

I TIMOTHY 6:6-10
WHEN LESS IS MORE

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 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.

Likely you have heard the story of the little boy who seemed not very bright. The older boys at school would offer him a dime or a quarter. Invariably he would take the dime--to the guffaws of the big guys. A teacher learned of what was going on and called the youngster aside. When asked about the value of coins, the little fellow answered correctly. When asked about his repeated decision to take a dime instead of a quarter, he simply said, "If I start taking the quarter, they won't offer me the dime anymore." In other words, "Less is more."

In our text for today Paul is writing to Timothy, his younger fellow-missionary, giving instructions for his ministry in Ephesus. Timothy needed to deal with those who twisted and turned the Truth of God's Word and the Truth of the Gospel of salvation by faith in Christ. Many thought and taught that a godly life in the name of Christ was a means to getting and accumulating earthly riches! That philosophy is still around in the church world today. How many big-name, big-media preachers amass fortunes for themselves from the people they serve? Likewise that is so often true in anyone's life: Make more money, whether it's needed or not, as if God won't take care of the needs of His children. Get more stuff, whether it's needed or not, as if God won't supply sufficiently for His people. Always increase the size of your "kingdom," whether it's needed or not, as if God won't make your "kingdom" big enough.

Paul says to Timothy that godliness is NOT a route to gain, **but godliness with contentment IS great gain.** If one wants gain, real gain, it is not found in amassing more money, stuff, or real estate. It's found in contentment with what God gives in life. Work is a good thing and a blessing, but not a make-or-break crusade to become a tycoon.

Contentment is being at peace with the events of the day that the Lord gives. Some days He grants less, some days He grants more. Think of Peter and the others who fished all night and caught nothing. Maybe they grumbled. The next day Jesus gave them the biggest catch ever—which they left behind to follow Him! Contentment is a wonderful state of mind—being satisfied, not restless for more. Have you ever heard little chicks chattering in the brooder house huddled under the heat lamp full, warm, and sleepy? Have you ever heard a little babe being fed in mother's arms, so satisfied with such a simple thing.

You have every reason to be likewise content. Your loving Father is almighty God, your rescuing Brother is the risen and living Jesus whom Satan himself could not defeat. your wise and excellent counselor is the Holy Spirit who leads you forward to Christ and forward in Christ. You have a real home in heaven. A place has been prepared for you, where there are no more tears, sadness, sickness, or death. What more could you want? The Triune God is deeply concerned about you. You may not always see it because of all the clouds of sin in this life and in your own heart. But the simplest and purest pleasure is LIFE, enduring life, and that is what you have in Him.

So, what about all this "hankering" for money and stuff? Its benefits so-called are very temporary. You will lose them all. You can't take them with you. Do you remember Jesus' words to the man who came to Him to have Him settle an inheritance dispute with his brother? "*A man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses*" (Luke 12:15). And then in the Parable of the Rich Fool, *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?* (Luke 12:20).

In our text Paul puts it this way. ***For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.*** You came with nothing and you leave with nothing, so why all this fuss in accumulating money and material goods, as if they'll be yours to keep forever. We just got back from a visit to Michigan by plane. What a drag it was to lug our carry-on bags through the airport, onto the plane etc, etc. In fact, how does "luggage" get to be called "luggage"? It has to be "lugged" around! What if we had walked on to that plane with nothing in our hand, because all we needed would be provided on the other end? And then when we left, we would leave the same way—nothing to lug around? So what would be the point and fuss of buying three new changes of clothes and shoes, books for pleasure and study, a few choice tools, or beautiful wall hangings—when all the while, they would all have to stay behind? Be content with the provisions for the trip. ***Having food and raiment let us be therewith content.***

The text also goes to the other side of the coin: ***They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.*** Riches and wealth provide easy access to that which leads away from God. In fact riches themselves become God, don't they? They are a disabling snare and a noose from which there is no escape. Perhaps some of you have used or experimented with homemade snares. Likewise riches get one caught in foolish habits that disable—such as alcohol and drugs, stepping on others to get more, lying, etc. Such sins are deceptive, disabling, and destructive—dragging one away from Christ. Money, the almighty dollar, buys everything, doesn't it? NO! Not God, not forgiveness, not heaven.

For the love of money is the root of all evil. These words have much to say. There is also much that they do not say. They do not say that money is the root of all evil. It is a gift from God and to be used wisely like every other gift—beauty, strength, music talent, brains, etc. Money is a gift of God and is to be used to show our love for Him, to care for ourselves and our family, to care for those in need, to support the preaching of the Good News of salvation in Jesus, and to support our government and pay our taxes. The problem is not money, but the LOVE of money. The love of money is a one way street away from God. Acquiring money becomes more important than God. My father used to talk about his uncle, who was very successful in business. His family said, Uncle Otto can't even enjoy a Sunday afternoon with his family, but has to go get ready for business on Monday. Personally I hope the Lord took my Dad's Uncle Otto from this life before his "business" extinguish ed his love for the Savior.

Question: Is it true, that *the love of money is the root of all evil*? "Love of money" wasn't the original sin in history, was it? Adam and Eve were not tempted by money. Satan was not tempted by money. The love of money is not the origin or source of all evil in the universe. Like a root from a noxious weed, perhaps creeping jenny—once the root is established the rest will follow. When the love of money is rooted in the heart, every other evil will follow—coveting (sinfully wanting what you cannot have), lying, stealing, bad-mouthing, disobeying the authorities whom God has placed over us, hurting and harming others, murder, sexual sins, misusing God's name, bailing out on His Word and the preaching of His Word, etc.

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. Do you remember Jesus' words? "*Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. . . . No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon*" (Matthew 6:19-21, 24).

Scripture says, Godliness with contentment is great gain. In Christ Less Is More!

Amen! So be it!

Pastor Kanzenbach---