

Heb. 13: 1-6; I Tim. 6:6-10; Love and Money I. The Wrong things to Love II. The Proper use of Money

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, do we love as we ought? What does Christ call us to do with our money to prove that love? Today we come in our study of Heb. 13 to v. 5 where the topic of money is raised and applied to the NT church in the context of NT worship. As we saw last week, we are now in the Second Table of the Law- how do we love our neighbor as ourself? Dealing specifically with the 8<sup>th</sup> Commandment- you shall not steal- and the 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment- you shall not covet- we find that Christian love calls us to be wise with our finances. Since we have a kingdom that cannot be shaken- as 12:27 puts it- since we have a home, possessions, wealth and honor in the Kingdom that is to come- we will see and use our earthly wealth differently. The fact that Jesus spoke more about finances than prayer should be a sobering truth- it seems that money problems is an age-old problem. Even many of our NT Letter have something to say about our view of and use of money. We would all agree that our government officials all have a problem with spending money- but the focus today is not so much on the spending of money but rather our view of that money. And although Heb. 13 speaks specifically about money- this concept can be easily extended to every earthly possession. Not only do both the rich and the poor find money tempting- alluring; it is also true that the young and the old long for possessions just the same. The child who spend 6 months compiling a Christmas list- and the retiree who constantly checks his retirement account- both have a heart issue that needs to be addressed. As Jesus said in Mt. 6- you cannot serve 2 masters- you cannot love God properly- or you will not love God at all- if you love worldly things. Where your treasures are found, there your heart will be also. So if our treasures are up above- if our true home is on Mt. Zion which cannot shaken- we will learn to hold loosely the things below that can and are shaken. If moth, thief and rust can take it away, then it belongs to the lowly, earthly and shakable realm- thus do not put your heart and love on these things! So we consider this theme: Jesus Christ gives us true riches so that we might learn to be content.

### **I. The Wrong things to Love**

In our first point we consider the opening of v. 5- keep your life free from the love of money. Everyone loves something- so what are the wrong things to love? The answer is- money and the things of this passing, fallen world. The writer of this book starts by exploring a path- a walk of life. Keep your conversation, your manner, your walk free from this worldly pursuit. I'm sure we all know people who are so enamored and consumed with money that it is all that they talk about. How are you socks doing- your 401K? Did you hear that I got a bonus or a raise? But not just money- the things that money can buy. Keep your life free from the love of earthly things. Although not about money specifically- there are many whose lives revolve around homes, cars, boats, motorcycles, and vacations. Now to be clear, we are not being told that any of these things are bad in themselves- but does their purchase, use and upkeep consume your life? Does your walk- your daily activities- display that you are living after this earthly and temporary way of life. Keep your life free from the love of money- free from covetousness. The word used here in v. 5 should be very familiar- it is "A Philos" the root word for love- Phileo- we found last week. We are told to love the brotherhood- to be a lover of strangers. So yes- do love your neighbors! But do not love money- don't be a lover of silver and gold. The same word for covetousness is found in I Tim. 3:3 where overseers must not be lovers of money. The same word is used to describe the Pharisees in Luke 16- they were lovers of money- covetous! It is this kind of mindset that will display the mentality of people who live during the last days- they will be as II Tim. 3 says- lovers of self and lovers of money. So God's people must be on guard against the constant temptation towards coveting- craving what others have- wishing that what is theirs became yours. Desiring and pursuing what will not last! We must not strive for these passing things- because coveting leads to envy, anxiety and fear! Those who want will always want- always craving more- they will never have enough! These hate those who have what they want- and scheme in order to get it! The Love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Those who love money are greedy for unjust gain- using others for their own ends- filled with worry- storing up wealth for themselves and pursuing treasures for this life. But Jesus makes it clear in Luke 16- you cannot serve two masters! So then, who is your master? What then do you love? Do you love money more than

God, His Word and His people? Do you crave silver and gold more than true life and riches above? Taking a step back- we remember where true riches are found and how temporary the things of this life are.

Everything we hold with these hands is temporary, passing- and one day will be shaken and tried by fire. Your money, stocks, homes, cars- all will not endure forever. If you set your heart on what is passing- you will be building with material that will not stand the test of time. Building your life on sand! It is foolish to love things- because these things cannot love you back- and they all will wear out and one day pass away! Is it not better to build with material that will last- to send our riches on ahead- to use earthly treasures for eternal good? Yes, to provide for your family, but also to help those who are in need- and so that the gospel might go forth to all lands? So then, do not love money, but rather love God and be content.

## **II. The Proper use of Money**

As we move into our second point, we find that money is to be both viewed and used properly. First of all, we must view money properly. It is a gift from God- given for a specific purpose- to bless others. Money is not God- therefore it must not be loved! We are to love God first and foremost- with all our heart, soul mind and strength. And secondly, we are to love our fellow man- love our neighbor as ourselves! So money is not God and money is not my neighbor! But God is the one who has given us this money. As James says, every good and perfect gift comes from above- from the Father of lights. It is He who gives and He who takes away.

Whatever we have is from Him- we are but stewards. We are called to be faithful as servants in the house- to use the gifts He has given us for the purposes of His design. God gives us extra- so that we might help those in need. And when we are in need, God meets our needs through the extra He has given to others. In that way there is equality in the church as II Cor. 8 puts it. So the money we have- the possessions we receive are not eternally ours nor are they something that fully merit. Everything belongs to our God- and He bestows them on man as He chooses. So we must view our money properly- as a Gift from God. So we keep money in its proper place- a passing thing. This greatly helps us- teaches us to be satisfied. Instead of loving money and always striving for more, we are content and thankful! Money must be kept in its proper place- that is what

breeds contentment. As we read from I Tim. 6- godliness with contentment is great gain. If money is but a tool from God- to be used to serve God and bless fellow man- when we see finances in this light, we will start to become content. Now contentment in v. 5 is the word- "arkeo" and it means to have a settled heart- to be steadfast and satisfied- knowing that what you have is sufficient and your heart is at rest! Give me neither poverty nor riches Proverbs says. Be content with what you have- or as Jesus said to the soldiers in Luke 3- be content with your wages. Or as I Tim. 6:8 says- if you have food and clothing, with these be content. Contentment knows when it has been blessed- seeing that our needs are filled we say in our heart- that is enough. Content people are not only happy and satisfied- they learn to be at peace with what they have. Even Paul could learn to be content in every situation as he said in Phil. 4. With either prosperity and plenty- or want and need. He knew that God would provide for His needs as long as he had work to do here below. Contentment has learned the lesson of Mt. 6- if God has provided for the birds and the flowers- if He has already given us Jesus His Son- will He not also give us our daily bread. Contentment says- I do not need more- I have enough. Amassing worldly things will not be the goal of my life- I have what is sufficient. Contentment is built on faith- I trust the One in whose hands I reside! As v. 5 concludes- when God promises that He will never leave us- never forsake us- then we can and will be content! He will never, no never, no never forsake! So the grounds for contentment is that God has become our loving Father through Jesus Christ our Lord! The grounds for contentment are the promises of God- both His promised presence and the promise of provision! He will never leave us- and He will never forsake us! If the LORD is my helper, I shall not be in want! He will not abandon us- He will surely give us what we need and work for our good all things. If we trust that God is sovereign- that He is good- that He loves us through Jesus Christ- then I can and will be content in whatever state my bank account may be.

But there is yet one more consequence- if we do not love money- if we see money as a gift from God to be used at God's digression- then we will not hold on to what we should give. The third mark of a godly life is generosity. As Luke 12:33 says, sell your possessions and give to the needy. As we saw last week, we are

called to love and serve God's people- and to love our neighbors who are strangers- doing good to all. This takes both time and money. But if we love money, we will not give! However, those who love God and their neighbor will both support the local body and be mindful of the general needs of mankind. So we will give- but not just give- we give cheerfully and sacrificially. From the heart and consistently! Listen to Heb. 13:16- do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are please to God. Do good- share what you have! So God's people are committed to supporting the local ministry of the church and the benevolent needs as well- along with missions and ministries of mercies. For God's people it is not- I must give 10%- giving begrudgingly. Rather, the tithe is only the beginning. We continue to increase our giving- thinking of ways in which we can send our treasures on ahead. Imagine a situation where the members of our church gave so much- cheerfully and generously giving to the church so that the deacons had to say- stop giving so much! We have more than we need already! Well, that is what happened in Ex. 36- the leaders had to restrain the people because they kept giving! That is what happens when God's people see money properly- when they Love God and Love fellow man- money is not an object that we love, crave or pursue. It is just a thing- loving rightly leads to cheerful giving! And we know that God loves a cheerful giver!

To conclude, the use of money in the New Covenant displays where our heart is. That is why the collection of our offerings is a proper part of our worship service- it shows our gratitude! As our theme stated, Jesus Christ gives us true riches so that we might learn to be content. If we are faithful with these lower things- if we are good stewards of this passing treasures, Jesus will give us lasting treasures up above! Almost every sin against man has coveting at its source- wanting something that God has not given as Adam did in the garden. But when God and His glory is our goal- when we love Him first and fellow man second- we learn to see money as it is. A useful, temporary tool that displays the true nature of our heart! So may we all resist the spirit of this age- refusing to love money- instead learning to be content with what we have as we cheerfully use our gifts to bless others! May we all hear those blessed words- well done good and faithful servant. You have been faithful with little- now enter into the joy and glory that My Father has prepared for you!