



GROW. PRAY. STUDY.

The Church of the Resurrection – Weekly Guide

November 8, 2015

“Money: It Can Buy Me a Boat”

Scripture: Matthew 6:24-25

[Then Jesus said to them,] “No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?”

Don’t choke out the good seed

MONDAY 11.9.15 Luke 8:4-8, 11-15

In this parable, Jesus said our priorities matter. He used images of various states of the human heart (soil) to show how each one affects our ability to hear and follow God’s word (seed). When we cultivate an open, “good soil” heart, he said, then “concerns, riches, and pleasures of life” won’t be able to crowd out the good fruit God is at work to bear in us.

- What’s most important in your life? Who or what first planted “the seed” of God’s Word in the soil of your life? What are some concerns or interests that have become less prominent in your life as you’ve made God your top priority? Which of the four types of soil in Jesus’ parable best describes how receptive you are to the seed right now?
- What are the concerns or interests that most often compete with God’s kingdom to be the top priority in your life? What key choices have helped to open you to God’s work in helping you to cultivate that “good soil” heart? What shifts in attitudes, actions and values would move you further in the direction of being “good soil” for God’s Word to grow in?

Prayer: Lord God, the fruit you bear in my life is wonderful, and I want to be good soil for it. Give me clear vision as to what gets in the way of letting that fruit grow. Amen.

What you can’t take with you

TUESDAY 11.10.15 Ecclesiastes 5:8-15, 18-20

The writer of Ecclesiastes had watched human life closely, carefully and un sentimentally. In verse 10, he noted the painful irony that “the money lover isn’t satisfied with money.” Verse 15 stated more poetically the same truth as the prosaic English phrase “you can’t take it with you.” Perhaps most important, he found that true joy and satisfaction in life come as God’s gift to us (verses 19-20).

- Have you ever experienced for yourself the truth behind the words “Those who love money never have enough”? If so, what lessons did you take away from the experience? If not, how intensely do you work at trying to have that experience someday? What choices most help you to own the things you own, rather than letting them “own” you?

- True wisdom helps us accept our limits, and especially our mortality (which our society tries so hard to deny). *The Message* rendered verse 20 as “God deals out joy in the present, the now. It’s useless to brood over how long we might live.” In what ways have you learned to find God’s joy in the now? What are some ways you thank God for the good things in your life, free from fear of the future or envy of what others seem to have?

Prayer: Lord God, you have given me the gift of this Tuesday. Accept my thanks and praise, and go through this day with me, filling every moment of it with your steadfast love. Amen.

“Free from the love of money”

WEDNESDAY 11.11.15 Proverbs 13:4, 11; 16:8, Hebrews 13:5-6

Scholar John Walton saw this theme in the Hebrew wisdom of Proverbs: “While wealth is considered a good thing and even a gift of Yahweh when acquired honestly, it is not the most important thing by far. If a decision must be made between wealth and a right relationship with Yahweh or with love or peace, the latter are far better.” Hebrews echoed that view—life may bring us much money, or not so much, but in either case contentment is possible and highly desirable.

- Proverbs noted that, as a general rule, steadily working toward financial goals is wiser than chasing “get rich quick” schemes. Have you ever worked steadily toward a goal, and felt the inner satisfaction when your disciplined pursuit paid off? On the other hand, have you ever had a financial windfall, and then regretted impulsively “blowing it”?
- Reflecting on Hebrews 13, scholar N. T. Wright wrote a helpful rule of thumb: “When you love something or someone, you make sacrifices for them. When you find yourself making a sacrifice of something else in your life, simply so that you can follow where money is beckoning you, regard that as a danger signal.” What relationships, activities or values would you never choose to sacrifice just to pursue more money?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, however much money I do or do not currently have, help me to look at it with clear eyes. Help me to see money as a tool to serve my higher values, not as the highest value itself. Amen.

Choose your master well

THURSDAY 11.12.15 Matthew 6:19-24

Jesus said that making the pursuit of wealth (no matter how you want to use it) the center of your life inevitably conflicts with loyalty to God. He stated the clear, common-sense principle that “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also,” and then pointedly added, “You cannot serve God and wealth.” Treasure in heaven, treasure by God’s standards, is the most precious item we can “collect.”

- Conduct a simple life audit. Review your calendar and your checkbook. Based on the time, energy and resources reflected in those two sources, what “master(s)” would you say you are serving? Can you see your loyalties shifting as you choose to invest in heavenly treasure? What kinds of changes could you make to give you greater freedom to fully serve God as Lord of your life?

- Pastor Rick Warren wrote, “If I put my money in my house, that is where my heart is. If I put my money in eating out... if I put my money in my clothes, if I put my money into a hobby, that’s where my heart is. So the question becomes, where do you want your heart to be?” How do you answer—where do your choices of priorities tend to focus your heart’s affections?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, calling you “Lord” isn’t just a nice, polite title. It means that you rule over my life and my priorities. Give me the courage and devotion to really mean it when I call you “Lord.” Amen.

Learning how to be content

FRIDAY 11.13.15 Philippians 4:10-13

From a prison cell (Philippians 1:13), Paul shared his inner response to gifts he had received from the Christians in the city of Philippi. His words showed how “needs” and “wants” fit together in his life, in good times and bad. In Christ, he said, he had “learned the secret to being content in any and every circumstance.”

- Paul did not glorify or glamorize poverty or hunger in these verses. (If it’s true that money does not guarantee happiness, that’s certainly also true of poverty!) Paul expressed heartfelt gratitude for what the Philippians had sent. How did those gifts represent God’s care for Paul’s needs? In what ways are you able to be God’s physical presence to bless someone else who is in need?
- Paul had learned to be content in every situation. How did he express his “secret” (verse 13)? How, if at all, have you learned to take strength from God’s presence when you deal with scarcity? On the other hand, do you ever have trouble finding contentment when dealing with plenty? If so, how does God help?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, keep growing in me the awareness that you, and not my “stuff,” are the secret to a contented life. Guide me toward a life of gratitude rather than grasping for more. Amen.

“Grab hold of eternal life”—the true treasure

SATURDAY 11.14.15 1 Timothy 6:6-12

Paul wrote to his protégé Timothy that the truest measure of any person’s wealth is not material, but spiritual. Verse 6 in the *New Century Version* says, “Serving God does make us very rich, if we are satisfied with what we have.” Paul didn’t want the often short-lived pleasures of material wealth to blind Timothy or the members of his church to God, “who richly provides” for our well-being. After describing the spiritual dangers that go with a lust for money, Paul told Timothy, “Run for your life from all this” (verse 11, *The Message*).

- How rich (or poor) are you, by the measure these verses suggest? If your “contentment quotient” is strong, reflect on how it got that way. What changes might disrupt your contentment, and for what reasons? If your quotient is lower, ask God to help you raise it. Ask the most contented person you know what values and choices led them toward contentment. In a culture flooded with messages meant to make you want “more,” how do you run for your life from all this? How can you avoid both pride and shame related to your material “success”?

Prayer: Dear God, help me to be a faithful steward of the money and things I have, to use them for your glory. May I never allow them to turn into a spiritually deadly trap that hides you from me. Amen.

Family Activity: Gather or create the following: play money, pictures of items a child might want to buy (toys, vacation, junk food) and pictures of ways to give (missionary, charity, church). Assign a pretend purchase price to each of the items. Pass out play money, giving each family member different amounts. Show your family members their choices of items to buy and ways to give. Invite your family to spend their play money however they would like by purchasing the items on pictures or giving to the places/people in need. After each person has spent their money, read Mark 12:41-44. Discuss the choices people made then ask God to help you each become cheerful givers.

Prayer Requests

Prayers for those receiving long-term medical care: cor.org/prayer

Prayers for Health and Healing for: Kathy Goldstein

Prayers for Peace and Comfort for:

- Ken Selzer and family following the death of his mother Lois Selzer, 10/26
- Sheryl Shelgren and family following the death of her brother Sydney Shelgrenm, 10/10
- Craig Laurion and family following the death of his son Shawn Laurion, 10/26
- Lori Patterson and family following the death of her mother Karen Eppson, 10/6
- Denise Lundberg and family following the death of her father, Jon Jacobson, Sr., 10/31
- Rusty Smith and family following the death of his mother Mary E Smith, 10/26
- Vivian Cox and family following the death of her sister Margaret "Joan" Kowitz Hegeman, 10/28