

Money! Money! Money!

Some years ago I heard a neighbour singing a song from back in the 1970s: “*Money Money Money...it’s a rich man’s world*”. The thought came to me: ‘What does the Bible say about money?’ The answer is ‘a lot!’

Good News for Rich and Poor

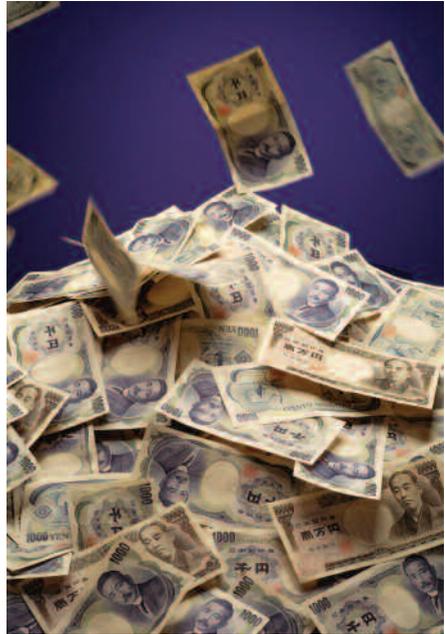
Look first at Psalm 49. The writer calls on everyone to listen to his advice, *Hear this, all peoples; Give ear all inhabitants of the world, both low and high, rich and poor together (v1-2)*. His message must be important if everyone needs to listen.

Those who trust in their wealth and boast in the multitude of their riches, none of them can by any means redeem his brother (v6-7).

Wealth may take us far in this life, but when death intervenes we take nothing with us. The restoration of our lives is beyond all human power.

It seems a dismal view, but the writer has a resounding shout of victory – *God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave (v15)*. How will He do that? Through the offer of salvation, God offers something greater than material things. He alone can destroy the power of the grave, but the Psalmist continues: *A man who is in honour, yet does not understand is like the beasts that perish (v20)*.

So the truth for us is that we should see that any wealth or possessions which we may have are a blessing from God. These can be a real benefit to others or ourselves when used wisely. However, it is God alone who can bring us out of the grave and raise us from the dead on the day of resurrection.



The Right Attitude

Agur, the enigmatic writer in Proverbs chapter 30, has wise words when he says, *Give me neither poverty nor riches (v8)*. He preferred moderation over extremes. Earlier in Proverbs, Solomon gives good advice on where we should place our confidence and how we should live: *He who trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like foliage (11:28)*. If only we could get the balance right in our lives, trusting in God like the righteous, and so flourishing. Solomon continues his thoughts later in Proverbs noting with some irony that, *Riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away like an eagle to heaven (Proverbs 23:5)*.

Now we listen to the Saviour as the master teacher. In Luke 12, Jesus speaks of a farmer who had done so well that he decided to build bigger barns to fill with his new crop. He said to himself:

“You have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry” (v19).

There was no recognition that God had blessed his crop with fine weather, and given him life and vigour to carry on his work. In verse 20 Jesus continues to tell us that God said to the man:

“Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?”

The man’s riches were powerless in the face of his mortality. His wealth is assumed to have come innocently, but it couldn’t save his life. As Jesus concluded in verse 21:

“So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”



In contrast the apostle Paul was careful to remember the poor when on his missionary journeys; indeed the Lord Jesus also said that the poor would always be with us. Nowhere in the gospel are we told that we can pray for riches, although they may be given to us.



Real Riches

Something far finer is offered to us – a life in the coming Kingdom of God: *Everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid (Micah 4:4).*

It will be a sublime time of peace such as we have never seen before, because everyone will follow God’s ways. *For the needy shall not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever (Psalm 9:18).*

To the oppressed of the world the psalmist continues our theme and says: *For he will deliver the needy when he cries, the poor also, and him who has no helper (Psalm 72:12).*

The only way to be able to be part of that wonderful time is to follow the command of the Lord Jesus, when he said, *“He who believes and is baptised shall be saved” (Mark 16:16).* No wonder the apostle Peter commented *“Therefore, to you who believe, he is precious” (1 Peter 2:7).* No riches on earth can give us what the Lord offers with his gracious invitation. Do not hesitate, for time is flying and Christ WILL come again.

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