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September 2016

### **WHERE IS YOUR HEART?**

Greetings in Jesus!

Over the years I have heard many preachers talk about Christians having a “Heavenly Bank Account.” According to their teachings, the more we give, the larger our bank account in Heaven. That bank account (somehow) gains interest, e.g. 30-, 60-, or 100-fold and we can withdraw from that account through faith, prayer and confession.

Typically, when such sermons are preached there is an offering received with an emphasis on giving a lot so that you can greatly increase the balance in your Heavenly Bank Account. You may hear what Jesus said in Luke 12:33 used in support of this doctrine,

***Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.***

I don't mean to burst anyone's bubble, but such a teaching about a Heavenly Bank Account is not true. The problem is that so many popular and high-profile ministers teach this doctrine that Christians tend to accept it without searching the scriptures for validity. Add to this the lure of great, personal increase with debt-free living and it can be a tremendous challenge to get people to accept truth over glittering, promising fiction.

First, no matter how much money you give, you do not have money laid up in Heaven. Money is an intangible commodity represented by circular pieces of imprinted metal (coins) and rectangular pieces of imprinted paper (bills). Money is *only* relative to life on earth and *only* has value according to the prevailing social cultures in the world.

To my knowledge, there is no currency presently in existence that was used anywhere in the world over 500 years ago, and most typical currency in the world is less than 300 years old. Thus, if we accept the Heavenly Bank Account sermons, it means that whether we give offerings in dollars, pounds, francs, Euros, shillings, etc, Heaven better have a good monetary conversion system in case what we give today is worthless in ten years.

Second, Luke 12:33 is *not* speaking of storing up finances in Heaven. Let's back up and read Luke 12:13-21,

***<sup>13</sup>And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.***

***<sup>14</sup>And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?***

***<sup>15</sup>And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.***

***16And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:***

***17And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?***

***18And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.***

***19And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.***

***20But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?***

***21So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.***

Based on verses 16-19, here is what we can deduce about this farmer:

- He owned a lot of land that was good, high-quality ground capable of producing abundant crops.
- He was a good businessman who knew how to manage money; otherwise he would not be rich.
- He was a hard worker, and out of his wealth he would have hired employees to help him work his land.
- He had built barns out of his wealth. Yet he still had so much money he was able to pay for his current barns to be torn down so new barns could be built.
- His great prosperity is evidenced in that his existing barns were at capacity.
- He was looking forward to having so much wealth laid up that he could essentially retire and live a life of pleasure.

In verses 20-21, God calls this man a fool and Jesus goes on to say that **EVERYONE** is a fool who, “*layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*” Some people have used this passage to teach that a person should not have much wealth here on earth. But please pay very close attention to what Jesus did *not* criticize:

- He did not criticize this man for being rich.
- He did not criticize him for being wise with his money or for being a smart businessman.
- He did not criticize him for having full barns or rich, fertile land.
- He did not criticize him for wanting to build bigger barns to store his increase.
- What He did criticize was the man’s *attitude* about his wealth: all he thought about was himself and no one else.

So, contrary to some popular beliefs, God was not upset about the great wealth that this man possessed. What bothered Him was the fact that this man saw himself as the source of his provision and all he owned. His attitude had nothing to do with using his wealth to touch people’s lives for God.

Now let’s look at verses 22-32,

***22And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.***

***23The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.***

***24Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?***

***25And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?***

***26If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?***

***27Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.***

***28If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?***

***29And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.***

***30For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.***

***31But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.***

In verse 22 Jesus continues by saying, “Therefore.” In other words, He is saying, “Now, based on what I’ve just told you in this parable, let me further explain some things.” Then He goes on to teach we shouldn’t worry about our needs because God will provide. What is important is that we seek to fulfill God’s will. It is in the process of accomplishing His Kingdom’s purposes that His provision will manifest.

But, just like with verses 13-21, there are people who will use verses 22-31 to preach that Christians shouldn’t have much; in other words, it is a type of “poverty doctrine.” However, that is not at all what Jesus is saying. He is trying to get us to understand that we can trust God for provision as we fulfill His will; in other words, our faith should not be in our own ability to work hard just to make ends meet to avoid losing everything.

Jesus goes on to say,

***32Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.***

***33Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.***

***34For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.***

In verse 32 He is saying that God desires to provide for us and to give us access to all His Kingdom has to offer. Then in verse 33 He says to sell what you have and give alms, or in other words, represent God and help people in need. Once more, people have greatly misunderstood this verse to mean they can’t have anything in life.

But let’s think about this: what Jesus said in verse 33 is based on everything He has said so far. Where did this teaching begin? In verse 13. What happened from verse 13 to verse 21? Jesus told the story of a man who already had great abundance yet was going to hoard all of his increase unto himself because he thought doing so was the only way to guarantee a secure future.

Relative to this parable, in verse 33 Jesus was saying, *“Mr. Abundantly Wealthy Rich Man, if you really trusted God you would be rich toward Him and use your wealth for His purposes. You would know that in doing so, God would see to it that you have provision; thus you could sell off your overflowing additional increase to help the needy.”*

As this would apply to us, Jesus is saying that, no matter how much or how little we have, we should consider our wealth to be used for God’s purposes and trust Him to meet our needs as He has promised. This doesn’t mean we can’t have nice things, a savings account or a retirement program. It simply means that if we trust Him, *we will not worry about our finances.*

Someone might respond, *“Yes Brother Martin, that’s very easy to say when a person has money in the bank. But I’m struggling day to day and week to week. I don’t have access to abundant wealth.”* Are you sure about that? Look once more at Jesus’ words in verses 31-32,

***<sup>31</sup>But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.***

***<sup>32</sup>Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.***

Jesus said to seek the Kingdom of God and all of what you need will be added unto you. This means that whatever you lack, seeking first God’s Kingdom purposes results in Him being able to *add* substance to your life. Jesus then says God takes pleasure in giving us access to everything relative to God’s Kingdom; He will not hold anything back from us as we are pursuing His desires on the earth.

How does this measure up with the “give to increase the balance in your Heavenly Bank Account” teaching? It exposes such a doctrine for the false teaching that it is. You see, the moment we are born again we become citizens of God’s Kingdom. Since it is His good pleasure to give us the Kingdom, we don’t have to give to get something God says is already ours! Through Jesus, we have already inherited a “Heavenly Bank Account”!

But this raises a question: if the treasure Jesus mentions in verse 33 is not financial gain in a Heavenly Bank Account, then what is it? Let’s again reason this out to get an answer. From God’s perspective, what would be the greatest treasure imaginable in Heaven? The answer to that is found in the very reason Jesus came to earth: to redeem humanity. The greatest treasure in Heaven is not money, gold or precious jewels; it is the souls of people washed in the blood of Jesus.

In Luke 12:33 Jesus is using a natural example to illustrate a spiritual reality: God wants us to use our finances to help reach people with the gospel. Relative to the entire passage of Luke 12:13-34 Jesus is saying, *“God knows you have to eat, wear clothes, and have a roof over your head. He is not opposed to you having a good job, nice things and living comfortably. But when you treasure the souls of people the way God does, you will not keep striving to gain increase for your own purposes; instead, you will determine in your heart to use your gain to seek first God’s Kingdom purposes.”*

God loves you more than you can comprehend. His desire is to help you in every area of your life, including your finances. Trust Him with all your heart and don’t ever be afraid to give what

He tells you; He will never cause you financial hardship. Capture His heart for the souls of people and be His helpmeet in the earth!

In His Grace,

*Jim*

P.S. - If you would like more teaching about God's plan to release increase into the lives of His children, be sure to order my sermon titled, "Blessings Waiting to Manifest."

>>>> **2017 PRAYER & POWER CONFERENCE** <<<<

Our 2017 Prayer and Power Conference will be Sunday, April 23 - Friday, April 28. Our host hotel will again be the:

Country Inn and Suites

3971 Colonel Glenn Highway, Fairborn, Ohio 45324

(937) 429-2222, email shekira.kanemoto@countryinns.com,

web site <https://www.countryinns.com/beavercreek-hotel-oh-45324/ohfairbo/rooms>

Rates per night (tax not included): Double Queen: \$105; King Standard \$105; King Suite \$120. Room space is limited. Those attending are responsible for making their own hotel reservations.

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\_\_\_\_\_ Check here to receive a CD of the sermon, "Blessings Waiting to Manifest"

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