

1 Tim 6:9,10 MONEY and MATERIALISM

INTRODUCTION

Jesus was asked one day to **help** in a family problem. He did! He was told "*Tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me*". Eventually Jesus said "*Take heed and beware of covetousness for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses*" [L12:15] ie **materialism**! That **was** great advice – although probably **despised**! It is **very hard** to **believe** these words. But they are very very true.

The DANGERS

Money can **destroy** people – I have seen it. I worked with someone who had drank himself bankrupt. He recovered, sorted himself out, got a job, then a terrible thing happened to him! He was left money - and drank himself to death! Make no mistake about it, **money has power**, it has a very **seductive** power. Just ask yourself this question: **Why**, do people 'go' for the 2nd million? Because there is a **power** in money – a spiritual power that **dominates the affections** – there is a love affair!

Story of poor young, American widow, to whom everyone in the Church went for prayer and guidance. She was poor, but she had the mind of the Lord and many people found great help and blessing with her. RT Kendall's home church. Many years later R T went back home and asked about the widow. Oh yes, that's her over there, that posh woman in the furs/jewellery. She had come into money and got caught up in that 'culture'! And **no longer** did people come to her for advice and prayer! Gone was her gift of 'having God's ear'; gone was the spirit of prayer! **Money made the difference!**

The big problem is our **heart's desire**, the problem is – we **want** things. There are things we **love** and must have (or we **think** we must have them). It is part of our **fallen nature** to desire things we do not have now. (Eve's problem!) Almost

everywhere we are swamped with advertisements and enticements to buy consumer goods, holidays, clothes, cars, Computers, etc Advertising is **directed** to people's **desires** and **wants**. People buy because they **want** the product. Advertisers know what **attracts** human nature! As does Satan! And when we **get** them - we want **more** of them!

Another time X said to disciples "*No no one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon*" [Mat 6:24] It is **impossible** to serve both! The problem is **not** that we have riches – it is that riches have us! Remember Simon? "*Your money perish with you... You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God... I see that you are in the bond of iniquity*"! You are **gripped** by this love of money!

I am **not** talking just now about **rich** people. I am **not** talking about the sin of **rich** people – I am talking about those who **want** to be rich! People like **you/I**!

Q. Are **you** a Xian? Yes? So you will know about X'x teaching on Discipleship when He said "*so whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple*" [L14:33] **APP** We need to ask 'What all did **you/I** give up?"

Sadly, money carries **weight, importance!** If people have money/property, they are **considered** important and have **value** and **status!** It has always been like that. James **warns** the Church about the man who wears "*gold rings*"! **We** 'give place' to people with money. We value people **according to** their income or possessions! Its all wrong.

Money/materialism is **dangerous** – because it **detracts** us from the **spiritual!** Look: The **most valuable** things are the things you still have when you **close** your **eyes** in **death!** Money brings more sorry than happiness! And yet **hardly anyone**,

Xian or not, **believe** it! The Lottery, Scratch Cards, Pools, ‘Who Wants to be a Millionnaire’ all testify to this hunger/lust for money – people are **deceived** by Satan, in thinking it will bring happiness. I’ve heard it said by millionnaires ‘It was the **worst** thing that happened to me’! Seemingly, the fellow who won £4m on Lottery 2 weeks ago said ‘I’d prefer if I got a new kidney instead’ and he received many letters asking for the £4m in exchange for their kidney!!

The rich young farmer who had a problem coping with his business expansion plans, and decided to build greater ones, would be considered by many today as **prudent**! What did Jesus call him? A **fool**! He did nothing wrong/evil. He just **forgot** he had a **soul**! But it was his **love** of money, his **desire** for it that did it! Money is **dangerous**. It **deceives** people; it **distracts** people from the **really important** thing – which is getting ‘right’ with God!

A CAVEAT

Of course there is nothing **innately wrong** with money – in fact we **need** it! Jesus’ **transfer of wealth** is surprising! We hear about the poor and the need for the rich to transfer their wealth **to** the poor! But Jesus had it the other way round! “...*take the mina from him and give it to him who has ten minas. But they said 'Master, he has ten minas!'*”[L19:24] Money is **meant** to be used – and **if** we use it well **we get more**! But of course using it well means you are using it **for God**, not yourself!

David and Solomon had great wealth – and it was ‘seen’ as a blessing not a curse! No embarrassment about it (far more than the **fat cats** of today)! The Queen of Sheba fainted before it!

So money is **not** an evil thing per se. It is how we **use** it!

CONCLUSION

Lessons (1) Before we can use money for the Lord, we need to

admit, we here tonight, have more than enough! We all have **more** than we **need**! We have an awful lot of things that we **can't take to heaven** – and that we **don't need in heaven**! We will never be able to conquer our love of money and use it for God until we acknowledge we have more than we really need. “Churches always ask for money”? **Because** Xns **don't** tithe!

(2) We need to perceive **everything** we have as **belonging** to God. When John Wesley saw his home destroyed by fire he said “the Lord’s house has been burned – one less responsibility for me”! He saw his property as a **responsibility** to be **used** for God! *No Xian ought to be **miserly** – to be tight with money! **Kindness** is a **spiritual grace**! Zacchaeus! A man’s **spirituality** is not to be tested by **how much** money he **has**, but how he **uses** what he has, for God?

(3) We need to **believe more** in the **Scriptures**. If we **really** believed the **promises** of the Bible – one of the **best** things we can do with our money is to **give it away**! “*One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want*” [Pro 11:24] What you give to the Lord, is the measure and degree of how much you **owe** to God’s **grace** and of how much you want to **thank** God for saving you! “*inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me*” [Mat 25:46].

“*there is great gain in godliness with contentment*” [1 Tim 6:6] What a **challenge**? Do you want the best out of life? I have seen again and again – money does **not** buy happiness. To be **contented** with what we have, is an **unspeakable** blessing! Some of us have to **learn** to **enjoy** the blessings God has already given us, instead of beginning another search for satisfaction. We need something more ‘**substantial**’ than materialism. Something that ‘moth or rust will not corrupt’ and that can **only** be something **spiritual**! God **has** provided that something – and its for nothing! Its **Jesus Christ**!