TITLE: Money

TEXT: Mt. 25:27 & 27:6; 1 Tim. 3:8 & 6:10;

Mt. 6:24 & 19:24; 1 Tim. 6:3-12; Heb. 13:5

INTRODUCTION: I want to start out with a pop quiz this morning ---

 Which one of these items is the most evil—a Coin, club, ax, sword or a gun?

 Trick question! None of these things in and of themselves are evil. An inanimate object doesn’t have the ability to be or produce evil in and of itself. Evil can only be displayed or manifest through something that has a will.

 So let me re-phrase the question…. Which one of these items has to ability to be used to do the most evil if placed in the wrong hands?

You can vote with a show of hands! A club, ax, sword, gun, Coin

 From a Scriptural standpoint the item that has the largest capacity to be used for evil if placed in the wrongs hands is THE COIN-money.

 There are a lot of different words used for money in the original languages that we simply translate as the generic word “Money” in English. Especially in more modern translations of the bible such as the NIV.

Let me give you some examples…

**Matt. 25:27 (NIV)
27Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.**

The word used here for money is:

***ar-goo'-ree-on***

***silvery, that is, (by implication) cash; specifically a drachma or shekel):—money, (piece of) silver (piece).***

**Matt. 27:6 (NIV)
6The chief priests picked up the coins and said, “It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money.”**

Here we have a combination of two Greek words.

Blood and money.

***hah'ee-mah***

***blood*, literally (of men or animals), or specifically (the atoning *blood* of Christ); by implication *bloodshed*,**

But the word used for money here is:

***tee-may'***

**a *value*, that is, *money* paid**

Where translations such as the old King James will use words like drachma or shekel or Denarii or silver or gold, newer English translations will, a lot of the times, use the catch all word money.

**1 Tim. 3:8 (KJV)
8LikewiseG5615 must the deaconsG1249 be graveG4586, not doubletonguedG1351, not givenG4337 to muchG4183 wineG3631, not greedyG146 of filthy lucreG146;**

**1 Tim. 3:8 (NIV)
8Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain.**

Filthy lucre most of us would understand as filthy money--implying that money is filthy.

 Niv interprets that phrase as dishonest gain.

 Which is more accurate?

In this particular case I believe the NIV is.

**lu·cre** (l›“k…r) *n.* Money or profits.

Lucre is preceded here by the word filthy.

***ahee-skhrok-er-dace'***

***shame* or *disgrace-* dishonesty,
shame.**

Money is not the problem here but money that has been secured by dishonest gain or gained shamefully is the problem.

 There is a lot of Scriptural admonition and instruction for us when it comes to money.

Jesus talked a great deal about money. Sixteen of the thirty-eight parables were concerned with how to handle money and possessions. In the Gospels, an amazing one out of 10 verses (288 in all) deals directly with the subject of money. The Bible offers 500 verses on prayer, less than 500 verses on faith, but more than 2,000 verses on money and possessions.

 Possibly the most often quoted verse of Scripture with regards to money is:

**1 Tim. 6:10 (NIV)
10For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.**

In the original language the phrase “Love of money” comes from a particular word in Greek.

**philarguria**

***fil-ar-goo-ree'-ah***

***avarice:*—love of money**

**Immoderate desire for wealth; greed**

What this is speaking to us here is that it is not the inanimate object of money that is evil in and of itself, but it can only become evil in the hands of a person who has an immoderate desire to obtain it or hold on to it or amass it for selfish reasons….

 A Club is not evil in and of itself, but it can be used as an instrument of evil if placed in the wrong hands…

 An Ax is not evil in and of itself, but it can be used as an instrument of evil if placed in the wrong hands….

 A sword is not evil in and of itself, but it can be used as an instrument of evil if placed in the wrong hands…

 A gun is not evil in and of itself but it can be used as an instrument of evil if placed in the wrong hands.

 And so, it is with money! Money or wealth is not evil in and of itself, but it can be used as an instrument of evil if placed in the wrong hands.

In fact, all these things have the potential to do great good if they are placed in the right hands!

There was a lady by the name of Bertha Adams who was a 71-year-old who lived in West Palm Beach, Florida. Bertha died alone on Easter Sunday morning at the age of 71.

 The coroner’s report read: Cause of death…. malnutrition…she had waisted away to 50 lbs.

 When the state authorities made their preliminary investigation of Mrs. Adams home, they found a virtual pigpen…the biggest mess that you could imagine.
 The woman had been begging food from her neighbors and gotten what clothing she had from the Salvation Army.

 From all outward appearances she was a penniless popper.

 But such was not the case. Amid the jumble of her unclean, disheveled belongings, the officials found two safety deposit box keys to two different local banks.

 In the first box was over 700 shares of AT&T stock certificates, plus hundreds of other valuable certificates, bonds and solid financial securities, not to mention a stack of cash amounting to nearly 200,000 dollars.

 The second box contained nearly 600,000 dollars in cash. Adding the net worth of both boxes they found well over 1 ½ million dollars.

 The story of Bertha Adams was reported on CBS radio and it was stated that the estate would probably go to a distant niece and nephew, neither of whom dreamed their aunt had a thin dime to her name.

 Why on earth would anybody salt away all that wealth in two tiny boxes, month after month, year after year, and refuse to spend even enough for food to stay alive?

Well, the fact is Bertha Adams wasn’t saving her money; she was worshipping it… Hording it… gaining a twisted satisfaction out of watching it grow higher and higher as she walked the streets of the city in the garb of a beggar…

 I believe we should save and invest when we can, and when we spend, we should spend intelligently, manage our money wisely, be good stewards with what God has blessed us with. But I don’t see one word in Scripture that validates our being a tightwad or a hoarder of money.

Martin Luther once said:

 ***“****God divided the hands into fingers so that money could slip through.”*

 Bertha Adams seemed to serve the almighty dollar far more faithfully than she did the almighty God.

 The fact is the almighty dollar became her god…

 Someone once said that our household budget is a

Theological document because it indicates who or what we worship.

 (Explain) As we go down the list of what we will spend in the month how much is for necessities, how much for things for ourselves and how much for giving back to God, charity, and gifts to others?

 The complete text here in 1st Tim. says…

**10For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.**

**Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.**

 The love of money, the desire to amass wealth, has split families, destroyed relationships, has even started wars…

 Men have killed other men for money.

 I remember hearing a story of a man who was killed because he refused to give a robber his wallet…the wallet contained less then 5 dollars…

 Many would say who would kill someone for 5 dollars…My question is who would risk being killed for 5 dollars…

As a Christian, an unhealthy desire for money is something that can really be a problem to our faith.

 In fact, it will often counteract and displace our faith in God.

Jesus said this…

**Matt. 6:24 (NIV)
24“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.**

Does that mean that money is evil or money is a bad thing?

No! Not at all! The love of money, the coveting of money, making money a primary object of our affection and desire is an evil thing.

 The fact is that God often will use money as a blessing for His children. A blessing for obedience and faithfulness to Him…

 Does that mean that if we don’t have a lot of money and find ourselves struggling financially on a day-to-day basis that we are not obedient or faithful to God?

No! Not at all! Money is but one of the blessings that God can bestow upon His children. We may be being blessed by God in other ways with other blessings that are worth far more than any monetary amount that we may receive. Good health for ourselves or our loved ones and friends!

 Adverted disasters! Children! Peace in the time of trial and adversity! God’s miraculous provision in a time of need whereby our flour and oil may get low but it never runs completely out….

 The worst thing that we can do is to limit the blessings of God to just one thing and then think that if we don’t have that one thing then we are not being blessed by God!

 Abraham was mightily blessed by God with financial prosperity because of his faithfulness and obedience to God! As were Isaac and Jacob and David and Solomon!

Other men of God in Scripture who were just as obedient and faithful to God lived their lives as virtual poppers! Lived and died penniless or at least never amassed any great fortunes in life.

 Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah, Jonah, Ezekiel, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter and the list could go on and on….

These men had not been financially blessed for their faith and obedience to God but that is not to say they weren’t mightily blessed by God…

 All these men testify to the mighty sustaining grace of God in their lives and of the many miraculous blessings of God upon their life…

 Money may have not been among those blessings but that doesn’t mean that they weren’t mightily blessed by God in things far more valuable…

 Such as: Being used by God to breathe life back into a grieving mother’s dead son!

 Being an instrument of God to lead an apostate nation back to God!

 Being used by God to reach and save a city that was just hours away from total and complete destruction! A city that contained more then 120,000 people who Scripture says could not tell their right hand from their left---A city in which there were over 120,000 infant children.

 Men who were blessed with the miraculous power of God to heal the lame, give the blind back their sight, deliver the oppressed and diseased, have the privilege and blessing to introduce people lost in their sin and separated from God to Jesus whereby they too could come and embrace the Savior and inherit eternal life..

 In fact, as far as the blessings of God are concerned, on a scale of 1-10, money would rank somewhere down toward the bottom of the blessings list that God has for us in Christ Jesus..

 So why does God bless some of His children financially but not all? Probably not even most?

 I think that the answer is not all that difficult…

Because God knows our heart, God knows us even better then we know ourselves.

 And here is the thing--- Many, if not most of us, could not handle the blessing if that blessing were wealth.

In fact, for a lot of us, it may be something that would distract us from God more than draw us to Him.

What was it that Jesus said about wealth?

**Matt. 19:24 (NIV)
24Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”**

Does that mean that money is evil because it may distract us from God?

 No! It just reminds us that we are inherently evil, we all have a sinful nature and can take what God has meant for good and end up using it for bad….

 Sometimes it may be our very poverty, our trials and tribulations that keep us focused and dependent upon God and if those things were not there we might find ourselves actually turning away from Him..

 Only God knows but God does know!

 And I don’t think that God would bless us with something that would, in the end, turn us away from Him or bring major problems into our life.

Let’s look a little deeper into the context in 1st Ti. 6…

**1 Tim. 6:3 -12 (NIV)
3If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, 4he is conceited and understands nothing.**

 **He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions 5and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.**

**6But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.**

**10For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.**

**11But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. 12Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.**

**6But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.**

A fortune-teller studied the hand of a young man and said, "You will be poor and very unhappy until you are thirty-seven years old."

 The young man responded, "Well, after that, what will happen? Will I be rich and happy?"

 The fortune-teller said, "No, you'll still be poor, but you'll be used to it by then."

A young man once said: I'm working as hard as I can to get my life and my cash to run out at the same time. If I can just die after lunch Tuesday, everything will be perfect.

**6But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that**

 Money is not evil but when we love it, when we covet it, when we make it a top priority in our life it becomes a potential object of evil and a potentially dangerous thing…

EXAMPLE: Say that you have two sons. As a loving father you know your sons very well. Maybe even know them better than they know themselves.

 One son is the picture of responsibility. Has his head on straight, works hard, has a generous nature and is extremely mature for his age.

 The second son is as irresponsible as the other son is responsible. He is a party animal who likes fast cars and faster women- spends every dime he earns as fast as he earns it on riotous living, and he has a real rebellious nature and is very immature for his age.

 And let’s say that you come into a lot of money and want to bless your children… What will you do? How will you administer those blessings if your ultimate desire is for the health and welfare and well-being of your children?

 You may feel comfortable giving your responsible son 100,000 knowing that he will receive it as a blessing and use it wisely--- but you may feel very uncomfortable giving your irresponsible son that kind of money knowing that he might very well go out and do something with it that could cause him a world of hurt! Possibly even lead to his destruction!

 A loving Father whose ultimate concern is for the health and wellbeing of his children will act accordingly…

 He may bless his immature son with poverty to help that child learn some of life’s important lessons and help him to come to a place of maturity and responsibility.

 The point is…

 God knows us better then we know ourselves.

 He knows what would bless us and He knows what would, in the end, be a curse to us and bring us harm and He will act and bless us accordingly.

**6But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.**

**8But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.**

**Heb. 13:5 (NIV)
5Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”**

 Here is the conclusion of the matter….

 It is not a Christian virtue to be rich!

 Nor is it a Christian virtue to be poor!

 It is a Christian virtue to be content!

 It is a Christian virtue to be generous with what we do have!

It is a Christian virtue to trust and rely upon God and give Him thanks in and for all things because He has promised to never leave us or forsake us whether we find ourselves living in poverty or wealth or anyplace in-between…

 Do you recognize the blessings of God upon your life in whatever form those blessings may take? And are you thankful for them?

**6godliness with contentment is great gain!**

 Is godliness with contentment words that describe our lives this morning?