

Reality Check – Enough is Enough

2/27/22

Ecclesiastes 5:10-20

Sunday AM

There's a story of a rich industrialist who was troubled to find a fisherman sitting lazily beside his boat. He asked, "Why aren't you out fishing?" The man replied, "B/c I've caught enough fish for today." To which the rich man said, "Why don't you catch more fish than you need?" The man replied, "What would I do w/ them?" The rich man said, "You could earn more money to buy better gear and a bigger boat so you could go deeper and catch more fish – and make more money. Soon you'd have a fleet of boats and be rich like me." The fisherman asked, "Then what would I do?" The rich man said, "Well... you could sit down and enjoy life like me." To which the fisherman said, "What do you think I'm doing now?"

OKAY – I have a very serious question to ask... When is enough going to be enough? How much will it take for you to feel secure/satisfied? How much do you need in your bank account and 401k to be content?

Call it **materialism** or **commercialism** – it's the idea that a person can find lasting satisfaction/fulfillment in the amount of stuff they possess this side of heaven. It's living for and finding your value in what you think you possess – it's the idea our stuff will be enough!

Of course, Solomon had something to say about this to bring us all back to reality...

Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied w/ their income. This too is meaningless. As goods increase, so do those who consume them. And what benefit are they to the owners except to feast their eyes on them? The sleep of a laborer is sweet, whether they eat little or much, but as for the rich, their abundance permits them no sleep. I have seen a grievous evil under the sun: wealth hoarded to the harm of its owners, or wealth lost thru some misfortune, so when they have children there's nothing left for them to inherit. Everyone comes naked from their mother's womb, and as everyone comes, so they depart. They take nothing from their toil that they can carry in their hands. This too is a grievous evil: As everyone comes, so they depart, and what do they gain, since they toil for the wind? All their days they eat in darkness, w/ great frustration, affliction and anger. This is what I have observed to be good: it is appropriate for a person to eat, to drink, and to find satisfaction in their toilsome labor under the sun during the few days of life God has given them – for this is their lot. Moreover, when God gives someone wealth/possessions, and the ability to enjoy them, to accept their lot and be happy in their toil – this is a gift of God. They seldom reflect on the days of their life, b/c God keeps them occupied w/ gladness of heart.

Solomon raises a question – **how much is enough?** He concludes there are (4) major problems w/ materialism and wealth that we all must contend w/ this side of heaven if we want to find hope/satisfaction in life.

I Wealth will not bring **SATISFACTION**

Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied w/ their income.

Wealth/possessions might provide a temporary sense of worth, but it'll never bring lasting satisfaction.

DYK thru-out Scripture, the love of money is spoken of in over **2,300 verses**. Jesus himself spoke of the challenges of financial matters in **11 of 39 parables**.

I think of the **Parable of the Rich Fool** in Luke 12 – *Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance w/ me." Jesus said, "Man, who appointed me an arbiter b/w you?" Then He said, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life doesn't consist in an abundance of possessions." And he told them a parable: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He*

thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry."'" "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' "This is how it will be w/ whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God."

Jesus' point in this parable is clear – *don't live for the accumulation earthly things b/c more will never be enough, you have no guarantee for tomorrow, and you can't take it w/ you. **Instead live rich towards God.***

This is why Jesus warned in the Sermon of the Mount – in what I call the ***Sermon in the Amount*** – ***You can't serve God and money!*** Why? B/c they're both vying for the throne of your life – it's one or the other.

SEE God knows no amount of financial accumulation will bring satisfaction/success; yet if we make money our god, it could very well condemn us to an eternity separated from the God who loves us and laid down His life to give us life. LWF – *it's easier for a rich man to thread a needle than enter the kingdom of God.*

I think this is one of the reasons I so respected ***James Westmoreland*** – who went to be w/ the Lord a week ago. He didn't live for earthly gain but for heavenly purpose – and his life touched 1,000's of people and sent a ripple into future generations. B/c there's far more to life than the accumulation of stuff.

Listen to **Matthew 6:19-20** – *Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth/rust destroy and thieves break in and steal, but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth/rust cannot destroy and thieves cannot break in and steal – **for where your heart is your treasure will be.***

Solomon discovered the heart of the matter was a matter of the heart. And he concluded that there's no amount of wealth that can ever satisfy the soul – ***our stuff will never be enough.***

Paul offered a plausible solution to us in Philippians suggesting we all find our contentment in Christ.

I'm not saying this b/ I am in need, for I've learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all things thru Christ who gives me strength. Philippians 4:11-13

I think Paul is saying that contentment is found in a Person (Jesus) and not in what can be purchased.

Truth – Measure your wealth not by the things you have, but by the things you have you wouldn't take money and by the thing's money can't buy.

The real measure of one's wealth is how much they'd be worth if they lost all of their money. Jowett

II Wealth will not bring **PEACE** of Mind

The sleep of a laborer is sweet, whether they eat little or much, but as for the rich, their abundance permits them no sleep.

Solomon offered an interesting perspective – the man who works hard, and has just enough, is far less stressed than the man who has more than he needs, yet can't sleep for fear of losing it.

I'm reminded of the Henry Ford quote – *I was happier when doing a mechanic's job.*

Ford was speaking of perspective – and in life, our perspective influences everything. A wrong view of something can lead to a world of hurt/confusion, while a right perspective can save us from torment and even open doors to a brighter, most blessed future.

Speaking of perspective – I’m reminded of the Peanuts cartoon where Snoopy is upset b/c he’s eating dog food on Thanksgiving while everyone else is eating turkey – when it dawns on him – *Things could be worse, I could’ve been born a turkey.*

Paul offered his protégé Timothy some perspective:

But godliness w/ contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we’ll take nothing out of it. But if we have food/clothing, we will be content. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and into many foolish/harmful desires that plunge men into ruin/destruction. For 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 w/ many griefs. 1

Timothy 6:6-10

Whether you have a little or a lot – if you want peace of mind, *keep it all in perspective.* After all, you brought nothing in this world, and you’re not taking anything from it when you leave. But while here – you will have to decide where you’re going to spend eternity; and the God/god you choose to sit on your heart-throne will make all the difference.

III Wealth will not bring lasting **SECURITY**

I have seen a grievous evil under the sun: wealth hoarded to the harm of its owners, or wealth lost thru some misfortune, so when they have children there’s nothing left for them to inherit.

In going back to the *Parable of the Rich Fool* in Luke 12, we discover his identity/security were wrapped up in what he had amassed – and the result was he was trusting in his stuff instead of in the God who gave him the ability to gather his stuff.

Listen again to God’s response – *But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’ This is how it will be w/ whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”*

DYK – this might be the only time in Scripture where God calls someone a FOOL? In fact, anyone who **says God doesn’t exist** or if **they live as if God doesn’t exist** is a fool – b/c the fool says, “There is no God.”

POINT – a fool places his trust/security in the stuff he’s amassed, instead of in the God who gives it and the ability to gather it. ***He thinks there’s greater value in the things of earth than in the promises of heaven.***

Interestingly, the cure for foolishness is believing and trusting God – and honorably *stewarding* the blessings He’s entrusted to you. In Malachi 3, **God asks...**

“Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, ‘How do we rob you?’ In tithes/offerings. You are under a curse – the whole nation, b/c you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so there may be food in my house. Test me in this, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing you will not have room enough for it,” says the Lord. Malachi 3:8-10

NOW – I’m not going to go off on the tithes except to remind you that the *principle of the tithe* is giving to God the first/best 10th of all that He has blessed and entrusted to you to honor Him. This includes your *time, talents, treasure, tongue, temple, and testimony*. Not b/c He needs it, but b/c we need Him and we need to give it so we never lose perspective of where it all comes from and who it actually belongs to – never forgetting *the earth is the Lords and everything in it*.

LWF – God wants to be our security. He wants us to trust Him in everything and in every way – so that He can direct our steps and guide our lives for His glory.

IV Wealth will not bring **MEANING** to life

Everyone comes naked from their mother’s womb, and as everyone comes, so they depart. They take nothing from their toil they can carry in their hands.

Here’s a thought to ponder... If we entered into this world w/ nothing, and will take nothing from it when we leave – then what is the purpose of it?

As Solomon has been sharing thru-out this book – life only makes sense, it only adds up, when God is in the equation. If we leave God out, life is meaningless and w/out profit; but if we take His existence into account, then life not only has meaning – it makes sense.

So, taking our cue from God Himself – who b/c of His love for you/me – GAVE His one/only Son... I am convinced that the meaning/hope of life is found in living a life of generosity. **Listen to Paul’s words:**

Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he’s decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. For God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all you need, you will abound in every good work. 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

Meaning/value in life are not about what we can gather and amass but in what we can give/invest in others – and we’re talking far beyond money. Giving of ourselves, sharing our lives to influence and help others. **This is what gives meaning to life.**

If you want to live – truly live – no matter how young or old you might be – live to honor God and invest the Jesus in you into someone else. This is what gives worth to life. Get up every day to see others and then strive thru-out your day to meet them at the point of their need influencing them to Jesus.

And above all – don’t let the lucre of life blind you to the joy and blessing of living on mission for Jesus.

One day an old, rich man w/ a miserable disposition visited his pastor. Knowing the man had lost perspective, the pastor took the rich man by the hand, led him to a window, and said, “What do you see?” The man replied, “I see men, women, and children?” Again, the pastor took him by the hand and this time led him to a mirror and asked, “Now what do you see?” The man replied, “Now I see myself.” Then the pastor said, “Behold, in the window there’s glass, and in the mirror, there’s glass. But the glass of the mirror is covered w/ silver, and no sooner is the silver added than we cease to see others, but only see ourselves.

TAKEAWAYS

Measure your wealth not by the things you have, but by the things you have you wouldn't take money and by the thing's money can't buy.

Only a fool places his trust and security in the stuff he has amassed, instead of in the God who gives it and the ability to gather it. A fool thinks there is greater value in the things of earth than the promise of heaven.

NEXT STEPS

1 Spend time this week in your quiet time or with another person discussing these GROW questions.

G – What is the first thing you would do if you suddenly inherited \$100,000?

R – Read **1 Timothy 6:6-10** – reflect on this verse and explain what it means to have contentment.

O – In what areas are you most prone to giving into the pursuit of possessions? Why? How can you keep a right perspective on your wealth and possessions?

W – This week, find a way to be generous to someone you don't know for their good.

2 This week, memorize Matthew 6:19-21.