

Text: Luke 12.32-40
St Stephen's

Aug 7/8, 2010
Weekend Message

God's Great Treasure Chest

Last Week: Giving and Greed! **This Week:** Giving and Greed!

Jesus talks a lot about this. 10X the amount of his teaching about sex. 1/8 verses in the Gospels are about money! Why so much teaching about money? Because **money makes us greedy and greed makes us sick**. It is a special disease of the heart; I have called it '**money sickness**'.

Here is the deal with money sickness: we are **vulnerable to it**, we are **blind to it**, and we are **devastated by it**. Remember Jesus' words:

Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed

Luke 12:15

When Jesus teaches about **money sickness** here, the first thing he says is '**watch out**'. Why? Because it is **contagious**, it is **deceptive** and it is **deadly**.

Do you know that 2/3 of Americans who earn over \$100,000 per year think that they do not have enough money to buy everything they need! **Greed is very easy to see in other people but very hard to see in yourself**. Everyone thinks they are living a modest middle class lifestyle. No one thinks they spend too much on themselves. So Jesus says, "Watch out".

A great deal of Jesus' teaching about money is **focused not so much on what we do with it, but on what it does with us**. Money has this capacity to draw us into a stressed out life, obsessive worry, gloating over what you have, or coveting what you don't have, an inability to be generous towards others while you find it quite easy to be generous towards yourself. Bill did a great job teaching us last week on this, and I

don't want to go over it again. What I want to do is dig deeper into the **effects of money**. Jesus taught that money generates a

Misplaced Confidence in the Value of Money

We think money brings **security** and **well-being, happiness** and **value** to our lives. But it is **rarely true**. The man in Jesus' parable had what we would call a bumper year, a windfall profit, and was suddenly fabulously wealthy. He starts to **gloat**...

I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.'

Luke 12:19

He gloats because he thinks all his money will bring security, value, and pleasure to his life. But he has **overestimated money's power**.

Money can certainly help. But **isn't it true that money is virtually powerless to bring the things that you value most in life?** It just can't do it.

When I was 13, w. not too many friends - my parents got a **pool** – suddenly I had lots of friends, but I was never sure what was really going on – I had no idea whether anyone liked me for me or for our pool. And if you decide to use that strategy for gaining friends, it can turn you into someone no one likes.

Money can't make real friendships, and often it ruins them. Money can't prevent unexpected tragedies, heal broken relationships, prevent crippling sickness or in the end, hold off death. It can't give you love or faith or hope beyond this life. And in fact, money can even make life more difficult because **money always makes sharp demands** on your life and your time and your heart. It is easy to overestimate money's power. If you are doing that, it's **a effect** of money sickness. Watch out for it!

Here is **another effect of money sickness**. This one makes you scratch your head. When Jesus seems to finish this teaching about

money sickness, he launches straight into a teaching about his **second coming**:

"Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes..."

Luke 12:35–37

What does that have to do with money sickness?

Shortsighted Planning

Here's the link: **money sickness makes you shortsighted**. It makes you think that what you see is all that matters. It blinds you to what is invisible.

I love the story about **Winston Churchill**, that in his later years a young officer fresh out of the military schools came to seek the advice of the old & wise prime minister. Churchill invited him to share his plans...

Well, I am seeking a commission in the army...

And then?

I would like to marry and have a family and make a career in the Armed services

And then?

I don't know... I suppose that I would want to see my children through college and into a start on their careers

And then?

Well, I haven't given it much thought, but I guess that I should think about provision for retirement...

And then?

Silence...

Young man, you have not thought it through enough.

Have you thought it through enough? I want to remind you: we are **not living** this life just for the sake of **this life**. We are living it for the sake of **eternity**.

We stand in the presence of **the crucified and risen Lord**. We live in sight of him. We can't see him, but we love him. In the end, everyone will stand before him and see him with their own eyes. The entire creation moves towards him. That day comes soon, like a locomotive it comes! Able to see beyond our eyes, we see him now.

Paul said, *"we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal."* 2 Co 4:18

You are **not a mere mortal**. Neither is anyone you have ever met. The **earth** is mortal; it will pass away. **Stuff** is mortal; it will rot. **People** are not. People go into eternity, we head into the presence of God, to stand before his great throne, in sight of breathtaking eternal realities.

So we **live this day** not just for today but also for what is coming 50 years from now, and for what is coming 50,000 years from now.

We **conduct all our affairs** in sight of eternity. Our jobs, our workplace decisions, our business engagements, our finances, our shopping, our spending...

We **conduct our relationships**, our conversations, our likes and dislikes, our hopes and fears – all in the sight of eternity. We raise our children in sight of that reality. We are not raising our children for this world alone. We are raising them for eternity.

This week we stand **with families** whose children face death. How can you do that unless you place one foot in eternity? I have a son in combat in Afghanistan. Friends say to us, 'There is nothing you can do about it.' Well there is certainly something we do about it. We stand in **vigil** and pray, with **one foot** firmly anchored in **eternal realities**, and **the other** planted in the **hardships of this world**.

I do not know how you can face the challenges of life, the dangers of life, the sufferings of life unless you keep your eyes **fixed on the one who**

stands crucified and risen, the Lord of eternity. Seeing him, we can **stand anywhere** and face anything - bringing his comfort, speaking his hope.

Money sickness makes you shortsighted. You don't want to be shortsighted. *"Watch for me. Jesus says. I come soon!"*

I think Jesus' **greatest concern about money sickness** is a concern about the **heart**. Jesus teaches that...

The Heart is God's Treasure Chest

What I mean by that is the heart was **made to hold something valuable**, to worship something, to serve something, to love something. The heart was made to hold treasure; this is part of the teaching of Jesus. *Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

Luke 12:33-34

Read the last underlined phrase with me: where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The **heart and the treasure are linked**.

You know what a **treasure** is. A treasure is something **valuable**, something **precious** to you, something that **matters more** than anything else to you. **Your treasure is** what you really value to **secure** your life and **resource** your life and **supply** your life. What you are depending on for your **beauty** and your **well being** and your **strength**.

Just think about things that are most valuable to you.

- Maybe you have a great home...
- Maybe you have a valuable financial portfolio...
- Maybe you have a special possession... a special hobby (golf)

The **heart and the treasure are linked**. If you set your heart on things that will **pass away**, you are setting the **destiny** of your heart. **Moths**

will eat it away. **Worms** will borrow into your flesh. **Thieves** will steal what you do not want to lose.

The destiny of your treasure determines the destiny of your heart. You don't want a treasure that **won't last, won't hold up, won't be there** when it has to be there. **Jesus** talks about a different kind of treasure, a *'treasure in the heavens that will not fail'*. That is the kind of treasure that you want. One that is safe and solid and dependable and reliable, and up to the task of anchoring your life and resourcing your life and making you life valuable and beautiful.

Look at verse 32 in this chapter...

"Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Luke 12.32

His Father, he says, is *'your Father'* (note it), and *'your Father'* is pleased to give you his Kingdom. He gives it to you. All of it. He holds nothing back. He **does not give as we give** – nothing half-hearted here, nothing held back here. These are *"mercies beyond our height, beyond our depth, beyond our reach"* (G MacDonald, Unspk Serms, p.43), beyond our capacity to conceive. The day comes fast when every tear will be long dried, every heart fully healed, every soul flooded with such joy that we shall laugh ourselves utterly to tears of repentance because we have looked for so little, expected so little from the one we call *'Father'*.

"Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Luke 12.32

I want to remind you **what it cost Jesus to say these words**. It cost him **the cross**. Every treasure of the world will demand that you give your life to secure it; we know too well treasures that demand our lives and run our lives and ruin our lives. But there is a treasure who **has given** his life for you. And gives his life for you. Because **you are his treasure**.

He says, *'do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father is happy to give you the kingdom. So come to me. I have given everything **for you** and*

*promise to give all things **to you**. Trust me. I will not fail. **Come to me and follow me and learn from me how to live and how to give.** And I myself will be your treasure. I myself will be your supply. I myself will be your reward.'* And so he is.

Prayer: we think about the treasures of our lives Lord...

None compares to you... Forgive us Lord... Heal our hearts of this money sickness... Take your rightful place...