

Money, Money, Money

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[0 : 00] Again, welcome to everyone of you in your houses. It is a pleasure to be here and to share the Word of God, to preach the Word of God, knowing that this is the last sermon of our series about living under the sun.

And the theme for today is about money and wealth. And let me say something. This is not a never. It's going to be a prosperity gospel sermon. That's not biblical. So today I would like to talk about emptiness or satisfaction, a biblical understanding of riches.

So emptiness or satisfaction. Again, this is the last sermon of this beautiful and special book of Ecclesiastes.

We know that has been, honestly, for me, it's sometimes it's a difficult book to deal with, with someone who can draw a good picture and sometimes it's a sad picture of the reality in a fallen world.

[1 : 20] And that's the reality of sin in our society and not just in this society, but in our hearts.

So let me first say that we should never forget that we were created to love God and love our neighbor.

Therefore, we were created to have fellowship, to have a sweet communion with God and our neighbor.

We were created to enjoy creation because first we were created to enjoy God.

So it's important that you have in your minds the last sermon that John Watson preached about pleasure. But however, one of the many things that prevent us from enjoying or calling to love God and love our neighbor, it is the attitude that we have towards something very special, something very particular, and that is money and possessions.

[2 : 31] As you know, I am from Tilly from Latin America and there are so many political issues back there.

So no matter if we live in a socialist or a capitalist nation, it seems that the attitude towards money and possessions brings more sadness than enjoyment.

We don't like to talk about that even in church because of so many issues. It's hard to talk about money, but I have to do it this night.

And let me be clear from this very moment. The problem is not money itself. What is my attitude, my reaction, and my heart towards money and possessions?

So knowing that this is the last sermon of this series about life under the sun, and therefore knowing that life is vapor, how are we going to deal with our money and possessions?

[3 : 42] What are we going to do with our money and possessions? But the question behind that question is, what are we going to do with our hearts from this moment?

The picture that we find here in Ecclesiastes is a realistic painting about the relationship of two kinds of people towards money and wealth.

Two different approaches and lifestyles towards the quantity of money that we have in our bank account. Two reactions towards possessions, two kinds of people, an empty person on the one hand, and on the other hand, a satisfied person.

So the biblical section that we read before teaches about this, and I will explain this in the following three points or heads.

The first one is a grievous evil, emptiness with everything we have. The second point is a sweet rest satisfaction with everything we have.

[5 : 00] And finally, the third point is practical applications of a satisfied life. So the first point is a grievous evil, emptiness with everything we have.

Why did I choose this title for this first point? Because two times is mentioned the description of a grievous evil, and it's used two times actually in verse 13 and 16 to describe the life of a person who has everything, but in reality has nothing.

The section in Ecclesiastes that deals with money and possessions begin in verse 10 with someone who loves. If we go to verse 10, you can check that there's a person who actually loves, but what does it mean to love?

And this is important. Love is an affection, steam, and a desire for something.

And to seek to have fellowship with that object. And in fact, that person lives for what he loves.

[6 : 29] We think about what we love. We dream about what we love. We move about what we love. We work about what we love.

We breathe about what we love. The object we love awakens all our affections to desire more and more what we love.

Let's go back to verse 10. What does this person love? The person loves money.

When you think about this, knowing the definition that we gave to what is to love, but in this case the person loves money. Think about this.

That person desires money, loves money, but the results are disastrous. He who loves money will not be satisfied with money.

[7 : 35] Few things will not be satisfied with his heart and his desire for more and more money. And when we are not satisfied, we want to have more and more.

And when we live for loving money, and maybe you get more money, no amount of money will be enough to quench your desire for having more money or possessions.

More money will never bring satisfaction to your hearts because we were not created for money.

That's the reason.

Our thirsty hearts yearns for living water. But when we love money, when we live, when we think about money, we try to satisfy our thirst with a glass of sand.

This is vanity. And the same is true of wealth and possessions. To have more and more and to live for possessions will bring more emptiness to our souls.

[8 : 47] This is vanity. This is meaningless. But on the other hand, sweet is the sleep of the laborer, whatever he eats little or much, but the full stomach of the rich will not let him sleep.

If sunlight was used to desperately live for money, our nights will be an nightmare.

If we use the oxygen just to get and to live for money, our beds will, we're gonna, we're gonna be a bad place to rest.

Sweet is the sleep of a laborer, whether he eats little or much, but the full stomach of the rich will not let him sleep. Such a horrible stress.

The meaning of a full stomach here, it is not intended to describe a night after eating a good highland burger or fish and chips.

[9 : 54] No, this is not the case. A full stomach means wealth. A person who has everything. That person cannot sleep well because he really loved his possessions.

That's the reason. That person cannot sleep well because he's sleeping for her or his possessions.

He or she lives to please his money. That person cannot have a sleep because, and this is important, because he is worshiping something that can never will satisfy the soul.

That person is wasting his energy in pleasing his idol. That's the reason that he cannot have a well rest or sleep.

He cannot close his eyes because his heart is totally connected with his idols. But in the very bottom and sadly, he cannot sleep well because in fact, he's a stomach but mainly his heart, heart empty.

[11 : 17] So the question is for today, what do you love most? How are you sleeping? Do you have a real rest?

And I am not asking to parents here who had a two years' tolerer at midnight. I am asking about your heart, about your mind.

Where's your heart in this very moment when we think about money? I know that we have bills to pay and we need to provide for our families.

But I'm not asking about your money. I am asking you about your heart. Where's your heart? How do you love most?

But this is not the end. As you will see, richest possessions or money can be used for a good purpose. But in someone who loves richness, who loves and worships money, this is actually very dangerous.

[12:27] People accumulate riches, possessions or money to feel safe, to protect their families. I hope so. However, someone who worships money indeed will bring destruction to his life and family.

Verse 13 and 14 of Ecclesiastes chapter 5. There is a grievous evil that I have seen under the sun. Riches were kept by their owner to his hurt. And those riches were lost in a bad venture. And he is a father of a son, but he has nothing in his hand.

Yeah, we can observe horrible things around us, especially during these times. And there is something that is a grievous evil.

Who dares to keep something or treasure something so that the treacherous thing can damage or even kill him?

[13:35] Nobody. But what if I tell you that this is exactly what is happening in every single person who loves money and possessions?

Riches were kept by their owner to his hurt. This point is very important.

Do you know where does appear the word keep in the book of Ecclesiastes? You remember the word keep something?

Yes, at the end of the book. To keep the commandments. That's the same word that it is used here of someone who keep money.

We are called to keep the commandments. That is to treasure the whole law. Meditating upon and delighting us in it in the law of God.

[14:30] In summary, to grow in our love to God and our neighbor. We are bound to keep the law because it comes from our Creator and Redeemer.

We are talking in a context of the covenant of grace. It is the law of freedom actually. When we think about law, please don't think in something like negative, like something bad.

Oh, the law. No. Thanks for the law because the root of the law is love. It's love God. So we have to desire. We need to meditate upon the law.

But how can we keep the law if we don't know the law? Or if we keep a legalistic understanding of the law?

Parents, we have an important task here to teach the law in grace. The Ten Commandments.

[15:26] Do we know the Ten Commandments? Have you think about that? About the Ten Commandments?

But here, the person is not keeping the law. The person is keeping or treasuring his riches.

He is considering his possession as something worthy to keep most than anything else. But in the end, these riches are going to hurt his life.

This is vanity again. The thing that you love brings you an injury. And you keep holding that as a special treasure.

This is vanity. The thing that you keep money, riches, possessions is killing us.

[16:26] And whatever you keep safe, or you lose them in a bad venture or occupation, you are not only destroying yourself, but also your own family.

To think that money is the best thing, the best heritage that you can give to your children, that we can give to our children, it is to give them nothing.

Our heritage is the Lord. This death injury is developed with the following characteristics.

While he eats on this earth, as we read in Ecclesiastic Five, this person eats in darkness in much vexation, like worried or frustrated.

That's the way of life, just living so frustrating, frustrated or worried, in sickness, or actually in anger or wrath.

[17:32] This person is just sort of upset because he doesn't have enough money, because he doesn't have enough possessions. So he lives in that way, he lives in that way with anger, with wrath, wrath, worried, frustrated.

So this could be a description of a very stressed life who is not living according to his chief and, and again, we have to remember our first or chief and.

I think this is a time to think deeply about your life. Life is a vapor.

Yesterday we were sharing a time with the Spanish-speaking community from Cornstone. You know that there's a Spanish-speaking community here in Edinburgh, and we have a Bible study, a Reformed Bible study.

And one of the women just, he was just sharing that a guy from a folk like 20 something, 24 years old, he just passed away like a couple of days ago.

[18:47] Life is vapor. The sister of my gran is right now in Chile. She's almost dying. She's in her deathbed.

Life is vapor. Knowing this.

Knowing that your life is ascending as the vapor of a cold morning here in Scotland. And you know that this vapor is disappearing while ascends to be before the throne of God.

That's your life. That's my life. I really love that example that John Watson gave us at the beginning of the series.

That vapor in a cold morning here in Edinburgh. Three seconds and then disappears. That's your life. That's my life.

[19:49] And it is ascending to the throne of God. Therefore, in the meantime, when your life ascends to encounter, face to face with God, what will be your attitude towards your possessions?

Life is so short. What are we doing with what we have?

And please, we need to understand that I'm not just referring to money or the quantity of money that you and I, we have in our bank account.

No, we have different riches or possessions. Family is a good possession. So rich.

I don't know. Maybe you're seeking or you have like your soul reaching decrease from a university or having books or whatever. I don't know.

[20:57] The question is, how are you living with your possessions? How are you sleeping again? Where is your heart? What do you have in your heart?

Inger? Are you worried? Or do you have joy? Maybe as verse two from chapter six says, you have wealth, possessions, and honor, but you don't have the power or the faculty to enjoy what God has given you.

That is so sad to have things or to have your family in front of you and not to enjoy a fellowship with them.

Again, knowing that our life is vapor. This sermon, honestly, this is for me because when I read this, when I was preparing the sermon and the description of this man like living so worry frustrated with anger or wrath.

Honestly, Lord have mercy upon us. How are we living?

[22:17] And we call Christians. It's time to live for God's glory. So let me go quickly to a second point, a sweet rest, satisfaction with everything we have.

So in this Ecclesiastes descriptions of riches, we encounter a key and important switch from the previous description of life as someone empty now to someone who has a life full of joy.

These two kinds of people have riches, both it, but there's a significant difference between them and it is only just one word.

This is the difference between the first description and this one, just one word, satisfaction. Verse 18 begins with a word that captures our attention.

Behold. After all that sad description, we have this word, behold. The preacher here is saying, hey, pay attention to this.

[23:31] Observe this. Life must not be as we previously described. There's something better, something that according to the preacher is good and fitting.

And what is this? Everyone. Verse 19 and 20. And also to whom God has given wealth and possession.

And this is important. Empower to enjoy them and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil. This is a gift of God, for he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart.

Two different people. In short, this verse as it describes the blessing, the joy of the lightning in the riches and possessions that we have.

And as I said, I don't want to refer only to what we have in our bank account or material possessions. I'm not talking just about that, but every kind of wealth, such as family or a simple dinner shared in fellowship with family and friends.

[24 : 57] That is so rich. In the diversity of riches we have, even the spiritual riches, God calls us to enjoy this.

God calls man to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil because this is a gift from God. This is a gift from pure grace.

Yes, see, life is hard. But amid all kind of difficulties and sorrows, the Lord is calling you to enjoy even the little we riches that you have.

Even the oxygens that we breathe right now, that we are breathing right now. Because this is by grace alone.

Yes, life is hard. But a person who enjoys what God has given him, and this is Ecclesiastes, will not much remember the days of his life.

[26 : 07] Pay attention to this, because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart. Can you appreciate this? The one who describes life as vanity in the whole book of Ecclesiastes, now he's telling us that the Lord is calling us to enjoy what we have.

That we have to, but we must recognize that this is impossible for people. Therefore, we need a miracle.

In order to enjoy the gifts of creation, we need to enjoy first the gift of the Creator. In order to enjoy the riches of creation, we have to enjoy the riches of the Creator.

So let me ask you this, what is the gift of the Creator? What are the riches of the Creator?

The gift and the riches of God are God himself. The one who possesses the whole universe has given his life, he gave his life for you and me.

[27 : 30] The one who is more beautiful than the whole gold of this planet and who is the rich one, took a human nature and died for us in order to give us the power or the faculty to enjoy God.

So yes, we are talking and dealing with money and possessions, but that's not the message of today. The message is that God is calling you to enjoy him, to recognize that he is our possession, that he is our heritage.

That's the message for today. So knowing that this is the gospel and the gospel transform our lives, I want to finish the sermon with the third point and that is practical applications for a satisfied life.

We are finishing this series and now how shall we live then? How are we going to live knowing all that you already know about Ecclesiastes?

Are we going to live this building saying, yeah, yeah, it was really good to see some friends and folks, San Colombas.

[29 : 05] How are we going to live as a wise person or as a full person?

Money and possession can be a great curse or a great blessing. Everything depends on your relationship towards money and possessions.

If wealth, money is your idol, surely this will destroy your life and not just your life but your family, your ministry.

But if Jesus is a savior and Lord and Lord of your life, then your possessions can be a great blessing, not just for you but also for your neighbor.

Paul identifies the love of money as the root of all kinds of evils. In fact, this is very dangerous for the church.

[30 : 10] It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

Horrible picture. To live without faith while we live as the description of the first point. That is having money but in reality having nothing and just wanting to have more money but at the same time we don't have the power to enjoy God's gift.

And we cannot enjoy the fruit of the labor because we don't have faith. But God is calling you to enjoy your lot, your money and your possessions.

And how can we do that? But as for you, O man of God, flee this things.

But as for you, O woman of God, flee this things. Let's go and let's grow up in godliness, in faith, love, gentleness.

[31 : 27] Let the good fight of faith take hold of the eternal life to which you were called. We enjoy early possessions when we live taking hold of the eternal life.

In practical terms, when we know that our possessions as every gift that we have are not mainly for us but for the glory of God and the edification of the church, of His church, this is generosity.

And this is what we need in our days to be generous. That is to enjoy our possessions. As presidents, our kings will not change your life, only God Himself. That's the reason of why we need the gospel. To really enjoy God, to glorify His name. Before the Reformation, and let me tell you this. Before the Reformation, the half of Scotland's riches were sent to Rome to the Vatican. But after the Reformation, everything changes. [32 : 53] Everything's already changed. Now the money was used to build the schools, churches, to pay the salary of university professors and ministers.

After the disruption, do you know the history of the disruption? 1843? Please raise your hands in the room, not here.

That's our heritage, by the way. After the disruption, many free church ministers lost everything. Everything. No salary, no mansions, nothing. Just a wife and children there on the streets. Because they renounced everything for the one who gave his life for his church. But there was a minister who helped other ministers to have a living wage.

[33 : 56] There was a minister who understood the necessity. And who understood the needs of the ministers.

Ministers without a salary. And that minister who helped other ministers to his friends was the first minister of this building, Thomas Guthrie.

Where are the men and women of God who will help the church of God with their gifts and money? Again, please, I'm not referring to just money.

You have so many gifts, but those gifts are not for you, but are for the edification of the one who is next to you right now.

That's the reason of why you have gifts. Or maybe that's the reason of why you have more money than the person who is next to you.

[35 : 00] It's not for you to be generous. It is to glorify God in being generous.

Do we know the reality of ministers or missionaries of the next ministers?

A reformation of the heart brings a reformation in our attitude to our wealth and possessions.

There's so much to do in order to plant more churches, right?

But how can we use our possessions, our money, our gifts to this? To go and make disciples because the Lord is with us.

Because this is not our mission. This is God's mission. And the Lord is calling us right now in this Sunday to meditate and to think about this and to repent.

[36 : 08] First, to repent of not having or delighting God. But then the Lord is calling us to repent of our love towards money and not using our money or riches or possessions to His glory.

Let me finish this sermon reading the last two verses of Ecclesiastes. Let me finish this series reading this. The end of the matter all has been heard.

Fear God and keep His commandments. That is love God and love your neighbor. How? You know how?

If not, let's pray for that. Fear God and keep His commandments. For this is a whole duty of man. Why?

For God will bring every deed into judgment with every secret thing, whether good or evil. Church of Christ, the main call for today.

[37 : 21] It is to, with all our heart, to glorify God and to enjoy Him.

And to enjoy Him. Enjoy His presence. When was the last time that you enjoy His presence?

And to enjoy Him. Not just for a couple of minutes, but forever. Let's pray together. Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

There's so much grace for us today that you call your people, that you're calling me, that God is calling you, whatever you are here or in your home or I don't know.

But God, because you are so gracious that you call us to repent.

[38 : 39] Oh God, life is vapor. Life is vapor. And we are ascending right now to be before your throne.

Help us to live for your glory. Help us to love you more, to love your ways, to love your law, to love your holy word.

To love you, just as simple, deeply, profoundly, in a very experiential way, to enjoy your presence, in order to enjoy our riches, our possessions, or whatever we have, in order to enjoy our family, our

children, our wife, our husband, or our friends.

In order to enjoy you in the midst of difficult times when we are dealing with cancer or a bad economical situation, when we don't know what to do, when we are so frustrated for life or illness or whatever is going on in our hearts.

Father, we want to enjoy your presence. Help us to live for you and not to live for our possessions.

[40 : 19] Help us to enjoy our possessions when we put them for the service of your kingdom, for the edification of the church, of your church, not our church.

Thank you for your word. It's so precious. Thank you because you are calling us to enjoy the little things, to enjoy this very moment, to enjoy the presence of the person who is next to us right now. Help us to consider the little things in our life. Help us to live for you.

Bless this church. Help us to apply what we have learned today, or in the morning, or in the previous sermons. Help us, oh God.

Thank you for this day. Thank you for the sweet rest that you gave us in Jesus Christ, our Savior.

[41 : 31] Amen.