

Riches: *a blessing or a burden?*

“...where your treasure is,
there will your heart be also.”
(Matthew 6:21)

Many times Bible speaks about such things as riches, wealth, treasures dividing those into the earthly and the heavenly.

Money (used here in the same interchangeable way with *earthly riches*, *earthly wealth* and *earthly treasures*) are not evil but the love of money is evil. Riches are not evil but a person cannot put his trust in them.

1Titus 6:17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded; nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God...

Psalms 62:10 Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.

Proverbs 11:4 Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death.

Psalms 49:6-7

6 They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches;

7 None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:

(*ransom* is redemption from sin and its consequences)

Proverbs 11:28 He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.

Mark 10:23 And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

Proverbs 22:1 A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold.

Proverbs 23:5 Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.

Proverbs 27:24 For riches are not forever: and doth the crown *endure* to every generation?

Jeremiah 9:23-24

23 Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches:

24 But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD.

Psalms 37:16 A little that a righteous man hath *is* better than the riches of many wicked.

There is a reward to those that fear the Lord and delight in His commandments:

Psalms 112:1-3

1 Praise ye the LORD. Blessed *is* the man *that* feareth the LORD, *that* delighteth greatly in his commandments.

2 His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed.

3 Wealth and riches *shall be* in his house: and his righteousness endureth forever.

We have to remember that what we might consider as having a great value might be looked by God as something that is worthless. Jesus spoke:

Luke 16:15 And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

and Paul said:

1 Corinthians 1:20-29

20 Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are:

29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

Our society is just so surrounded by the false values - those that in the eyes of God are worthless because they will not last. They are temporal not eternal.

Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to the treasure hid in a field:

Matthew 13:44 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

That man had money but his attitude toward those things that he had was right because when he found the kingdom of heaven (as a treasure hid in the field) he went and sold all that he had and bought the field where that treasure was hid.

There was another man, a ruler that came to Jesus inquiring on what he shall do to inherit eternal life:

Luke 18:18-24

18 And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

19 And Jesus said unto him, **Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.**

20 **Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother.**

21 And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.

22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, **Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.**

23 And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.

24 And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, **How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!**

Those riches that he had were so close to his heart that they became a stumbling block on his way to make it to heaven. Evidently those treasures in his eyes were more important to him than the salvation of his soul.

Jesus spoke also a parable about a certain rich man who had a problem with being content with what he had:

Luke 12:16-21

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, **The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:**

17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry.

20 But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

21 So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

This rich man missed on what was most important. He was laying up treasures on this earth not realizing that “the eyes of man are never satisfied.” (Proverbs 27:20) He was not concerned about his soul.

Truly what matters the most is the attitude that a person has towards money, riches, treasures (all expressed in the earthly monetary values).

Are those things become a priority in our lives? Do those things matter to us more than having a relationship with Jesus as a faithful and true God?

As the Bible plainly declares:

1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

and as Jesus spoke in the parable of the sower:

Matthew 13:18-23

18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked *one*, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth *it*; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold some sixty, some thirty.

No fruit can come out of the lives of those that are preoccupied with the cares of this world. In spite of the word that they receive the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke that word planted in their hearts.

Solomon, the wisest man ever living upon the face of the earth, is an example of one who started well with God but never made it to the finish line. He had great wisdom and understanding. This is what he asked of God at the beginning of his reign:

1 Kings 3:9-13

9 Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

10 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.

11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment;

12 Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

13 And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honor: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.

So, the initial intension of his heart was right. What he asked for was pleasing unto the Lord. Nonetheless during Solomon's reign this is what he noticed in the Book of Ecclesiastes:

Ecclesiastes 2:8-11

8 I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I got me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, *as* musical instruments, and that of all sorts.

9 So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me.

10 And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labor: and this was my portion of all my labor.

11 Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do: and, behold, all *was* vanity and vexation of spirit, and *there was* no profit under the sun.

So somewhere, somehow, his eyes began going after the earthly things and his heart began to be focused on the earthly pleasures. Yet when he looked on all of these he realized that it was all vanity (emptiness, having no value, nothing). Jesus said:

Matthew 6:19-24

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great *is* that darkness!

24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Mammon means riches, worldly gain personified as a false god.

In other words, there is only one place in our heart and what occupies that place determines the outcome of our entire life. Jesus said:

Matthew 16:26

26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?