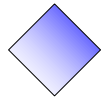


The Voice of Truth



April 14, 2013

“The Vanity Of Earthly Riches”

By Jimmy Pettigrew

Earthly riches themselves are not wrong! But if we become like the church in Laodicea that we become so wealthy that we need nothing even at the point of not needing the Lord, we're wrong and put too much trust in earthly riches (**Rev. 3:14-22**). "... Give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with the food that is needful for me: Lest I be full, and deny (thee), and say, Who is Jehovah? Or lest I be poor, and steal, And use profanely the name of my God" (**Proverbs 30:8-9**). Paul speaks of the "uncertainty of riches" in contrast to the confident hope one may have in God; godliness is real wealth (**1 Timothy 6:6, 17**).

We need to be like the church is Smyrna, rich in Christ! Why put your trust in things we must loose (**Lk. 12:15-21**)! This parable found in **Luke 12**, is a classic example of the "deceitfulness of riches" (**Matt. 13:22**). Material wealth promises much, but delivers little. Earthly treasures are extremely temporal as the rich fool sadly learned that "no man can serve two masters" (**Matt. 6:24**). Those who are preoccupied with material wealth are frequently led astray from the faith into much sorrow (**1 Timothy 6:9-10**).

Remember the parable of the sower found in **Luke 8**, the seed that fell on thorny soil was "choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to

perfection" (**verse 14**). Two great temptations to unfaithfulness are cares [worry concerning life's necessities] and riches [i.e., a passion for wealth]. People who place priority on material and earthly wealth while at the same time trying to serve Christ, the end is spiritual suicide, a lust for wealth is destructive (**1 Tim. 6:9**). The word of God is crowded out! People rob God (**Mal. 3:8**).

We should set our "mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth" (**Col. 3:2**). "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (**1 Jno. 2:15**). We need always to trust in Him who "shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (**Phil. 4:19**). Why? "For in one hour so great riches is come to nought" (**Rev. 18:17**). Remember "all is vanity" (**Eccl. 1:2**).

As Christ was never wealthy on earth: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven (have) nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (**Matthew 8:20**). "For your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich" (**2 Corinthians 8:9**). His riches must have been heavenly - glory with God - prior to coming to earth (**John 17:5, 24; Philippians 2:6**) Where are your riches (**Matthew 6:19-21**)? ♦

The Nature Of The Kingdom Of God

IS NOT

1. Of This World (**John 18:36**).
2. Eating and Drinking (**Rom. 14:17**).
3. In Word (**1 Cor. 4:20**).
4. With Observation (**Luke 17:20**).

IS

1. In Power (**1 Cor. 4:20**).
2. Righteousness (**Rom. 14:17**).
3. Peace (**Rom. 14:17**).
4. Joy (**Rom. 14:17**).
5. Within You (**Luke 17:21**).
6. Unshakable (**Heb. 12:28**). ♦

None are so empty as those who are full
Of themselves

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“Leaving Your First Love”

By Jarrod Jacobs

The adult class began this quarter studying the book of Revelation on Wednesday evening. I find the book of Revelation to be an amazing book that unfortunately is ignored all too often by brethren.

As is normal for me, after the class, I continue to think about the subject studied. Last week was no exception. As I thought about our study, and the various points made, it hit me that I had missed an application point in our study. This point, I believe, will tie together several key New Testament Scriptures; and I believe, help us to harmonize more of the Bible. Our study begins in **Revelation 2:4-5**, where Jesus said, *“I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”*

Some forty years after their beginning in **Acts 19**, the church at Ephesus was to be commended for many things. Yet, in spite of the many commendable qualities they possessed, Jesus said they had developed a very serious problem. They had *“left (their) first love”* (**Rev. 2:4-5**). What is their “first love”? Last Wednesday night, we spent time discussing this question, and some very well thought-out and appropriate responses were made. Yet, (as always happens with me) afterward, I thought of something else I believe would be appropriate and helpful to our study, and wanted to include it here.

First, when we think about “love” as was discussed in **Revelation 2**, we need to be reminded that God Himself is described as “love.” John (the inspired writer of **Revelation, 1:1, 11**) wrote to the saints, telling them, *“God is love”* (**I Jn. 4:8, 16**). Through a word study, we find the original word translated “love” in English is the Greek word “agape.” Therefore, in these verses, God is compared to love itself. (Like Jesus was once called the “door”, “shepherd”, “lamb” and other things in Scripture.)

When I think about “love”, my mind also goes to **I Corinthians 13:1-8** where the apostle Paul admonishes the Corinthians to remember to love. To paraphrase, he says that without love as the motivator for the things he was doing, he is nothing and there is no spiritual profit for him if he acts without love. Does this sound familiar? Friends, the warning Paul gave the Corinthians was something the Ephesians LIVED in **Revelation 2!** The context of **I Corin-**

thians 12-14 discusses miraculous spiritual gifts. In **I Corinthians 13**, they are reminded of their need for love, and letting love be their motivation for everything, INCLUDING the exercise of these spiritual gifts, for they would soon end, (**v. 8-10**); but faith, hope, and love remains to this day (**v. 13**).

Seeing this is true, we return to our text of **Revelation 2:1-8**. Here, the Ephesians were condemned for willingly leaving their “first love”. They were told to *“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent”* (**v. 5**). Understanding that John equates God with love (**I Jn. 4:8, 16**); can we not then see that the Ephesians had in essence left God behind in their good actions (**v. 2-3**)? This they had done, and were condemned for it. They in a real sense had become like the Pharisees, who did good things at times (Christ never condemned their good, only their disobedience and hypocrisy), but were doing it for the wrong reason, or had the wrong motivation! For example, are fasting, prayers, and giving wrong? No! Yet, the Pharisees were condemned for their wrong motivation — to be seen of men (**Matt. 6:1-18**). In **Revelation**, instead of the Ephesians doing things because it was “of God” and allowing their love for God to motivate them, their good works became merely something that “they did”.

Another lesson for us is that what the apostle Paul warned of happening in **I Corinthians 13** was in fact something that had happened to the Ephesians! The warning that if things were done without love, it became vain, was something Christ said the Ephesians were living. They *“left (their) first love.”* This means the great and commendable things like their labor and patience, not enduring evil ones, testing the false teachers, and hating the deeds of the Nicolaitans, etc., (**v. 2-3, 6**) became of no profit to them! (**I Cor. 13:1-3**) If this is not true, then why did Christ demand repentance of these people? It was not that they needed to repent of their good works. Rather, they need to repent and return to the correct motivation behind those good works! Their “first love,” God (**I Jn. 4:8, 16**), needed to be their motivation, and at this point in time, He was not! Therefore, they were to suffer what the Corinthians were warned about (**I Cor. 13**) if they did not repent (**Rev. 2:5**)!

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Conclusion

What can I learn from this? Let me learn that God is just as concerned about my motivation as He is my obedience to His commands! When it comes to my worship, my worship to God is to be done *"in spirit AND in truth"*, not just one or the other (**Jn. 4:24**). In like manner, any aspect of my obedience and faithful living must be motivated by my true love toward God. This is made abundantly clear when Jesus said, *"If you love me, keep my commandments"* (**Jn. 14:15**). Parallel to this is another statement made by Christ: *"If a man love me, he will keep my words"* (**Jn. 14:23**). Again, we see love (God) as the motivation behind our every action (**Col. 3:17**)! Ignoring the warning to the Corinthians (**13:1-3**) and doing things because "I" think they are righteous, instead of because of love or God motivating me, will result in my being in the same place spiritually as the Ephesians!

Friends, let us examine ourselves (**II Cor. 13:5**). What motivates us to be obedient? Is it worry over what others might think, or true love? Is our worship to God something

we do from "habit" and "learned behavior" or something we are doing *"in spirit and in truth"*? Be honest!

Remember your "first love"! When we first obeyed the gospel (**Mk. 16:16**), we did it out of a love and admiration and appreciation to the God of Heaven who sent His Son to die as a sacrifice for mankind (**Rom. 5:8; Jn. 3:16; II Cor. 5:20**). We marveled at a salvation available to all (**Titus 2:11-12**), and were appreciative that we could share in it. Is our continued faithfulness (**Rev. 2:10b; I Cor. 15:58**) motivated by this same God, our "first love"? If so, remain faithful and steadfast and tell others of the love of God, the sacrifice of Christ, and the joy of obedience when we are in a right relationship with God (**II Tim. 2:2; Mk. 16:15; Rom. 6:16-18; Acts 8:8**).

If this is not the case, and we have different motivations now than we did when we first became Christians, then repent today, as the Ephesians needed to do (**Rev. 2:5**). Our works will be as nothing and be of no profit if we are not motivated by the right One (**I Cor. 13:1-3**)!

Credit: The Old Paths - 10/24/10 ♦

The Church is Not Author Unknown

...composed of people who think they are better than others, but rather those who realize that they should be better than they are and must continually strive to do better (**Philippians 3:12-14**).

...composed of perfect people, but rather those who realize they are following a perfect Lord who revealed a perfect plan in a perfect book (**James 1:21-25**).

...composed of people who never sin, but rather forgiven sinners who acknowledge their faults and forsake them (**Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:8-9**).

...trying to withdraw from everyone, but rather trying to draw everyone into the fellowship of Christ by walking in the light of Jesus Christ (**John 12:32; Mark 16:15-16**).

...trying to set up arbitrary rules to hinder anyone, but rather trying to show the rule of Christ which helps everyone (**Galatians 6:2; 1 John 3:16-18**).

...trying to take the joy out of your life, but rather trying to instill the beauty of holiness and true joy in your life (**2 Chronicles 20:21; Philippians 4:4; 1 Peter 1:8-9**).

...trying to separate you from your money, but rather trying to keep your money from separating you from God (**Matthew 6:19-21; Luke 12:13-21**).

...trying to rob you of your time, but rather trying to get you to put the priorities of your life in proper order so that you can enjoy eternity (**Matthew 6:33**). ♦

***A faith that will not take us to worship will not
Take us to heaven!***

In What Have You Placed Your Faith?

By Jonathan L. Perz

In spite of thinking to the contrary, everyone has faith in something. To reject the concept of faith is to reject something that is obviously intrinsic and inherent in all. The question in today's society is not whether or not one has faith. The question is, "In what are you placing your faith?"

Faith differs subtly in meaning and varies greatly in degrees for different people, but it is frequently manifest in the lives of all. Some believe in God, a god or gods. Some believe in science. Some believe in another person. Some believe in a cause, an idea, a mantra, a platform, a philosophy. Some believe in themselves. To say you believe in nothing is, in and of itself, a belief. Therefore, to deny faith is folly.

Some mistake losing faith in something for losing faith period. Hindsight will reveal that, in such cases, someone was simply transferring his faith from one thing to another. While there might be a searching phase, it is not uncom-

mon to go through these transitions. Yet, faith will prevail.

For a Christian, "*Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen*" (**Heb. 11:1**). Christians walk by faith, and not by sight (**2 Cor. 5:7**). This faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God (**Rom. 10:17**). This faith is completely and totally in God. Without faith in God, we know that it is impossible to please Him, because those who come to God "*must believe that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him*" (**Heb. 11:6**). This has been undeniably demonstrated throughout history.

In Christians and non-Christians alike faith manifests itself in works (cf. **Jas. 2:18**). Your works will inevitably and ultimately reveal the truth about your faith. In the end, all that you have is the record of your life and that very record reveals your faith. The question you should ask yourself now is, "Where have I put my faith?"

Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com ♦

HOW TO GET WHAT YOU WANT

- If you want friends — **be friendly.**
- If you want someone to smile — **smile.**
- If you want courtesy — **be courteous.**
- If you want knowledge — **study.**
- If you want a good name — **live right.**
- If you want to reap well — **sow well.**
- If you want to be a Christian — **obey God's word.**
- If you want to go to heaven — **live a Christian life** ♦

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - **Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3**

Believe - **Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24**

Repent - **Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30**

Confess the Lord - **Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21**

Be Baptized - **Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27**

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - **Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17**

About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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Our Address

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Green Bay, WI 54313



Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com