

GUARD THE TRUST, ENJOY THE TREASURE! 1 Timothy 6:17-21

INTRODUCTION: How secure is your money? Do you trust the bank where you have your accounts...the credit card companies...anyone who has access to your Social Security number? Most of us are very careful not to expose any information that might put our financial resources in jeopardy. After all, we cannot afford to lose something as valuable as our salary and savings and perhaps even investments!

Why do we care so much about that? We care because what we have, we have to live on! Small or large, the treasure we have is carefully guarded because we depend on it! But if we depend on it, we may come to treasure it too much...count on it too much...and perhaps even come to put entirely too much of our affections and efforts into gaining and guarding what comes to be our greatest treasure.

Paul warns Timothy in these closing words of the danger of putting too much emphasis and giving too much attention on the wrong things!

***1Tim. 6:17-19** Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. ¹⁸ Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹ storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.*

In other words, glory in the goodness of God, give generously from the bounty of God and guard carefully the trust you received from God.

Of all the things entrusted to our care and oversight, one gets far too much attention and the other too little—we have been entrusted with family, friends, jobs, health, talents, time and so forth. But as Paul astutely observes, the object of our affections and our hope, that which we believe brings joy and satisfaction, is what he calls “*the uncertainty of riches*” in this present world.

THESIS: Until Jesus Christ is all you want, all you long for, your heart will never rejoice and will never be content.

I. GLORY IN THE GOODNESS OF GOD

--We live in a time when many believe it is their right to question the goodness of God, to cast shadows of doubt over the rightness and goodness of what He does and how He acts.

--Rather than step back and get some objectivity, most of these questions and doubts arise from the subjectivity of personal self-interests and hopes that did not turn out the way they wanted, or the way they thought it should.

--This text does not go into detail to answer their objections but instead does offer a revealing insight into the nature of our God.

A. THE RIGHT PLACE TO PUT OUR HOPE

--When our hope depends on things going our way, we usually mean the ways of “*this present world*.”

--The standard by which we measure our present and future circumstances often stems from how “rich” we are in the goods and resources of this world as we already noted above...*family, friends, jobs, health, talents, time and so forth*.

--Honesty in how we measure the hope we have will force us to admit that none of these things sustain hope at all...there is no peace in them, no certainty, no confidence, no lasting satisfaction...and only occasional periods of happiness, never any deep and abiding joy!

--So Paul tells Timothy to charge/command/instruct those in the body of Christ not to be duped into putting their trust in the wrong things, not to be deceived into thinking there is any real hope in what he says arise from two factors.

1. Personal Conceit

--There is an amazing amount of haughtiness, arrogance and conceit to be found in those who believe that they can be the source of their own hope, the foundation of their own joy.

--Yet that is the prevailing sentiment within the human heart, expressed in a myriad of ways in our literature and our lifestyles and our worldviews.

--One we had to memorize back in school days seemed so bold and courageous, but is nothing more than a source of false hope:

From Invictus...

It matters not how strait the gate, How charged with punishments the scroll.
I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul. **William Ernest Henley**

--God protect our souls from this vain hope arising from the worst form of human conceit...that we owe our own hope and happiness to none but ourselves!

2. The Uncertainty of Riches

--Can there be anything more uncertain than riches?

--Even those with great bounty live with the daily uncertainty that some devastating calamity may strike at any time and their amassing of wealth come to nothing!

--Therefore, they fight and worry and guard and legislate and hoard what they have, always living in fear of the possibility that their security from riches will vanish like a mist in a windy day!

Luke 12:15 *And He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."*

A.W. Tozer "There is within the human heart a tough fibrous root of fallen life whose nature is to possess, always to possess. It covets 'things' with a deep and fierce passion. The pronouns 'my' and 'mine' look innocent enough in print, but their constant and universal use is significant. They express the real nature of the old Adamic man (sinfulness of man) better than a thousand volumes of theology could do. They are verbal symptoms of our deep disease. The roots of our hearts have grown down into things, and we dare not pull up one rootlet lest we die. Things have become necessary to us, a development never originally intended. God's gifts now take the place of God, and the whole course of nature is upset by the monstrous substitution." (*The Pursuit of God* - Chapter 2 - "The Blessedness of Possessing Nothing")

B. THE PROPER ENJOYMENT OF GODLY RICHES

--To all of that, Paul's exhortation provides a better way to enter into the fullness of life that can only be experienced in Jesus Christ.

1. Put your hope in God

--Everything in this present world will pass away, and at best is only temporary.

--But a life built on the foundation of eternal hope in the everlasting God never disappoints because all our hopes for all that matters are fully satisfied in Him.

2. Consider the riches of God

--God's provisions always go beyond anything we could hope for or imagine.

***1Cor. 2:9** but just as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him."*

--As we are busy imagining what life would be like with things alone, God is providing a life with the full measure of all that we need to be satisfied and filled with joy and thanksgiving.

***Psa. 65:4** Blessed is the one you choose and bring near, to dwell in your courts! We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple!*

--The riches of God takes us into realms of delight we would never even have considered because He knows what is best and what will last—neither of which can we know!

3. Enjoy the goodness of God

***1Tim. 6:17** fix their hope...on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.*

--For those who doubt the goodness of God, we are reminded of two very special truths that we can know:

a. God richly supplies us

--God does not skimp or hold back but always lavishes His good gifts on us...pours them out upon us with abundance.

***Psa. 16:5-6** The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. ⁶ The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.*

b. All things from Him are to enjoy

--Far from being a God who calls us to follow Him into deprivation and into a lifetime of emptiness, our God makes every circumstance of our lives in Him enjoyable because He is with us...and because His company alone satisfies and delights at the deepest level.

Application: *Therefore, we must glory in the goodness of God!*

--With gratitude and joy, we must see every good gift as from the gracious hand of God...count our blessings, consider our bounty and give glory to Him for His goodness.

II. GIVE GENEROUSLY FROM THE BOUNTY OF GOD

--Once we have grasped in some way the gracious goodness of God's riches lavished upon us, how can we not demonstrate His likeness in our own lives?

***1 Timothy 6:18-19** Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹ storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.*

A. BE RICH IN GOOD WORKS

--No matter how little of the world's goods you have, you are always rich in what you can do for Christ and for others.

--Even if you have poor health, limited time or opportunity, there is always a way to "be rich in good works" so that others may see the beauty of Jesus Christ through your acts of sacrificial love.

--Those who may not be able to grasp fine points of theology or explain the biblical narrative of redeeming grace can and will recognize, be blessed and be drawn to love in action!

ILLUS. I have a friend who prays often, "Lord, just give me an idea! Expand my vision for ways to be rich in what I have, not to bemoan what I do not have!" May God give us all holy and helpful imaginations!

B. BE GENEROUS IN GRACIOUS GIVING

--One would think at this point that all followers of Christ would be lining up to model their lives after His in this respect.

--After all the things expected and asked of us, this is one area we can all do right away...a move toward obedience that is within the reach of each of us immediately!

1. Managing Money for God's Glory

--One of the topics people most hate to hear preached and taught is how we are supposed to manage our riches...more specifically, how we manage money.

ILLUS. If you claim to be a follower of Jesus Christ, you should know that He talked about money more than He did about heaven and hell combined...more than any other subject but the Kingdom of God!

Consider that 11 of 39 parables talk about money and 1 of 7 verses in the Gospel of Luke talk about it.

But still, most of you here today cringe when the subject comes up and would rather talk about just about anything else!

--Yet the reality is that we can quickly make more progress in how we trust Christ in this arena than practically anywhere else.

--I may want to be better at praying, but it takes a lot of practice and study...better at sharing my faith, but again it takes practice and preparation...better at loving others, but practice and learning how are needed.

--You can decide to be faithful in giving God's way right away with at least something!

2. Mismanaging Money for Questionable Ends

ILLUS. More than likely, at least 40% of those present this morning will never give one cent to the Lord this year! Statistical records show that to be true in most Bible teaching, Christ-centered, gospel-preaching ministries!

Assuming that they cannot afford to do so, far more than that 40% will never approach the minimum level of giving 10% as a tithe of their income and settle in for a periodic "tip" to God instead of tithe.

Using what they call "sociological analysis," 3 authors wrote a book called *Passing the Plate: Why American Christians Don't Give Away More Money*.

By taking the average household income of those who identify as evangelical Christians, arriving at a total amount, taking 10% of that number, subtracting the recorded amount given as charitable gifts, they discovered that over **\$46 billion** remained in their pockets instead of in the hands of the Lord!!!

--The usual explanation people give is that they cannot afford it, which is likely to be true because they have reallocated what should be the Lord's to other expenses.

ILLUS. If you think you cannot afford to give as an act of faithfulness to the Lord, consider the following stats: Americans spent...

- 2005 -- \$27.9B on candy
- 2004 -- \$92.9B on refreshment drinks
- 2005 -- \$59.4B on watches/jewelry
- 2000 -- \$203.7B on entertainment (prod & service)
- 2004 -- \$288.7B on travel/tourism (+\$48.3 abroad)
- 2003 -- \$45B on state lotteries
- 2004 -- \$29.7B in sporting goods stores

Between 1959-2000 while charitable giving was *decreasing*, Americans *increased* spending on size of homes, travel, sports, entertainment, eating out, toys, etc.

--Briefly summarized, we have plenty—we have just chosen to fix our hope on the wrong things, value the wrong treasure and invest in a dead-end future!

--How do we keep from such a dreadful course of events in our lives and find contentment and joy, regardless of whether we have much or little?

C. BE ASSURED OF A GOOD FOUNDATION

--Paul tells Timothy that the only way for the people to “take hold of that which is life indeed” was to give them a sure foundation upon which to build their lives.

1. Instruct the people

--Since we are not by nature generous, normally being selfish keepers instead of generous sharers, instruction is necessary.

--People must be equipped by the Word of God to know how and what to do and why that is important.

PBC plan to Equip for Generosity: As we equip people in biblical parenting, marriage, witness, prayer, Bible study, serving, missions, we also equip you for this critical area of life!

1. **Instruction in General Stewardship** – the tithe is the basic standard of biblical obedience
2. **Christian Financial Management** – Offering courses, small groups, and personal counsel in biblical principles
3. **Transparent Budgeting** – a trustworthy approach to church spending with high levels of accountability
4. **Designated Projects** – domestic and international
5. **Estate Planning** – helping those without a plan to make one, including a will and a strategy
6. **Social Security Information** – an astounding number of people do not know what’s available and need to know!
7. **Culture of Generosity** – the practical overflow of a spiritually anchored environment of grace and gratitude

2. Model the Principles

--The church cannot ask the individual household to do what we as the collective body of Christ are not doing so we look to model biblical principles of generosity in how we do ministry.

--Some have complained over the years that we give too much away (millions have been given in missions over the years...hundreds of thousands in benevolence, scholarships to retreats and conferences, training events, etc.), but we want to continue to find ways to even do more...to be even more generous.

--Why? Because we know that where the Lord’s money goes, that is where our hearts will follow!

III. GUARD CAREFULLY WHAT IS ENTRUSTED FROM GOD

--So Paul closes this letter to Timothy with two primary exhortations:

- *Guard the Trust*
- *Enjoy the Treasure*

--All that we have been given, all that we have received comes with a charge to see that it takes its rightful place in our hearts and lives.

A. GUARD THE TRUST

--All that we are and all that we have has been given to us, entrusted to our care and management for the glory of God.

1. Your heart always end up where you put God's money.

***Matt. 6:20-21** "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; ²¹ for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

--If you wonder why Jesus talked so much about money, He knew this principle was true...that where our money goes tells the true story about where our heart has gone!

2. Your understanding of Jesus as God's greatest Treasure rests in guarding the truth by which He is made known.

--With a shift here, a deviation there, a different doctrine there, the truth about Jesus gets buried under a pile of misinformation and speculation.

***1Tim. 6:20-21** O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called "knowledge" — ²¹ which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith. Grace be with you.*

--Each one of us must join together and guard against the invasion of deceiving and diluted ideas about who God is, what is true about Jesus Christ and how we can know Him.

***2Tim. 2:15** Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth... **4:2-3** preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. ³For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires.*

B. ENJOY THE TREASURE

--Once we have let go of our attachment to the things of this world, the riches that will all pass away, we can be released to see life as God intends it!

--Rather than unhealthy cravings, envy, worrying about sustaining our stockpile, we will find that when our hearts are wholly satisfied with all that God is for us in Christ, we will begin to find the joy that has eluded us.

--*"With all things to enjoy,"* the Lord richly supplies us with sufficient provisions to rejoice in Him at all times.

CONCLUSION: How sad that so many followers of Christ trust in their money and love it more than they do Him! They guard it more diligently...seek it more rigorously...love it more practically than they do Him! That is why Paul warns us that the *"love of money is the root of all evil"* ...it draws our hearts away from God and takes and keeps us captive.

But when Christ is our Greatest Treasure, we can finally see everything else God has richly supplied for our good pleasure and His great glory!

So what can you do?

- 1. Determine today to do good, be generous and share freely.*
- 2. Ask the Lord for eyes to see the fullness of His riches upon us.*
- 3. Guard and believe the Truth, God's Greatest Treasure in Christ.*

Until Jesus Christ is all you want, all you long for, your heart will never rejoice and will never be content. Watch what happens when you let go of the uncertainty of riches in this present world and embrace the abounding riches of a God who richly supplies all things to enjoy!

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