



The Treasure Principle

We all have money problems! Either we have too little, and so we borrow or gamble and get into debt. Some may have too much, and then spend wastefully. Fortunately the Bible has much to say about money, wealth and possessions. There are 2,350 verses in the Bible on this subject. More than one-third of the parables of Jesus, are about money and possessions.

For example, he told the Parable of the Rich Fool in Luke 12:16-21 and the Parable of the Shrewd Steward in Luke 16:1-13. Jesus told us “if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?”

In Matthew 6:19-21, Jesus says “do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth.” Because earthly treasures are bad? No. Because they won’t last.

Proverbs 23:5 tells us that “all of earthly belongings will sprout wings and fly away.” So when Jesus warns us not to store up treasures on earth, it is because wealth will always be lost. Either it leaves us while we’re alive, or we leave it when we die. No exceptions.

The Sermon on the Mount

In this sermon from Matthew 6:19-33, Jesus commanded us to store up treasures – not on earth but in heaven. When we store them in heaven our “eternal” investments will grow. We can’t take our money and possessions with us when we die, but we can earn eternal rewards while we are still alive. From verse 21 we learn that your heart will follow your treasure. Money leads and hearts follow. And God wants our hearts.

But what is this “treasure in heaven” that Jesus is talking about? This treasure is arranged in 4 levels of importance: the most important treasure is a person – Jesus Christ and the salvation He gives us (Philippians 3:7-10).

Secondly, a place in heaven (Philippians 3:20-21), Thirdly, we receive eternal rewards and inheritance. Lastly, our worldly

possessions here on earth. But, even then we are not the owners, God is!

Job recognizes God’s ownership of everything when he cries out that “everything under heaven belongs to God.” (Job 41:11). God owns everything.

We are only stewards. So we need to be both diligently and faithful. Money and wealth is entrusted to us to manage. The Scriptures tell us that if we handle money faithfully, Christ will give us true riches which are eternal (Luke 16:10-12).

Eternal rewards

Have you heard of the story of William Borden of Yale who died at the age of 25 years in 1913 after 4 months of ministry in Egypt? He had inherited great wealth but given it all away to support missions work and dedicated his life to reach out to the Egyptians. Not far from his grave in Cairo is the Egyptian National Museum which exhibits the tremendous wealth of the young king, Tutankhaman, who died at 17 years old. He was buried with tons of solid gold. The Egyptians believed in an after-life where they could take earthly treasures with them. But all these gold treasures stayed in the grave of this king until it was discovered by an explorer in 1922.

What a contrast these two young men provide. One lived a simple life (in spite of his inherited wealth) in the service of the one true king, and now enjoys his eternal rewards in the presence of His Lord. The other faces the misery of separation and loss in a Christless eternity.

When we are faithful and obedient to the will of God, there are eternal rewards reserved for us in heaven. We will reign with Jesus Christ (Revelation 20:6). Faithful stewards will be put “in charge of many things” (Matthew 25:21,23). We will be given leadership and authority over cities (Luke 19:12-19).

There are eternal rewards reserved for those who do good works (Ephesians 6:8), persevere under persecution (Luke 6:22-23), and who give to the poor and needy (Luke 14:13-14).

God also grants us rewards for generous giving. He said to the rich, young ruler: “Go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasures in heaven” (Matthew 19:21). God keeps an account of all that we do for Him (see Matt 10:42).

In the words of the missionary-martyr, Jim Elliot, “We are no fools if we learn to give what we cannot keep, and gain what we cannot lose.” By holding on to what isn’t ours, we forgo the opportunities to be given eternal riches and rulership in heaven. By generously distributing God’s property on earth, we will become property owners in heaven!

The Blessings of Giving

So when we give our offerings to the Lord, we can give generously and cheerfully. It is not our money that we are giving away. It is His money which we are giving back to Him. We must give to God with a right attitude, out of a heart of love. There is an abundance of blessings when we give cheerfully for it is “more blessed to give than to receive”: For example, let me list 3 benefits:

1. giving draws our heart closer towards Christ because where our treasure is, there our heart will be also;
2. giving develops Godly character and helps us to conform to Christ. He loves us and so He gave; and
3. giving can produce a material increase to the giver. Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-11.

It is a blessing to us to learn to give generously to God’s work for the spreading of the gospel and so transfer our wealth from this earth to the “heavenly bank” and thereby lay up for ourselves treasure in eternity. This is our treasure principle.