

Luke 8:14 (KJV)

And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

Last Sunday we talked about how the three emphasis points of Lent are abstinence and fasting, almsgiving and prayer and we then talked more about abstinence and fasting.

This Sunday, let us talk about almsgiving. Let us talk about almsgiving in the sense of how it can change our lives.

John Wesley once said the best way to control money is to give it away.

Jesus tells us about the same message in ***Luke 12:33 (KJV)*** *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.*

In other words, we should concentrate on the giving of money instead of gaining it, instead of accumulating it.

Paul writes in ***1 Tim. 6:10 (KJV)*** *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.*

We have many other references in Holy Scripture about money. In fact, as I have mentioned before, Jesus made more references to money than any other subject, more than faith, more than prayer.

The most familiar of these references is ***Matthew 6:24 (KJV)*** *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.

Almsgiving allows us to keep money in perspective. Almsgiving allows us to do more than to just “give to the poor,” and is more involved than solely giving.

We are told in **Matthew 6:1 (KJV)** *Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.*

God rewards those who are generous but when we are generous, when we give in the sense of almsgiving, like as Jesus would say **Matthew 6:3-4 (KJV)** *But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: ⁴That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.*

Do you begin to see the pattern? If we concentrate on giving instead of getting, we are replacing the almighty dollar with Almighty God. We are then turning loose and letting God control our lives.

Today the news is full of economic upturns and downturns, inflation and stagflation, recession and depression, bulls and bears. So much that we become anxious, we become anxious about what, about money, about how we are going to make it.

Doesn't that sound like we don't have enough faith in God?

If we don't let money control our lives and let God handle it, don't you think we would all be better off?

Didn't Jesus say **Matthew 6:31-32 (KJV)** *Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? ³²(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:;) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.*

God knows what we need. God will take care of us. But we have to have enough faith in him to let him do it. Almsgiving allows us to begin to practice that faith.

***Luke 6:38 (KJV)** Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.*

I'm not preaching that so called "prosperity gospel." But I am saying if you let God be the center of your life all else will be in perspective.

You might not ever be rich in money and possessions but you will have the riches of God's love.

Think about it. Which is better, the riches of this world or the assurance of the next?
Which is better, treasures on earth or treasures in Heaven?

Amen.