

GOD IS OUR GOOD FINANCIAL ADVISOR

He reminds us of our real inheritance -- He tells us how He would keep us in the faith.

1 Timothy 6:6-10

TEXT: *But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.*

In Jesus' name, my fellow redeemed:

I wrote this prayer: "Dear Lord, you are Almighty, and you are love. Dear Savior, give me more money so that I can do more for you and better by my family. Amen."

Or, how about this one: "Dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, please let me win the lottery, just once. I promise that I will give most of it away to help others, and that I will give half to the church. Amen."

Is there anything wrong with either of those prayers? I would not criticize the prayer of any Christian, since the Lord commands us to pray and promises to hear us. He teaches us to pray boldly, and with hearts like little children. He Himself has written: *I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.* Mt 21 However, when Christians trust the grace and wisdom of the Lord, those who recognize Him as OUR GOOD FINANCIAL ADVISOR, our prayers for earthly blessings will go something like this: "Dear Heavenly Father: Give us today our daily bread..." GOD IS OUR GOOD FINANCIAL ADVISOR since He reminds us of our real inheritance in heaven; and He tells us how He would keep us in the faith.

While there is no specific mention in this text regarding what God has done for us to assure an eternal wealth and inheritance that surpasses our imagination, the Apostle certainly leads us to consider it when he says: *we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it...* These words, standing alone, are very depressing. Everyone knows this truth, and without any other information from the Lord we would join the world in pursuing whatever wealth, power and glory we can before we die. We, too, would seek our heaven on this earth.

But these words do not stand alone, for he also says: *But godliness with contentment is great gain. ... if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.* How is this possible when we can look about us to see the many wonderful things God has created and blessed for our enjoyment, and we often spend many days and years working and slaving just to get by?

Be content living day by day with only a day's worth of life's necessities while so many in this world are accumulating wealth and are using it to enjoy so many of life's pleasures? This doesn't sit well with children, does it? Children want this and that, and many times parents are distressed when they cannot give them what their little hearts desire. Young men want to get rich, and young women want to marry rich men. Parents work hard to assure that their children get the best education so that they can be successful in this world. These parents want to brag about the colleges their children have entered and the high-paying jobs that they have acquired. And as middle age begins to examine retirement, the Social Security scare begins to loom, and everyone begins to sock away as much wealth as they can so that they can be assured a comfortable retirement. How can anyone do this by being content with living just one day at a time concerned with nothing but each day's food and clothing?

We can't. Scripture's frank revelation about man's sinful nature tells us that there is no escape from the sin of covetousness, selfishness and greed. Of all earthly institutions, it is the church that must administer the greatest and most sacred tasks with the smallest proportion of this earth's resources. In every congregation there are those who gather to sing praises to God while offering far less than what they have spent on themselves and their children. There are those who have spent more on eating out than what they offer to their Lord. There are those who spend more on things we cannot take with us than offering to the Lord gifts that assure us the one thing needful. And there are some who want to be called Christian, but give little or nothing at all. We gather today to sing praises to God, but then go home to spend the week whining and complaining about how poorly and unfairly the Lord has provided for us.

Satan knows this fact about depravity of our sinful nature. That's why he tempted Jesus by offering him the world, remember? *...the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."* Matt 4:8-9 Do you think that Satan could have delivered on this promise? I believe that he could have. Look at how Satan has enriched the lives of so many to harden them in their unbelief! Even Christians have fallen to Satan's delightful desire to "bless" us with earthly wealth. Paul mentions this sad fact: *People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.* We ALL have that secret desire to become rich. Our muscles all tense up whenever anyone comes near our wallets and purses. We all have that secret arrogance that says, "If God would make ME rich, I would not lose my faith, but would then be generous. I would give most of it away. I would see that the church would have what it needs." In other words, God doesn't know how to bless me, or He'd give me more.

Jesus did not fall to Satan's temptation. Instead, the Bible says: *Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'* Mtt 4:10 We worship Jesus because He is God. We thank Him, and praise Him because He kept this commandment FOR US and by Him we are credited with His perfection. We trust Him because even when He was entering the most productive time of his life on earth, he gave it up willingly to pay for our sins of selfishness, covetousness and greed. He died and rose again for our justification so that we might be, as Paul also writes: *Now if we are children, then we are heirs-heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.* Romans 8:17 Do you hear that? Heirs! Heirs are inheritors! In inheritors are given something for which they did not work. It's a gift with you in mind.

A GOOD FINANCIAL ADVISOR would remind me of that inheritance and that I should do all that I can do to remain an heir of such a treasure. Since the Lord is our "financial advisor" his council and advice serves to keep us in the saving faith.

His counsel and advice is this: *...seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.* Mt 6 Shall we believe Jesus? Shall I actually put God's Word first in my life and see! Shall we spend what we do on a LES where God's Word is present every day and see how the Holy Spirit's power affects the lives of our children, for eternity? What is the result of spending time listening to sermons and eating the Lord's Supper? The Bible declares: *... the gospel ... is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes ... For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith.* Ro 1 The POWER OF GOD that keeps Christian hearts and minds in the one true saving faith. It is this power of God that keeps us aware of the fact that Jesus' righteousness is our righteousness, and that each of us are as the Psalmist writes: "The Apple of God's Eye."

It is the wisdom that trusts God so that instead of praying the kind of prayers that focus on earthly things, money and pleasure, we learn to pray the Lord's Prayer: *Give us this day our daily bread...* and let the Lord manage your life. He knows where we are at: *Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?* Matt 6:25-27 How will these promises effect my attitude toward this world's wealth? What good is it but to use it to serve God and to help others? If God promises to take care of me, how generous can I be in my responsibilities of this life. How generous can I be in giving to back to God? I'd say, pretty generous, wouldn't you?

Trust God. Pray the prayers Jesus has taught us to pray. And your biggest problem you trusting and generous heart will have will be what to do with all the blessings He will give you to manage for the years He has given you to work for Him and His Kingdom. Amen.