

In the fall of 1990, the Boston based rock group Extreme released an album entitled Pornografitti. The album had such hits as, More than Words, Hole Hearted, and Song for Love. But it also contained a song entitled Money (In God We Trust). The chorus of the song makes it clear what the song is about:

Money
I need more money
Just a little more money
Yeah, I need more money
Money, money
I need more money
I need more money
Just a little more money
Just a little more money
Yeah, I need more money
Yeah, I need more money

But it is the verses and bridge that so accurately depict the American perspective of money. The motif of the song is borrowed from the popular childhood prayer, Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep. This is evident from the opening verse which goes:

Now I lay, I lay me down to sleep
Hallelujah
Almighty dollar
I praise the lord afford my roll to keep
Hallelujah
Almighty dollar

The remaining verses and bridge continue the theme:

And give us these days
Our daily bread
Only you we praise
Almighty dollar
Money
My personal savior
Money
A material lust
Money
Life's only treasure
Money
In God we trust
And if I should die before I wake
Hallelujah
Almighty dollar
I'm gonna take the money that I make
Hallelujah
Almighty dollar

While many could rightly use this as an example of the evils of American capitalism, that would be short sighted. Americans and capitalists are not the only people in history to have an unhealthy obsession with money. The problem of worshipping money and wealth is as old as human civilization. Jesus confronted that reality in the passage to which we turn our attention this morning. Here he confronts the worldly perspective of money and wealth with his own righteous perspective. And it is that perspective that enables us to give in accordance with his teachings found in the opening verses of Matthew 6. So let's take some time to look and learn from Jesus' words.

Scripture: Matthew 6:19-24

I. A Righteous Perspective of Money

A. Principles

1. The Heart (21)
 - a) Our heart is where our treasure is
 - (1) Jesus does not condemn such an attitude
 - (2) He simply seeks to redefine "treasure" and where it lies
2. The Eye (22-23)
 - a) Good eyes see mammon and money as God sees them
 - b) Bad eyes see mammon and money as the world sees them
 - c) Darkness that is believed to be light is disastrous
3. The Life (24)
 - a) Impossible to serve two masters
 - (1) No one can walk in darkness and light (1 John)
 - (2) Love of either will lead to hate of the other
 - b) Inevitability of Mastery
 - (1) You WILL/DO serve someone or something

B. Practical

1. The Life
 - a) Christians are called to be servants of God
 - (1) We have been delivered from darkness into light
 - (a) 1 Peter 2:9
 - (2) This means that we must hate everything else in comparison to God
 - (a) Luke 14:26
2. The Eye
 - a) God view VS Worlds view
 - (1) Worship VS Wealth
 - (2) Service VS Security and Status
 - (3) Kingdom growth VS Personal gain

3. The Heart
 - a) "Treasure"
 - (1) Mammon VS Men's souls
 - (2) Opulence VS Obedience
 - b) Where our treasure lies
 - (1) Earthly life VS Everlasting life

Earlier I mentioned a sermon I preached years ago as part of a series I entitled Pendulum Riding. I called it that because we, as Christians and as humans in general, have a tendency to swing from one extreme to another. The Christian mindset on money and mammon is no exception. A cursory glance at Church history reveals the poles between which the Church has swung.

Most recently many within the evangelical Christian community have embraced a "health and wealth" or "prosperity" perspective which preaches that God financially blesses those with whom he is pleased. This makes it easy to see who has found favor with God. The more money you have the better Christian you must be. In the early days of Christendom, the opposite was preached. Poverty was preached as a sign of true faith. Many Christians gave up their wealth to join monasteries and deny themselves.

Neither of these approaches is biblical. Money and mammon are not evil in themselves. Both money and mammon are amoral; meaning they are neither good nor evil. The Bible is full of wealthy people who were considered righteous. Abraham, Jacob, Job, David, Solomon, and Joseph to name a few.

It is our attitude toward money that is either evil or righteous. If we love God, we are called to love people. And as the adage goes, we should love people and use money not love money and use people.

When we have a righteous perspective of money and mammon we realize that it all belongs to God. Some will say, "God doesn't need my money." I would simply respond to that with "God doesn't need you (or me)." He desires us. And he desires that we recognize that all we have is his. With that in mind we must be good stewards. Once we have the proper perspective, giving can be done the way Christ commanded.

What is your perspective on money and mammon? Is it the same as God's or does it align more with the world's way of thinking? I challenge you this morning to use our time of invitation to adopt God's principles and perspective so that you may practice righteousness with the money and mammon he entrusted to you.