

## February 28

**1 Timothy 6:6-11 (NIV)** <sup>6</sup>But godliness with contentment is great gain. <sup>7</sup>For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. <sup>8</sup>But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. <sup>9</sup>Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. <sup>10</sup>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 with many griefs. <sup>11</sup>But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.

A woodsman was cutting down a tree by a river. He made his living cutting wood, so his axe was his livelihood. As he swung at the tree, his axe slipped from his hands and flew into the river. The woodsman sat by river with his head in his hands crying bitterly over his lost axe. A figure who ruled the water heard his cries and had pity on the man. The figure dove into the water and came up with a golden axe. When he asked the man if that was his axe, the woodsman, an honest man, said it was not. The figure next produced a silver axe. Again, the woodsman said that was not his. The figure then produced all three axes and said, "Because you are an honest man, you may all three." When the woodsman told the story in town, a greedy man thought he would try it. He took a bigger axe and threw it into the river and began crying. The figure heard him and produce a beautiful, gold axed. When the figure asked the man if that was his axe, he greedily said, "Yes!" The figure, knowing better disappeared into the water. The greedy man lost both the gold axe and his own.

Paul tells us that godliness with contentment is great gain. Jesus tells us that God will provide for us. When we can be content with what we have, we walk in a peace and joy that is impossible to find in the world. Yet, if we look around at others and covet what they have, we lose that contentment. We begin to strive after the world instead after godliness. Paul also tells us that money is not the problem. The love of money is. He says that those who WANT to get rich, like the second man in the story, will fall into temptation. Their desires will cause problems for themselves and others. Our society seems to be built on the idea that wanting what others have is a right. God tells us that He loves a cheerful giver, not a cheerful taker. This does not mean that we cannot seek to better ourselves. But, when we are content, we are more ready to give than to take. Instead of seeking what others have, we are to seek what God so freely offers to each of us: righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness. Everything of this world will sink to the bottom of the river as that axe did. Everything of the God will last forever.