

To Be Rich, Give!

Ponder: Should you take a vow of poverty?

Scripture: “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me” (Matt. 19:21, NKJV).

How do you become wealthy? From a worldly standpoint, you work, save, invest, and do without. Yet Jesus taught that we will have treasure if we give generously. How many financial advisors recommend that? Only those few who understand Biblical principles and know the difference between earthly and spiritual wealth would give such counsel.

Critics of Christianity abuse today’s text to say that Jesus requires all disciples to sell everything and give every penny of it away. Since virtually nobody does this, professing Christians must all be hypocrites! Is that what Jesus was teaching? Should you take a vow of poverty?

Jesus and the Twelve had a bag of money from which they could buy what they needed and help the poor (John 12:6 & 13:29). Mary of Bethany possessed a vial of fragrant oil worth about a year’s wages (John 12:5). She voluntarily used it to anoint Jesus. So possessing material wealth isn’t sinful! If you have nothing, how will you help anyone?

The rich young ruler in our text trusted in his wealth and refused to share it. Jesus challenged him to turn loose of it, promising him treasure in heaven. Especially in our affluent culture, we face the same challenge. Jesus warned “how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God” (Mark 10:24). “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matt. 6:19-21).

Scripture emphasizes the generous heart and the danger of trusting in riches. Paul told Timothy to “command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God who gives us all things richly to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share” (1 Tim. 6:17-18).

Generous giving is no guarantee of greater material wealth; but you will have infinitely superior treasure in heaven!

Song: “All To Jesus I Surrender”

Prayer: Gracious Father, you have entrusted massive wealth to us. Please help us to be good stewards, always remembering that it isn’t ours – it all belongs to You, and we will be held accountable for how we have used it. Help us not to trust in our material possessions, but to trust in You and be ready and willing to share with those less fortunate. In Jesus’ name, Amen.