an easier time reaching that end. But if the goal we are striving for is absolutely dependent upon money, we probably have the wrong ultimate goal. If your goal is to retire on a beach and sit around on a lawn chair admiring the sunsets, just how does that fit in with what God wants you to do? Or maybe in the pursuit of riches you forgot: 1 Cor 6:19 “. . . you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.” Or: 1 Cor 7:23 “You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.” And may I add: or slaves of money.
4. The one question that we don’t answer very often is this: When you have money and when you have things, just who owns who? Just what owns what? Do you own the money or does the money own you?
5. Peter Parker’s uncle Ben said: “With great ability comes great responsibility.” That is true. If you have money you see – or **any other thing** you have a responsibility because of that. If it is a spouse or a car or a house or a bank account, you have responsibilities simply because you have it. The more you have, the more maintenance is required; the more responsibilities you have. I can’t find it in the Bible, but I don’t think God will give a godly man anything he is not prepared to be responsible for – especially money.
6. So remember that money isn’t bad. It isn’t good, but neither is it bad. Money is neutral – it’s what you want money for, it’s what you use money for that is good or bad.

In considering how God wants us to look at money, we should consider:

III. Money is not the object of life.

1. In the movie Star Wars IV “A new Hope” (that was the first one to come out) Han Solo is trying to get some precious metals loaded and leave before the death star comes. Princess Leia says to him: “If money is all you want, then that is what you will get.” He loads his loot and flies away. Then at the critical last moment, he comes back and helps Luke take down the Death Star. It turned out, money wasn’t all he wanted. Why not?
2. The most famous fictional story of this season is Dickens, Christmas Carol. Scrooge’s entire life and attitude changes after he spends a night with four spirits. The day before he was the richest man in town, but he was also the loneliest and most miserable. He didn’t know it, but he was. When you find people who have spent their lives chasing money, usually they forgot to chase relationships and friendships. Money is a side benefit of life, not the object or goal of life.
3. Think about things you cannot do with money. You can’t eat it. You can’t wear it. You can’t live inside it. You can’t talk with it. You can’t take it with you when you die, no matter if you go to heaven or to hell. There is an old joke about five men who were friends and they had spent much of their time making money. They agreed that when the first one died, the other four would each leave \$10,000 in the coffin to see if it was true that you couldn’t take it with you. Well the day came and Charlie died and each one went up and left his bundle of hundreds tucked inside the coffin. John went last and he stood there for longer than the rest, then closed the lid of

the coffin and sat down. A few days later the men were eating lunch together and one asked John: “What took you so long at the funeral the other day?” John looked at each of them in turn and replied: “I was writing a check.”

4. Money isn't valuable. Salvation is valuable. Years ago when Janet worked at Midway Bank, during her first week, one of the girls she worked with asked her to: “Take this junk upstairs when you go, will ya?” The junk? It was some staples, a stapler and twenty five thousand dollars in cash on a box lid.
5. If your goal in life is to accumulate money, you may succeed, but what will you lose to gain it? Money as a goal for your life is just not worth the cost.

CONCLUSION:

1. We have looked today at our finances, specifically at the value of money. We called the lesson “What good is money?”
2. We looked at three things: 1) Money is only a lubricant. 2) Money is not bad – it's neutral and 3) Money is not the object of life.
3. My objective was that you would examine your views on money and adjust them to fit God's views. I pray that I succeeded in that goal.
4. If there is a way in which we, as a body of Christ, can help you change your attitude towards money, or change in any other way to be more what God wants and less what you want, let us do that as we stand and sing.