

Title: Riches or Righteousness?

Text: Proverbs 13: 8

Date: August 19, 2012

Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Our subject this morning is one of utmost importance for everyone here. We have many young people in this congregation. You are what got me to thinking on today's subject. Parents will have a vital interest in this subject, too.

I want to give everyone here two words. When you hear these two words I want us to be honest with ourselves. Which of these two do we think is most profitable to us? Which of these two do we think it is wisest to seek after?

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Riches include all gains and position gotten by our efforts and our hands. All temporal, outward, carnal gain: honor and position along with those possessions that usually come to mind, as well as riches of self-righteous religious works. A person does not have to be a millionaire to have his heart set on riches. We could be living beneath the poverty line and still have our heart trusting in the security of temporal things. Riches or righteousness?

Proverbs 11: 8: The ransom of a man's life are his riches: but the poor heareth not rebuke.

Our young people have your whole life ahead of you. Are you more interested in seeking this world's riches OR the righteousness of God? What sounds better to you being rich or being poor?

This world teaches us to go after riches. Every commercial, every music video, every television show focuses on a superficial, materialistic way of life.

Tradition teaches us real profit comes in devoting ourselves in the pursuit of things which God plainly says will not profit.

For most, it is the normal mind-set today that a young person will start life with a mountain of debt from getting a college degree. It is almost abnormal to think otherwise. We are willing to invest thousands in a college education for our children, invest thousands in business, willing to pay thousands for homes, cars, vacations and whatever brings comfort to our flesh.

Do we invest as much in the pursuit of everlasting righteousness as we do temporary riches? Are we teaching our children to conform to the world or to Christ?

"Well, a person can't compete in the world today without these things." But it is the Righteous God who holds everyone and everything in his hand who says they will destroy us. I wonder how God would bless us if we trusted him. Trust him so much that we were willing to invest more in giving our children the gospel of Christ's righteousness than these other things.

Will we covet something God says will surely make us ERR from trusting Christ? Would we load an arrow in a crossbow then PIERCE ourself THROUGH with the arrow? Would we work from dusk till dawn to heap SORROW upon SORROW upon yourself? "No, I wouldn't do that!" Then listen to God!

1 Timothy 6: 10: For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have ERRED from the faith, and PIERCED themselves THROUGH with MANY SORROWS.

Are we really interested in hearing and heeding God's word or do we really think our way is better? There are many, many scriptures that warn of the dangers of having our hearts set on riches. I want you to see a few scriptures that warn us. Listen to God.

Proverbs 8:18: Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness.

Proverbs 11:4: Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death.

Proverbs 11: 28: He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.

Proverbs 13:7: There is that maketh himself rich, yet *hath* nothing: *there is* that maketh himself poor, yet *hath* great riches.

I. THE RICH MAN

Proverbs 13: 8: The ransom of a man's life are his riches:...

When a man thinks in his heart that his riches provide his security then the man looking to his money, if held for ransom by thieves, has money to redeem himself. If disease comes upon him then he can pay for medical help to save himself. Where famine to strike the land then he can pay for food to preserve himself. So the man whose security is in his possessions never has to look to God for anything. But temporal riches can only purchase temporary salvation. Soon those who trust in carnal riches will hear the rebuke of God.

Psalm 49: 6: They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; 7: None *of them* can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: 8: (For the redemption of their soul *is* precious, and it ceaseth for ever:) 9: That he should still live for ever, *and* not see corruption...12: Nevertheless man *being* in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts *that* perish. 13: This their way *is* their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah.

Psalm 52:7: Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.

II. THE POOR MAN

Proverbs 13: 8:...but the poor heareth not rebuke.

This man is poor in spirit—broke, bankrupt, contrite in spirit—this is the poverty of knowing in your flesh dwells no good thing.

This poverty makes a man depend entirely upon the precious ransom accomplished for him by Christ. Christ who redeemed him from the curse of the law not by corruptible things as silver and gold but with his own precious blood. This is poverty which makes a man depend upon Christ who healeth thee. The poor in spirit knows that if he is cured of sin-sickness then he has life eternal. He is cured of all, even of death. This is poverty that makes a man see the utter famine of his own flesh, the famine in the riches of this world, the famine in being a fat-cat with nothing to worry about in this life. He depends upon Christ the Living Bread. If I have Christ I trust him that "the righteousness shall not be found begging bread."

Such a one has the greatest riches of all. He may not be sleeping in satin sheets on a bed with gold bed posts but he can stretch out on God's bed in the sweet rest and assurance of knowing Christ has him covered. If Christ has you covered in righteousness, Christ has you covered in whatever else you need.

Romans 8: 32: He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

But this is the greatest of all--**8:...but the poor heareth not rebuke.**

That man who went through life looking to his wealth shall meet God and hear the rebuke of God. His very riches will be a witness against him.

James 5: 3: Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

But the man poor in spirit who put all his trust in Christ shall never hear this rebuke from God. He is an heir of God's eternal inheritance, a joint-heir with Jesus Christ the Lord.

Matthew 5: 3: Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The believer believes God. He has God's word on it that "all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." (1 Cor 3: 21-23)

Application: Now which is better? Riches which can ransom you temporarily then damn you for all eternity OR enduring riches of Christ that provide both now and forever!

Illustration: The man who was missing church to earn money to serve the Lord later in life. He will never do it.

Illustration: As a boy mowing yard. I remember when I was boy mowing yards. I had 500 dollars in the bank. But if I just had 1000, I could buy better equipment, expand. But by the time I saved up 1000, with inflation, it wasn't enough, now I needed 5,000.

Do you think if you just had a little more then you would be content? If you are not content with what you have now then you will not be content with more.

This is important—get this—the thing that makes a believer happy, a cheerful, generous giver in God's house is godliness with contentment. By God's free abundant grace in Christ, God has freely given me all things that pertain to eternal life and godliness. Having eternal life in Christ, being now made godly in Christ, I have contentment, and this godliness with contentment makes me to be persuaded that "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." (2 Cor 9: 8) Covetous hearts suppose that gain is godliness but it is not so. "Godliness with contentment is great gain." (1 Tim 6: 5-6)

Illustration: Mr. Living Good. "He tried to avoid prosperity."

Psalm 37: 16: A little that a righteous man hath *is* better than the riches of many wicked.

Matthew 6: 24: No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. 25: Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? 26: Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your

heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? 27: Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? 28: And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30: Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith? 31: Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32: (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33: But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34: Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.

How do we get this righteousness? I am sure most here can at least give a general blueprint on how to get riches in this life. How many know how to get this righteousness?

- Righteousness is the Lord our Righteousness.
- Righteousness is to be made the righteousness of God in the person of Christ Jesus through his finished work.
- Righteousness is having Christ our Righteousness formed in us so that we are internally, eternally new and alive in inseparable union with Christ.
- Righteousness is free to all that will rest in Christ by faith.
- Get this Pearl of great price and you are rich.
- Christ is the ONE THING NEEDFUL.

AMEN!