

Can't Buy Me Love
Ecclesiastes 5:10-20
Reading: 1 Timothy 6:3-16

Bethany Baptist Church
May 19, 2019 (p.m.)
March 4, 2012

She was *rich!* And *powerful...*and, no doubt, *pretty smart.*

The ruler of an ancient, African kingdom. But the stories of the wisdom & the wealth of the king of Israel were on every man's lips.

So the **Queen of Sheba** organized her retinue & loaded down her royal caravan, and traveled regally to the east?

They were *right!*

This guy was smart!

- 1 Kings 10:1 – *She came to test w/ difficult questions.* He answered them all! 1 Kings 10:3 – *Nothing was hidden from the king which he did not explain to her.*

This guy was rich!

- *Palace, feasts, servants.* And Solomon gave her *any gift* she could name.

The Queen of Sheba was overwhelmed. If she came out of Africa *skeptical*, she went back home *amazed*:

- *“It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words & your wisdom. Nevertheless, I did not believe the reports, until I came and my eyes had seen it. **And behold, the half was not told me.** You exceed in wisdom & **prosperity** the report which I heard.”*

Was this guy *rich*? Was this guy *smart*? *You ain't heard the half of it!*

Join me back in Eccl 5; read vv. 10-20. *You can't find fulfillment in wealth because at best you simply **enjoy** it here and **leave** it here, at worst greed consumes you and sucks the joy right out of your soul.*

The world's smartest & richest man runs the numbers on the dangers and deficiencies of riches.

1. **One wealth principle (10-12).**
2. **Two money evils (13-17).**
3. **One careful contentment conclusion (18-20).** *...pray...*

One wealth principle (10-12).

1. The Christian *bookstores & radio stations* have always been blessed with *financial counselors*; godly teachers like *Ron Blugh, Larry Burkett, & (recently) Dave Ramsey*. But surely *wise & wealthy Solomon* was one of the first *wealth management experts* on the scene! We *still* read his *stewardship advice* (Prov; Eccl); after all, **none** of those other money managers can claim to be *divinely inspired!* *Think about it...!*

2. So if you care about Christian *stewardship*, you'd better *listen* when *Solomon speaks...!* Here is his *number one wealth principle*; he puts it right up front so everything else is in reference to this: *He who loves money will not be satisfied w/ money. 2X*
 - a. Read carefully! *Solomon doesn't say possesses money; money is not inherently evil. He warns the man who (lit.) loves its abundance. The problem is greed. Eccl. is all about finding fulfillment, and the greedy won't find life's meaning in a Swiss bank account!*

 - b. The Hebr term your **OT** translates as *money* is lit. *silver*. How *ironic!* **1 Kg 10** records that *Solomon* was so rich he made *silver* as common as *gravel* in *Jerusalem*, he wouldn't even make *drinking cups* for his house out of *silver; not rare enough!*

 - c. The king's assessment of a *greed-driven* life is simple, sad & familiar: *vanity* (keyword in Eccl; lit = *futility*). The *love of money* is a waste of your life.

3. That's *easy* for *Solomon* to say, that guy was *loaded!* But he'd learned a few lessons, and he's willing to share them (**11**). *Money comes and money goes; silver slips your fingers like water* while you watch it. It has help! The rich man attracts all kinds of *people: predators, pickpockets & paparazzi*.
 - a. *Where does it go? Predators, competitors, thieves, taxes, time, depreciation, rust, moths, decay, toys, children!*

 - b. **V.11b** So *what* is the advantage to their owners *except to look on* – lit. *to see it with their eyes*. You watch your money *come*; before you can *do much with it*; you watch it *go* – the *only good* you got out of it was to *watch it!*

4. No wonder the *greedy* man is so frustrated! If you're all about *the money*, you know what that will get you? *Indigestion, insomnia & anxiety*. Not necessarily in *that order*! (**read v.12**)
- a. Not everyone is *greedy*. Not everyone is *rich*. (*Remember* – they're *not the same*! There are men & women who are *affluent & godly*.)
 - b. Solomon runs the *video* of the *blue-collar hero*. The working man who *puts* in his day, *kisses* his wife, *plays* w/ his kids, *pays* his bills, *hopes* it enough, & *sits down* to a simple meal at night. He can't even spell *escargot*, let alone bring himself to *eat one*! But when his *head* hits the *pillow*, **eight hours** away from starting it all over again, he *sleeps* like a baby!
 - c. Does his *greedy* cousin? His meal was *rich* & his stomach is *full*. But night brings *no rest*. His *full stomach & rich repast* reap only *indigestion*! His concern for the *predator* (**v.11**) robs him sleep. How can he *protect* what he's accumulated? How can he make *even more*? He *tosses & turns* – *anxiety* breeds *insomnia*...
5. Here is Solomon's *point*; his *principle of wealth*: *the greedy are never satisfied*. They're accumulation efforts are *pointless*.
- a. The Roman philosopher *Seneca* said it this way: *Money has never yet made anyone rich*.
 - b. *Paul & John & George & Ringo sang it* this way, *can't buy me love*!
 - c. But beloved, the **NT** puts a *moral* point on it, and that's eternally profitable, (**Col 3:5**): *Consider the members of your earthly body as dead to...greed, which amounts to idolatry*. Are you looking for *satisfaction in accumulation*?

God says greed is *futility & idolatry*.

Two money evils (13-17).

1. *Wealth & stewardship* were important topics to Solomon. He's already addressed them, *more than once*, in Eccl, & there will be *more to come*. For now, the king wants you to consider **two grievous greed evils**. The idea of *grievous evil* is strong language, & familiar (**1:18, 2:17, 2:23**).
2. *Grievous greed evil #1. Hoard it and loose it. Read vv.13-14.*
 - a. *Hoarding is greed on steroids. Piling* stuff up for the sake of *having* the pile.
 - b. Solomon uncovers a common *pitfall* for the hoarder. His *greed* lures him to a *bad* (risky) *investment* or *venture*, hoping to increase this pile, but the investment *goes south* & the pile goes w/ it.
 - i. Like a *gambler* on a roll who *stacks* the chips and *spins* the wheel *one time too many*. **Gone...**
 - c. Then life's responsibilities *raise their head* and you can't *meet them*. The *worst penalty* you can imagine: your *children* suffer for your *greed*.
 - d. It's not that this *always* happens to *every* rich man, but it can. And *evil #2* is *universal*...
3. *Grievous greed evil #2. Hoard it and leave it.*
 - a. Here is the unavoidable axiomatic truth that the greedy can't seem to get through their head: *you can't take it with you*. **Read vv. 15-16.**
 - b. Solomon had been reading the book of *Job* (1:21) – "*Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away, blessed by the name of the LORD.*"
 - c. Solomon's *recap* (**v.16**) reads literally: *exactly as a man comes, thus will he go*.

- d. So then, *what's the point* of all the *piling*? All you get is a *wallet full of wind*. More of the king's favorite language: *vanity, toil, wind...*
4. I believe **v.17** *subtotals* the cost of hoarding. A life of *frustration*. A life of *darkness*.
- a. The *miser* eats in the dark. Maybe *literally* "*in the dark*" because he's *so tight* he *won't light a lamp!*
- b. Maybe *figuratively*, because *greediness* is *sin* (i.e, greed is worshipping the *false god* of silver & stuff), & sin is spiritual *darkness*.
- c. In **v.12** the rich man *eats* but can't *sleep*. Now he can't even enjoy his *meal*: great *vexation* (frustration), *sickness*, & *anger*. You know, of course, that *worry* makes people *sick...*
- d. No wonder Solomon says *greed* is a *grievous evil!*

The greedy woman or man will never be satisfied w/what she has in this life, and even if she holds onto what she rakes together, she can't take it with her.

One careful contentment conclusion (18-20).

1. What is the *opposite* of *greed*? Is fair to suggest “*contentment*”? Solomon says that when comes to what you *have* (and what you *don't*), enjoy whatever God gives you. *Contentment* is the best answer ***under the sun***.
2. *Contentment* is a blessing for the *working man* (read v.18).
 - a. The idea of *enjoy oneself* is lit. to ***see good*** in all one's labors. The original text has the *faint aroma* of a command. You are *called* to see your *labor* & its *fruit* as good.
 - b. *Labor. Toil. Hard work ain't easy!* But you know, of course, that *work is not the curse*, the toil & frustration of *difficult fruitfulness* is the curse. God *blessed* Adam by giving him work, & then God *punished* Adam by making productivity frustrating.
 - c. Can you *enjoy* what you do, and what it *earns you*? That's the *blessing!* Solomon's *money management principle* has been *peppered* w/ the idea of *eating*: *simple* meals, *extravagant* feasts, dinners in the *dark*.
 - d. Now he reminds you that it's such a blessing to simply to *set yourself* to enjoy whatever God gives.
 - e. Friend, *life is short*; determined, intentional *contentment* is your best investment.

3. *Contentment* is a blessing for the *wealthy man* (**read v.19**).

- a. Here is a theological statement: *riches are a gift of God*. But as the Spirit has been saying, *wealth* comes with several big red *warning labels* on the box!
- b. What is your wealth? Is it *money*, or *position*, or *talent*, or *beauty*, or *smarts*, or *strength*? Here is the *point* in **v.19**; the secret is *to hold your wealth, w/o your wealth **holding you***.
- c. *To enjoy the gift, w/o forgetting the giver*. If you *have much*, use it as if you know *where it comes from*. Use your *wealth* as if you know there is *more to life*, than your *stuff in this life*.
- d. Because, again, *life is short*.

4. *Contentment* is a blessing for *every man*.

- a. Job said, “*As surely as the sparks fly up, so a man is born to trouble.*”
- b. But if you can focus on the *good hand of God* in your life, and live in *contentment & faith*, you won’t be prone to the problems that attend a *fixation on finances*, the troubles that come w/ *greed, discontent, worry, fear*.

Read v.20. *Working class hero. Wall Street warrior.* What could they have in *common*? The **one good God**, who grants *gladness of heart...now **that** sounds like a blessing!*

If you are looking for *meaning* or *happiness* in what you can *accumulate*, you'll get *burned*!

- * *Silver & stuff won't satisfy*. There is never enough ...
- * You could *lose it* all; you'll definitely *leave it all behind*.
- * If you are *all about accumulation*; you'll spend your *life* in *darkness*, *feasting* on your own *frustration*. Perhaps alone.

Doesn't sound *very satisfying*!

There is only one way to know you have *exactly what you need*.

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you." (Mt 6:33)

There is only one *source of fulfillment*. It isn't anywhere to be found *under the sun*. Jesus lived & died to guarantee an *abundant life*.

*"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have **life**, and have it **abundantly**."* (Jn 10:10)

...pray...

Christian – *invest* in the kingdom; *invest* in the souls of men.

Unbeliever; seeker; skeptic – *invest* in your own soul! *repent, believe & believe* in Jesus