



Where is Your Treasure?

Rev. Chris Andrews

“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.”

Matthew 6:19-21

A colleague told an interesting story of bringing this text to life. He had a large piece of plywood painted with the image of a one-dollar bill. Then, on another piece of plywood, he cut out a large heart and painted it red. Both pieces of wood were mounted on rollers (like I said, they were large pieces) and a chain linked them together. When the dollar moved, the heart followed. Where the heart went, the dollar followed.

Jesus said, “...where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Like the chain connecting the models together, Jesus knew that heart and treasure are always linked. Now there are many things that we treasure, but in this text the “treasure” referred to is money. And the Bible has more to say about money and possessions than almost any other subject. Consider: there are more than 2000 verses about money and possessions in the Bible compared to about 500 verses on prayer. Jesus talked about money, a lot. We have a record of 38 parables that our Lord shared and 16 of these deal with money and possessions. Jesus, you see, understood the human heart and he knew about the power of money. Jesus knew that how we think about money reveals where our hearts truly are. That is why an examination of a person’s checkbook will reveal more about them than reading their prayer journal.

What we do with money—where we spend it, how we feel about it—is the true indication of where our heart is. In other words, money reveals what is truly sacred for us. Perhaps this is why early on in the faith community the command to offer a tithe of one’s possessions was instituted. A tithe (10%) of what one has is a significant offering. The Biblical community knew that unless people gave significantly to God, their

relationship to the Holy would deteriorate into casualness. Only by making God a priority could they have a relationship that would bless and enable them to grow in His will.

It is not for nothing that the first of the ten commandments is an injunction about having “other gods.” Human beings must be very careful about what they allow to control their hearts, for without that care the Living God can be pushed aside in favor of false gods. And, wherever our heart is, there we will find what we truly worship and serve. So, the Bible calls upon us to give a tithe, a 10th of our income, to the service of God. It is a way of reminding us that God is a jealous God and that our faith demands not just casual commitment but nothing less than the treasure of our heart.

Would you steal from someone? Probably not, for we are law abiding people. Well, would you steal from God? Again, I am sure your answer is “no.” But have you ever thought that when you give less to the work of God than the Bible directs, that this is a form of theft? OK, I know I’ve moved from preaching to meddling, but stay with me for a moment.

Let me tell you a story: Wayne Myers, a missionary in Mexico, told this story. A Mexican pastor named Chanito was convinced he was too poor to tithe. One night, after services, Wayne Myers was giving Chanito a ride home. They began to talk about the subject of finances, because that had been Rev. Myers’ subject for the evening sermon.

“You don’t tithe, do you, Chanito?” asked Myers.

“Brother Wayne, I don’t have enough money to tithe,” was the response.

At that point Rev. Myers pulled his car over to the side of the road and stopped.

“Get out of God’s car,” he commanded.

They were in the middle of nowhere in the dark of night, miles from the nearest town.

“Why?” asked the surprised Chanito.

“Because I am harboring a thief and you are endangering my life.”

“You are not going to leave me with the thieves, Brother Wayne,” Chanito implored.

“Let the thieves beware of you!” Wayne replied. “I am more afraid of you than I am of them. They only rob men. You have the audacity to rob God.”

“Brother Wayne, I promise I will start tithing.”

“All right, get in,” said Wayne. (Wayne later said he really would not have left Chanito on the roadside, but he wanted to make a point).

Chanito began to tithe and he discovered that not only did he have enough money, but that his heart was so blessed by God that he was led to become one of the great church planters in Mexico.

I am not talking “give and God will give to you,” here. I am simply saying that when the offering plate passes and you keep God’s tithe in your pocket, you are stealing. You can say you love God, but remember that your heart follows your treasure.

So, get to the heart of the matter. Ask yourself, “What do I treasure?” Then give. Start where you can and work till you reach the tithe—it might be 1% a year, but you can get there. Give. Just give. Give to fulfill the Great Commission. Give because you love God. Give because you love others. And give because God loves you. The pattern of your giving regarding money will determine the quality of your relationship to God.

Amen!