

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Let The Rich Be Truly Rich!

1 Timothy 6:17-21

Keywords: Money, riches, generosity, heaven, good works, sharing

PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

SermonAudio Blurb: If you are an American it is most likely that you are rich. The media will tell you otherwise and the politician most certainly will not agree. But you are rich. Take the typical American “poor” and send them to the bush in Africa. Let that “poor” person tell the people their of their great poverty, and the people of the bush will look in wonder at the rich person before them. That is the reality. The question for the American Christian is not whether they are rich, but what they are to be doing with those riches. God makes it as plain as plain can be here in the passage before us. Will you receive it as such? Will you rejoice in seeing the will of God?

Dismiss

I. Introduction.

- A. Read 1 Timothy 6:13-16.
- B. These are Paul’s final words in a difficult letter.
 - 1. Over the bulk of the letter there has been a back-and-forth instruction on how Timothy is to deal with the problems of the church.
 - 2. Rebuke, reject, correct false teaching.
 - 3. Instruct, equip, help his fellow Christians.
 - 4. Primarily the focus, therefore, has been narrow.
- C. Here in our passage he broadens it a bit, moving from false teachers and simply to those who are rich in this world.
 - 1. It is our last sermon in this book.
 - 2. And it is a sermon we all need to hear. May God do a work in each of us this hour.

Hausa of Nigeria

Population: 24,733,000

Language: Hausa

Preached on May 29, 2011 AM

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Religion: Islam

Evangelical: 0.04%

II. The hard reality.

A. We are rich.

1. If you are an American it is most likely that you are rich.
2. The media will tell you otherwise and the politician most certainly will not agree. But you are rich.
 - a. If you have any money saved (even 100 dollars), a hobby that requires some equipment or supplies (fishing, hunting, skiing, cropping, coin collecting, painting), a variety of clothes in your closet, two cars (in any condition), and live in your own home, you are in the top 5% of the world's wealthy.
 - b. Whether you feel rich is not the issue.
3. Take the typical American “poor” and send them to the bush in Africa. Let that “poor” person tell the people their of their great poverty, and the people of the bush will look in wonder at the rich person before them. That is the reality.
4. The question for the American Christian is not whether they are rich, but what they are to be doing with those riches.
5. God makes it as plain as plain can be here in the passage before us. Will you receive it as such? Will you rejoice in seeing the will of God?

B. So understand that this sermon is for almost every one of us in this room.

1. He tells you to not be conceited, hoping in your money.
2. Randy Alcorn figures that "15 percent of everything Christ said relates to this topic – more than his teachings on heaven and hell combined" (*The Treasure Principle*, p. 8). Why? Because this thing grips us.
3. Rather, have your hope fixed fully upon your Lord and then prove it by being rich in good works and generous in all things.

C. **At the core of this message is a call to those who are rich to consider who or what is their Lord, their Savior, their Hope, their Joy, their Pursuit, their Satisfaction, and their God.**

III. Instructions to those who are rich.

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- A. First, what he did not command.
1. Note that Paul didn't say, "Command those who are rich to stop being rich."
 - a. You don't have to be feeling guilty about it, it is a blessing.
 - b. The implication is that there is legitimate diversity in the amount of money and possessions held by Christians.
 - c. Listen to the messages I gave in 2010—grace centered generosity and gospel-centered generosity.
 2. In other words, Paul is not prohibiting us from being rich in this present world. But he is giving God's very clear expectations for those who are rich.
 3. The quicker you and I come to grips with the fact we are truly rich, the better off we will be.
- B. Two things we must not do.
1. First, we must not be conceited.
 - a. Arrogance, or pride, is the deadly sin of all people. But it seems to be a special struggle for those who are rich.
 - b. We see it in the spirit that says, "I deserve [fill in the blank]. How many foolish decisions are made from that heart attitude?"
 - c. But it is also seen in the purchase of something special, that others don't have. That pleasure that we gain when others look at what we have with a sense of envy.
 - (1) I-Phone (3g vs 4g); car; cropping materials; vacation property.
 - (2) Cigars, can you tell the difference between a \$5 and a \$15?
 - (3) shoes, clothes (even if on sale), music, games, game platforms, laptops.
 - (4) The list goes on and on.
 2. Second, we must not fix our hope on riches.
 - a. This is because they are uncertain.
 - b. And what is implied with the next phrase, money is not what supplies us with things.

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- (1) his is where we get to the very core of the issue. When our hope lies in our money and possessions, then we simply reveal where our hope lies.
- (2) God is the giver of all that we have, money, at best, is the secondary entity.

Ryken said:

The only safe place to put our trust is in God himself. All prosperity comes from him. Daily bread comes from him, not from one's paycheck. Tuition payments come from him, not from a scholarship fund. Security for old age comes from him, not from a retirement account. Thus the only place Old Testament put all true confidence is in God, in whom we have everything we need. Those who do trust in him are able to say, 'Lord, you have blessed me with more than I could ever deserve. But you could take all away tomorrow and I would still be full of joy; for I have everything I need in Jesus Christ.'

- c. At the core of this is the issue that our Lord brought up in Matthew 6:24.
 - (1) Money and possessions can do a work on our hearts that we don't like to admit.
 - (2) But this is how it works in this "world" or "age" that as Christians we live in. God and money seek to exercise mastery over us.
 - (3) If you are mastered by money then you serve it in some way. And you ignore God, in many ways, though the church is often helping you do it.
 - (4) Or, you make God your servant, merely meeting your needs. "God was so good to us, we got that raise we hoping for!"
 - (5) Or, you are mastered by God, therefore you bring money under into the service on His kingdom.
 - (6) But then, one or the other tries to gain mastery over you—and the battle begins. Jesus said, when this happens, you will hate one or the other.
 - (7) There is no truce. There is no middle ground.

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- (8) And I think that a great lie of American Christians is that we believe there is. Jesus said it is an issue of mastery, not tolerance.
- d. Notice what Jesus says right afterward? “Do not be anxious....”
 - (1) What motivates you in your decisions?
 - (2) Is the truly the Kingdom of God? Is it your comfort? Or safety? Or maybes something so basic as what you will eat or drink?

Piper on the ‘Middle Class’

One of the main dangers in being comfortable in our Christianity is that over time comfort tends to begin to feel like something that God—or the world--owes us; and what we once called "luxury" is now called "need." More and more we want things, and securities, and comforts. And we find our conversations with people even drifting onto the subject of special new things that we have just bought and we're not talking Kingdom language anymore. It's a creeping kind of gangrene with a smiling face on it that eats away at the heart of the Kingdom.

<http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/ask-pastor-john/what-is-the-danger-in-being-a-middle-class-comfortable-Christian>

- (3) Sobering.....
- C. What, then, must we do?
 - 1. Note that these are not options for us to consider. These are God’s call for His children.
 - 2. What he is saying here is simply, “Now prove it!”
 - a. E.g. Rich, young ruler
 - b. It is here that our minds begin to work overtime to begin to minimize certain biblical, God-given expectations.
 - 3. The first is to fix our hope on God.
 - a. Because he supplies us with all things to enjoy (17c)
 - (1) When we really believe this we become grateful people.

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- (2) We begin to see that the world is before us to enjoy and it is a gift from God. This includes a good meal, a wonderful vacation spot and a sleepy Saturday afternoon.
- (3) But we also realize that all that we possess was not something we truly earned, but was a gift.
- (4) Consider your skills and talents.
 - (a) Did you create your intellect?
 - (b) Did you cause yourself to be born into the family and nation that you were?
- b. In other words, we look to the true source of what is and may be ours.
- c. And then enjoy what we have as gifts given from a generous God.
- d. The answer is never forced asceticism, it is being a grateful person filled with awe and joy at all of the gifts from God, gifts that are to be shared.
- e. (I.e. the wedding yesterday, where we invited many who knew Lydia and Matt to share in the gift of marriage.)
4. The next four are not distinct from each other, rather they actually are vitally connected. Paul starts broad and brings the focus in tighter and tighter. For our purposes I will break them into two other commands.
5. Second, do good/be rich in good works.
 - a. Note that these two points require nothing of us with regard to our money.
 - (1) Understand this well. God does not need your money. And he is certainly not begging for it.
 - (2) But what He does desire from you and I is a heart of a servant, a crazy servant.
 - (3) It is one thing to say that you are praying for a person who is ill and a whole other thing to then go feed them, or change their bandages, or simply listen with a gentle heart as they pour out their burdens.

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- b. Matthew 23:23 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.
 - c. We were created and saved to do these (Ephesians 2:10).
 - d. This fits with the “Missional Triad” that all who go through the V&V hear.
 - (1) Be rich to be rich...in good works.
 - (2) Be a blessing to the community you live in.
 - (3) Use the many gifts that God has given you to bless those who do not have them.
6. Be generous/ready to share.
- a. Basic principle: You were made rich so that you might enrich those who have nothing.
 - b. Luke 12:32–33, “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 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.”
 - c. God has not called us to make a vow of poverty. But he is telling us to make a vow of generosity. Have you made it? And is it real?
 - d. “29,000 kids will die today in this world of preventable causes. If I’m to love my neighbor AS myself, why spend so much time worrying about me?” (Francis Chan while taping his wife holding a premature baby in Africa)
 - e. Simple, life-changing questions to ask:
 - (1) Does my decisions indicate a fear of the unknown, or a trust in God who provides?
 - (2)
7. Generosity is key because it is one way we can imitate the generosity of God toward us.

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- a. The Gospel is a Gospel of Infinite Generosity.
 - b. [What is a bad day regarding sinning for you?] (define sin in light of Romans 1:18)
 - c. What is a “good” day for you with regard to sin? How about 3?
 - d. At 21, you have almost 23,000 sins against your Creator and Sustainer.
 - e. Yet.....the gospel!
8. Note the idea of being "ready" to share.
- a. Means there is a watchful eye for opportunities for sharing.
 - b. Is not limited to money, but time, talent, food and company.
 - c. Requires excess so that you can share. To carry so much debt, or to spend all that you make each week destroys this ability.

IV. Why?

- A. Stores up an eternal treasure (19). Transferring the currency of this world into the currency that is for the next (which requires faith!).
- B. Which is a good foundation.
- C. And is future oriented.
 1. This is not salvations by generosity. It is not via good works (though some have tried to use this passage as a way to show that those rich can gain heaven more easily.)
 2. When you start to consider that this world is not yours, then certain decisions will be made.
 3. When you start to consider that this world is passing away, then certain decisions will be made.

V. Conclusion.

- A. In all of this, Paul then quietly brings this book to a close.
- B. “Guard what has been entrusted to you”
 1. A financial idea.

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2. When you went on a long journey you would leave your valuables with one you trusted.
 3. Timothy....and you/I.... have been entrusted with the infinite value of the gospel and those doctrines that adorn it.
- C. Others will go astray and leave that which is entrusted.
1. But those here at MDF, I pray, shall never do so.
 2. Let us be a people who step into the world around us, carrying a great treasure that is entrusted to us.
 3. And generously share it.

Small Group Questions

- **When does your giving away money and goods indicate presumption? Why?**
- **Do you hope in God? Does your giving and generosity support that idea? How or how not?**
- **When considering your money, savings and retirement, what frightens you the most?**
- **In our nation there is a huge debate regarding National Healthcare. What would Jesus maybe say and why?**