



Blackfoot Church of Christ

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"Give me not Riches or Poverty?"

By Bill Sexton

(Proverbs 30:8)

Here are two sides of a problem. However, one side may never be recognized as a problem-that of riches. The common response, jokingly, of course is: "I'd like to have that kind of a problem for awhile". Yet, seriously, if one has riches, he/she is responsible for the proper use of them. The other side, poverty, is not desirable, either. One is likely to misbehave on either side, in either case. Yet, there is a sense in what the poor may have unreachable riches, while those who are "rich" may in fact be in poverty (Ch. Eph. 3:8; Rev. 3:17).

First, if one has riches, he/she is tempted to be satisfied and see no real NEED for God. Etc. The fact is one always has the need for God's guidance, protection, strength to be fair, just, and caring. The scriptures warn against such:

1). In the old Testament. To the children of Israel (Deut.6:10--12) when they came into the land and had "houses full of all good things,...wells (dug), ... vineyards and olive trees,...; Then beware lest thou forget the Lord, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage." The key word here is "forget."

2). In the New Testament. I Timothy 6:17 "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; 18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; 19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." The key word here is "trust."

3) The young man, (Mk. 10:17-27; Matt. 19:16-22) seemingly wanted to serve God. However, when it came to a test of who or what came first, he chose the money and went away sorrowful, "for he had great possessions."

4) The "love of money" is the downfall of many a person: I 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.

Secondly, if one is feeling the pain of being in poverty, he/she is tempted to be so dissatisfied that he/she fails to depend on God and trust Him. All their time and effort is spent thinking about how unjust they are treated, etc. Perhaps, they develop bitterness in their mind, which eats away at them and manifests itself toward other in such a way they harm themselves and others, too.

Thus we see that neither riches nor poverty is the ideally state to be in. Responsibility is associated with each. The state of being in either, however, is not necessarily destructive. There is danger associated with each.

If one finds himself/herself in poverty, then, let them search for the reason and the key for getting out of that state with integrity, maintaining one's relationship with God and His Son. If one find himself/herself with riches, instead of being puffed up, proud, and uncaring, self-sufficient, let them ask how can I use these riches to help others, benefit God's people? Consider the instructions God give Timothy to pass on to those in this state (1 Tim. 6:17). I have heard a few express the idea that only "poor people" can be righteous. Such is not correct. Often, it appears to me today in our land those who are "poor" are in that state because of their lack of ambition, developing skills, or failure to manage what they have had. Beloved, we cannot escape the fact that we are responsible individuals, regardless of the state we are in, relative to riches, socio-economic status. We are responsible for using whatever goods we are permitted to possess in this life in a sensible, rational, right manner. Let us discharge our affairs as God directs!

Ignorance Is No Excuse

By Mike Thomas

It seems as if ignorance is shunned in every aspect of life except religion. Children are expected to learn the correct spelling to "cat" and the right answer to "2 + 2." An operate of a vehicle is expected to know what to do at a yield sign and to know how far to park from a fire hydrant. A tax payer must be able to prove the deductions he is claiming. Ignorance in any one of these examples will result in penalty. Sincerity alone does not justify our mistakes, especially when they are fatal. When a man picks up a live wire thinking it is without electricity, will his sincerity keep him from being shocked? When a doctor prescribes the wrong medication, will ignorance prevent the patient from getting sick? Indeed, we are expected to know the truth in every aspect of life if we are to find safety and

success. “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death” (Proverbs 16:25).

Unfortunately, that caution and exactness is not always required of people in practicing religion. To the contrary, ignorance is celebrated and justified. “God’s mercy covers our sins as we do things that are contrary to His will.” Or, “God doesn’t care what we do in religion as long as we are kind to one another.” Thus, the philosophies of “Attend the church of your choice” and “Practice the religion that best suits you” are given free reign.

When Paul addressed the people of Athens he said, “I perceive that in all things you are very religious” (Acts 17:22). He could see they were passionate about their religious beliefs but he rebuked them for their ignorance and ungodliness. He announced, “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent” (verse 30). Ignorant of God’s will? Yes. Sincere in their beliefs? Absolutely. Justified in their sins? Not a chance. They had to repent of sin as they learned the truth. The same was true for the unbelieving Jews Paul encountered. He said of them, “I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness ...have not submitted to the righteousness of God” (Romans 10:2-3). Sincerity did not save them, either. We cannot be hearers only of God’s word to be pleasing to Him; we must also be doers of it as well (James 1:22). From God’s point of view, there is such a thing as right and wrong in religion. Specifically, “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Ephesians 4:3-6). Jesus said, “And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch” (Matthew 15:14). He was addressing those who were willfully ignorant of the truth because of their refusal to obey God in all things. Certainly, we should avoid the same mindset.

Yes, we need God’s mercy and patience to grow in our knowledge of His will (2 Peter 3:18), but we must also be committed to rightly dividing His word to be pleasing to Him (2 Timothy 2:15). This is why He tell us to “Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22). Why issue this warning if ignorance is our safety net in religious matters? Why tell us to “test all things” if there is no danger in selecting the wrong belief?

Prayer Requests & Announcements

- Porters are in SLC this weekend
- Ray Mitchell is undergoing blood test for some health problems
- Shirley Torres, Seattle WA (Torres' have visited our congregation) is fighting cancer. Chemo treatments have not been successful. They have decided to stop the Chemo and pursue other treatments to help enhance her quality of life
- Keep April in your prayers as she deals with health issues
- The Christians in the Philippines
- Bible class tomorrow night 7:00pm at Chad and Kass' on evangelism

For prayer requests, call or text

Chad @ (208) 221-2587 or Ross @ (208) 680-6590

Assignments

<u>Today</u> Bible Study – Ross Ward Song Leader – Tom Mitchell Lord's Table – Chad Mitchell Sermon – Ross Ward	<u>Wednesday</u> Bible Study – Ross Ward Song Leader – Chad Mitchell Invitation – Ross Ward
<u>Next Sunday</u> Bible Study – Ross Ward Song Leader – David Porter Lord's Table – Tom Mitchell Sermon – Ross Ward	<u>Next Wednesday</u> Bible Study – Chad Mitchell Song Leader – Tom Mitchell Invitation – Ross Ward

Blackfoot Church of Christ
370 North Shilling Ave.
Blackfoot, Idaho 83221

Meeting Times:

Sunday Morning Classes 10:00AM
Sunday Morning Worship 11:00AM
Wednesday Evening 7:30PM



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