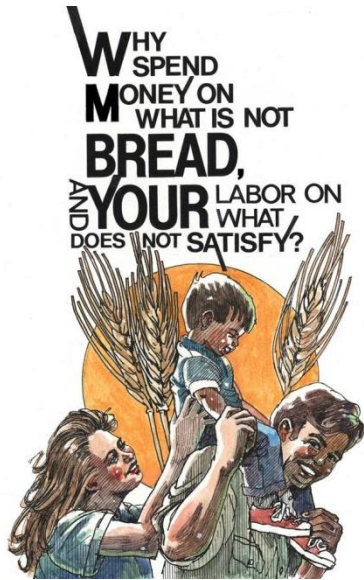


SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 13



RICHES—FORTUNE OR MISFORTUNE?

Scripture Text: Mark 10:17-31

We have studied Paul's teaching concerning true and false riches. In this lesson we take notice of one portion of Scripture in which Jesus deals with this subject. Jesus spoke of riches in many places throughout the New Testament. He considered it very important in the Christian's progress. He taught that to obtain eternal life is the greatest pursuit. Love of material possessions shuts out one from God. Not only must our actions be right, but our hearts must be changed. God rewards both here and hereafter for everything left behind for His sake. True disciples of Christ will be persecuted.

MEMORY VERSE: *How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!—Mark 10:23b*

DAILY READINGS:

- Mon.—**Deuteronomy 8:10-18** Gratitude for riches.
- Tue.—**James 1:9-11; James 5:1-9** Vanity of riches.
- Wed.—**1 Timothy 6:7-12, 1 Timothy 6:17-19** Advice to the rich.
- Thu.—**Romans 12:1-8** Giving selves to the Lord.
- Fri.—**Philippians 3:4-11** Paul's denial of self for Christ.

Devotional Reading: Isaiah 55 The great invitation.

Seek Eternal Life

Mark 10:17-18 Jesus and His disciples walked toward Jerusalem where He would be put to death. **There came one running, and knelt to him.** His running indicates determined urgency to overtake Jesus before He was gone. Kneeling indicates respect and humility. He was seeking the best gift man can attain—**eternal life.** Matthew's account (**Matthew 19:16**) tells us that he asked, **What good thing shall I do ... ?** The way to God is not by good works or accomplishments or sufferings. No! Believing rather than doing opens the way to God. The heart must be changed. This man (Matthew tells us he was young and Luke that he was a ruler) called Jesus, **Good Master.** Jesus answered, **Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God.** The thing that made Jesus good was the only thing that makes any other person good, a work of God's goodness in the heart, making one a son of God.

When the Bible speaks of eternal life, it means not only its quantity—endless—but also its quality—heavenly. It is that life which God has. It is the life that is in His Son Jesus (**1 John 5:11-12**). It is the life that He gives to His people (**Galatians 2:20**). It is holy and ever growing. It cannot cease to be, but it can depart from us if we let sin in. It is the greatest treasure. Seek it above all else.

Jesus Tells the Way

Mark 10:19-21 Jesus first pointed him to the Law given through Moses. Keeping it is not enough to save one (**Romans 3:28; Romans 8:3**), and Jesus wanted the man to realize this from his own experience of trying to keep it and yet remaining unsatisfied and without eternal life. **Jesus beholding him loved him**—because He loved him, He told him the truth of his condition. **One thing thou lackest**—he had not left all, he did not love God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength. He still loved himself and the world. **Go ... sell ... and give ... and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take ... and follow me.** To supply his lack, he must fully

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surrender, be willing to sell all, give away the proceeds, take the way of sacrifice, and follow Jesus. He would have far greater **treasure** than before (**Matthew 6:19-20; Mark 8:34-36**).

Riches a Hindrance

Mark 10:22-27 The young man made a wrong decision. He **went away grieved**—offended by the Words of Jesus. He went away from Jesus, peace, joy, a life of service to Christ, and endless bliss in Heaven with God. He went to sadness, grief, remorse, despair, darkness, and death. In just a short time, he lost his riches to the Roman Army in their devastation of Jerusalem. **How hard is it ...** What a hold possessions can have upon one! They have an intoxicating charm that drives one to get more and more. It is not only those that have money who love it. Some of the poorest people are bound by the power of the love of riches. We call riches a fortune. In the light of the Bible, would they better be called a misfortune? **The disciples were astonished** at Jesus' Words! **It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle ...** He compared it to a rich man entering the kingdom. It is **impossible** with men. Jesus said it plainly. Only God can cleanse the love and trust of money from a rich man's heart and fit him into the kingdom.

The Reward for Dedication

Mark 10:28-31 Jesus had promised the young man **treasure in heaven** if he obeyed. Peter was reminded of his experience. What would the disciples have for giving up all for Jesus? **An hundredfold now and eternal life** hereafter. For giving up family, the dedicated one has loving spiritual brothers and sisters. For giving up possessions, he has his needs supplied by God through His people. The joy from these and **in the world to come** is immeasurable riches. But **with persecutions**. Satan and the world always oppose those who go all the way with Jesus. **First shall be last ...** Jesus explains His meaning of this verse in the parable of **Matthew 20:1-16**. Equal riches are for all who qualify.

The Consecrated Life

We may hold in our possession many things—material, physical, mental, and spiritual. To follow Christ, some of these must be sacrificed, others dedicated. Anything that would hinder the full life of Christ in us must be left, cast aside, sacrificed. Those things that can be used in His service must be presented to Him, fully yielded, dedicated. We must dedicate ourselves to use them at His Holy Spirit's direction. The child of God consecrates his possessions, hands, tongue, mind, abilities, and all for God's use.

Since money can become so destructive to character, if used without reference to Christian ideals, it becomes very important that every Christian be well acquainted with the Gospel teachings on this matter. The Christian life involves Christian stewardship. No matter how prominent we may appear in the picture, we must realize that everything we have has been given to us either directly or indirectly by God. One must make a friend of money and thus keep money from becoming his enemy. He must recognize money as a servant and never allow it to become his master. Here is a great truth—we get out of life what we put into it. **For God loveth a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7b)**.

JUST A THOUGHT

The spirit in which we give is more important than the gift itself.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.

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