

TRUE RICHES

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Bible verses are drawn from different Bible versions. Bible verses are italicized.

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The LORD God Gave It All

The glory of God can be seen from all creation. His works are mighty and great. Look at the heavens, the earth, the seas, the heavenly beings, the earthly beings, the sea, and land animals. They all tell how the LORD God is powerful and mighty. The flowers do not have to spin their own dress, yet they are so beautifully cloth even if it is just for a short season. The birds in the sky do not plant, harvest nor store, yet the heavenly Father feeds them. Look at the snail in its beautiful shell house, it does not build, yet it is well sheltered. It enters its shell house and comes out as it pleases. If the shell house cracks or breaks, it rebuilds itself. Look at man, created in the image of God. Man, radiates with the glory of God. The LORD God could have created man in such a way that man will respond to him as the other animals do (programmed) but he did not. He gave man a free will. God does not want to force or coerce man to worship him. He wants man to exercise his free will and wholeheartedly choose to worship him. His worshippers must love him. It is only in this manner of worship that He is truly glorified. Those who choose to truly worship him will share eternity with him but those who choose not to worship him will go into eternity without him. To go into eternity without God is death. For God is life.

All creation looks up to God for nourishment. The birds wait on God for food; the trees for sunshine and growth; the earth for rain; etc. Without the rains and sunshine, there will be no crops, for the earth will be unable to reproduce. The whole creation will die if there is no water or sunshine. Whether we acknowledge it or not, we each depend on God's mercies and loving kindness. God is the only one who provides us with the things that we really need in order to live. He provides us with the nourishment we need for the soul and body. Man must take his place as a creature and look up to God, the creator.

While the other animals look up to God for bodily nourishment, man must look up to God for both spiritual and bodily nourishment because man is a soul (a spirit cloth in a body). When God made man, he breathed into him the breath of life and man became a living soul (Genesis 2.7). The fallen sinful man does not know spiritual things. Spiritual realities are useless to him. The fallen man lives on the earth separated from God and the heavens. All he knows, sees, seeks, and thinks about, are earthly things. So he is completely unaware of how much he is spiritually needy and sick. Did God create man just for earthly things? Certainly not! Man's greater need is spiritual and not bodily. The great danger is that man is unaware of this. Without God, we are like sheep meant for the slaughter. We can do nothing right neither can we even know His will.

In the beginning, the Lord God made the light, sky, dry ground, plants, the moon, the sun, animals, and then man. When God made man, he blessed man and told him to fill the earth and rule over it. He gave to man, the fruit bearing plants for food (Genesis 1.26-30). God gave man nourishment for his body by providing him with every kind of fruit growing plant that was good for the body. For the Lord God had caused the ground to produce all kinds of seed bearing plants. He had made the plants before making man.

Genesis 1 tells us of how God made man and gave him bodily food and told him to fill the earth and rule it but Genesis 2 tells another part of the creation. Genesis 2 tells us of how God made a living soul by breathing in him the breath of life and then providing for him spiritual food. The Lord God planted a garden in Eden (paradise). He made the ground to produce every kind of tree that was both beautiful and suitable for food to nourish the soul of man. What kind of trees came out of the garden of paradise? The trees were spiritual trees and they produced good and suitable spiritual food. Two of those spiritual trees were mentioned; the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. As recorded, there were many other spiritual trees but only two crucial trees were mentioned. God gave man another responsibility over the garden as he did over the earth. He placed man in the garden to have him work it and guard it (Genesis 2.4-15).

The Lord God made man and provided for him both bodily and spiritual nourishment. He gave man responsibility over two areas; the earth and the garden. The earth produced

food for man's body while the garden of paradise produced food for the soul of man. God gave man the earth and garden. As such, man could be on the earth and in the garden. Man could eat of the plants of the earth and also eat of all the plants of paradise except one (Genesis 2.16-17).

I believe that the garden of paradise was the place that God had prepared for man in the heavens. In the Bible, heavenly things are usually described with earthly features e.g. gold, tree, river, crystal, light, horse, lion, lake, throne, east, west, etc. Looking at the scriptures this garden should not have probably been on the earth because the earth can only produce earthly trees which produce fruits/crops for bodily nourishment of man. The earth does not produce spiritual trees. Some earthly rivers may have been named after the rivers found in this garden but that does not mean that the location where the earthly rivers are found is paradise. The river Euphrates around the Middle East does not divide into four neither does it belong to a group of four rivers. Even if we were to say that these were the rivers, history records that Noah's flood had changed the course of every of river and stream. The tree of life found in the garden is still a present reality in the heavens (Rev 2.7; Rev. 22.2; Rev 22.14). The Lord Jesus is promising to give the fruit of the tree of life found in paradise to anyone who overcomes the sinful life. Apostle Paul had in/out of body experiences to paradise (2 Cor. 12.4)

When God made man, God gave him a place in the spiritual realms. His place was paradise (the Garden of Eden). In this paradise, man could feed spiritually as much as he wanted on every spiritual tree including even the tree of life.

Except we see the full picture of the creation, we will not understand the nature of our full beings nor will we see the extent of how spiritually needy we all are. The first Adam had it all before he fell from his place in the heavens. The first Adam was never sick bodily or spiritually. He never lacked food, for the earth brought forth all its fruits in its due season and the garden brought forth all its own fruits. He did not need to toil with his hands. The earth tilled and watered itself to bring forth food for Adam. Why did this beautiful picture change? Everything changed when man lost his place in the heavens (paradise) and fell. Why did man lose his place?

The test of free will - the tree of knowledge of good and evil

Yahweh God gave man every seed-bearing plant on the earth for food. He also told man to eat of every tree in the garden of paradise except of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

“Then Yahweh God gave the man this command, `You are free to eat of all the trees in the garden. But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, you are not to eat; for, the day you eat of that, you are doomed to die” (Genesis 2:16-17).

When God made man, he made him different from the other animals in the field. One of the uniqueness of man is his free will. God gave man the ability to choose and decide. So, when God made man, God put man under trial to see if man will choose to obey him. Did man pass the test? Man was obedient to God until the serpent the devil visited him in the garden to tempt him to sin. Let us look at the temptation, man’s response and God’s reaction;

The snake: *“Did God really say you were not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?”*

The woman: *“We may eat the fruit of the trees in the garden. But of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden God said, “You must not eat it, nor touch it, under pain of death”*

The snake: *“No! You will not die! God knows in fact that the day you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing good from evil”*

The woman saw that the fruit was good to eat, and pleasant to the eyes, and ideal for gaining knowledge. She took its fruit and ate it and gave some to her husband who was with her. He ate it (Genesis 3:6).

God: *“Now that man has become like one of us in knowing good from evil, he must not be allowed to reach his hand and pick from the tree of life too, and eat and live forever”.*

Was the tree of knowledge of good and evil an evil tree? Certainly not! Every tree which the Lord God made was beautiful and suitable to man for food. If the tree was evil, then that will mean God is evil because God has knowledge of good and evil. But we know that God is holy. Did the devil lie to them that the tree will make them like gods? No! The devil did not lie because after eating the fruit, they became like gods in knowing good and evil (Gen 3.22). The devil lied when he told them that they will not die even if they disobeyed God because they eventually died from their sin. Even though, man had eaten of the tree of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, man’s judgement of good

and evil is not sound because sin has darkened man's spirit. God did not withhold the tree because it was bad for man. The tree was good for man as were the other trees. The tree was just a test of obedience for man. If the Lord God had chosen the tree of life for the test, the tempter will have still tempted them saying; "No! You will not die! God knows in fact that the day you eat it you will be like gods, living forever." All the trees were beautiful. The devil, because he wanted them to disobey God, made the tree of knowledge of good and evil appear so good in Eve's eyes lying to her that disobeying God is not punishable. What was Adam's sin? Adam's sin was the sin of disobedience to God.

Sin caused Adam's fall. His sin was disobedience to God's command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. What is sin? Sin is any act of disobedience to God. Every sin is a breaking of God's commandment.

When the Lord Jesus resurrected from the grave, Lucifer and his angels fought to enter back into heaven but they were driven out and their place was no longer found in heaven. They fell down to the earth and became the fallen angels (Rev. 12.7-12). When Adam sinned, he lost his place (paradise) in the heavens and also became fallen man. God drove man out of the garden and specifically blocked him from eating of the tree of life found in the middle of the garden. So far, Adam and Eve had not yet eaten of the tree of life. Man, was restricted only to the earth. He lost every right to enter paradise or eat of its trees because of one single act of disobedience.

Because of this one sin, man lost paradise as well his spiritual life. This one sin now gave birth to several sins as man became very weak to rule his flesh. Man could not stop sinning and thus became a slave of sin. God told Cain that Sin knocks at his door seeking to rule him but he must subdue it (Gen. 4.7). Cain could not subdue sin and finally killed his own brother. As time went on, sin grew and man drew further apart from God and became completely lost. Man is lost to his bodily appetites, sin and death. Men are so lost away from God such that they even question the existence of the LORD God.

God loves us and gave his son

At the time of Noah, the sins of man were so grave such that it earned the punishment of the flood. Only Noah and his family were saved because Noah was an upright man. Sin continued to grow after Noah's time but God did not destroy everyone rather he sought for a way to save mankind from their sins. God started the restoration process when He found a man who could look up to Him. He found Abraham. To Abraham, He gave very rich promises. *"And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed because thou hast obeyed my voice"* (Genesis 12.2-3 & Gen.22.18). God called Abraham righteous because Abraham believed God's promises and hoped even against hope itself. He believed and did not consider the deadness of Sarah's womb and his own old age for the promise of a seed (a son).

God brought about a nation, Israel, from Abraham. God gave the Israelites the law of righteousness which embodied the good and bad acts. Nobody was able to obey the whole law. As a result, none was found righteous. The law was meant to give life if it was completely obeyed but it instead brought death because none could obey the entire law. Though the law pointed the way to life, it did not give the power to follow the way to life. Man left on his own is too weak to obey God.

In the appointed time, from the nation of Israel, God sent forth his saving Justice, Christ Jesus.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him will not die but have everlasting life" (John 3.16).

The Lord Jesus was sent to save us from our sins (Mathew 1.21). The Lord Jesus Christ died for the sin(s) of the world. The sin of the world is that original sin that has given birth to several sins. He received the punishment for all our sins and by his wounds we are healed (spiritually). He established a new covenant whose laws can be obeyed only by walking after the spirit of Christ (Romans 8.4). The old covenant which depended solely on the strength of man for obedience has been cancelled. The law itself was not cancelled rather it was renewed and man was empowered in Christ Jesus to obey the renewed law. The Grace of God enables us to obey and follow all the commands which the Lord has laid down for us.

The Lord Jesus renewed and brought the law to a higher plain than it was in the old covenant. In the new covenant, the law is to be obeyed in the power of the Spirit of

Christ. He summed up the entire law in one law: Love God and Love one another as he has loved us (John 13.34).

Christians who are trying in their own power to live a good and godly can never attain the level of purity which the Heavenly Father desires of us. Christ Jesus is the life and power of the Christian. He is the seed of Abraham that has blessed every nation on the earth.

The spiritual life that was lost as a result of the fall was restored in Christ Jesus. Those who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ are blessed in Him with every spiritual blessing in the heavens (Eph. 1.3).

It is my father who gives you bread from Heaven, the true bread, for the bread of God is the bread which comes down from Heaven and gives life to the world” (John 6.33).

He strengthens us with his life to live holy, exercise full control over our bodies and to dominate sin. When he overcame death, he went back to heaven, and became a life-giving spring to all those on the earth who believe in him. He has everything we need for spiritual nourishment. Only those who believe in him can have this spiritual life. He alone died for the sins of man and only he went back to heaven. Those who receive him become one spirit with him and when they eventually give up their bodies, they remain alive with him in paradise.

Salvation from our sins is the primary need of man. What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loose his soul. Because of sin, we lost our place in the spiritual realms. We can gain it again if we receive God’s forgiveness for that sin and stop sinning. He supplies us with power so that we can stop the sinful way of life so as to get back to paradise and eat of the tree of life. He who overcomes sin shall eat of the tree of life found in paradise (Rev 2.7).

Bodily life is a secondary need to spiritual life. Lazarus died very poor, yet he was taken to paradise (Luke 16.19-31). The bodily life of the thief was cut short yet he was taken to paradise (Luke 23.43). Out of the ten lepers that received bodily healing, only one was made completely whole (in spirit and body). Certainly not all those who received bodily healing in the days of the Lord Jesus received spiritual life nor made it to paradise.

The kingdom of God is not food and drinks (Romans 14.17). It is not about what we wear, eat and where we sleep. These things are also important but they are not primary. The Lord gave the crowd that followed him all the bread and fish they wanted to eat but strongly admonished them to seek for spiritual food so as to live. When man fell, God did not take away man's food and water. What God took away was his spiritual food and place. The gospel is not about how man can get plenty food, designer's clothes, private car or jet. The gospel is about how God has made a way through Christ Jesus for man to be saved from his sins and find life and reclaim his place in the heavens. The kingdom of God is about righteousness and not earthly things.

While you still have the breath of life on the earth, your main preoccupation is to work out your salvation (being completely free from the sinful nature) with fear and trembling so that you can have a place in God's big mansion in the heavens (John 14.1-3). We must pursue holiness without which no one will see the Lord (Hebrews 12.14). God gave everything we needed for full restoration in his son. Christ Jesus died to take away sins, so we must not go on sinning. The cross of Christ was solely for the salvation of man and not for bodily healing or food or clothes. His wounds were for spiritual restoration (1 Peter 2.24). He healed all that came to him when he was on earth so that the scriptures may be fulfilled (Mathew 8.17). He still heals. Yet this is not the reason for which Christ died. He died for the sole purpose of taking away sins.

All our needs are met in his son

Those who believe in Christ Jesus have their spiritual and bodily needs met by God. When we believe and obey God as little children, he becomes truly our father who is **willing and able** to take care of us.

"Why worry about what ye shall eat or drink or wear? The birds do not plant; harvest or store in barns, yet your heavenly father feeds them. Your heavenly father knows you need these things. Set your hearts first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, then all these things will be added unto you" (Matthew 6:25-34).

The only way to have our bodily needs met by God is to believe God, to believe in his son whom he sent and to do all we can to obey him (Mathew 6.33). To set our hearts on his righteousness means to do all we can to obey Him. We must not be disobedient like

the first Adam but be obedient as the last Adam (Jesus Christ). Childlike faith and obedience is all that the Lord demands. If we do not take care to believe and obey God, we will continue to live in lack no matter the magnitude of Prayers, selfish giving and religious activities that we do. God provides for people who belong to His kingdom. Those who belong to the kingdom are those who believe and obey God. The heavenly Father is willing to enable you to enter the kingdom. It is from the position of being in the kingdom of God that your needs are met.

The LORD God can take the five loaves and two fishes in your hand and multiply to meet your **needs**. He can ask you to throw your net again and you will catch fish to meet your **needs**. He can bring bread and fish from non-existence to existence for your sake. He cares much about you. You do not need to toil from morning till night like the heathen in order to have bread. In vain the sinners get up early and go late to bed sweating to make a living but God provides for his beloved even while he is sleeping (psalms 127:1-2).

Most Christians have their hearts set on earthly things rather than God and his kingdom. Therefore they can easily believe the erroneous teaching on tithes to make God give to them. They have not learnt trust and obey. They do not even delight in spiritual things. They want more of these earthly things than they want to know God. As a result, they have fallen victims in the hands of devouring greedy wolves.

“In their greed, they will try to make a profit out of you with untrue tales. But the judgement made upon them long ago is not idle, and the destruction awaiting them is forever on the watch” (2 Peter 2:1-3)

True Riches

What is a treasure?

A treasure is something of great value. We give our hearts and life to our treasures. “Where your treasure is, there your heart will lie” (Mathew 6.21). You cannot separate the heart from the treasure. The two always go together. We can know how much attached we are to our treasures only when an attempt is made to take them away from us. A person who is rich in material possessions cannot say that his heart is not attached to it. His heart is attached to his treasures whether he acknowledges it or not because the human heart always goes after its treasure.

The fallen man places much value on a lot of things; money, reputation, power, sex, food, drinks, health, family etc. Among all these, money is most valued because it can easily buy the rest of the things. Money is a medium of exchange for almost everything in this earthy life. So, we can name all of the earth’s treasure as one word – money.

Is money a true treasure? Does money deserve our life devotion, worship and loyalty? Earthly riches are temporal and unsecured. Spiritual riches are eternal and secured. True treasure is that which is eternal, completely secured, and adds no sorrow.

Money, the False Treasure

We can know the real value of money by looking at how God values money. Money is also called mammon or earthly riches.

In Rev 3, the church of Laodicea believed that they were a wealthy church because they had earthly goods. The Lord Jesus rebuked them for their wrong mindset and brought to light their true condition; they were poor, blind and naked.

“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Rev 3.17).

The Lord Jesus told his disciples the story of the selfish rich man. The ground of the rich man had produced a good harvest. He planned to live a life of rest and comfort by storing up his plenty goods. Howbeit, his plans were never realized because the Lord God made an immediate demand for his soul since he thought it not important to be rich in His sight (Luke 12:13-22). From the story, the Lord Jesus was teaching them not to store earthly goods. The Lord God is pleased with those who pursue spiritual wealth instead of earthly wealth. Earthly wealth is not highly esteemed by God. One who has earthly riches is not necessarily rich in the sight of God.

In another story, there was an astute servant who upon knowing that he will soon lose his job, reduced his debtor’s debts so as to secure for himself their long lasting friendship.

“.....And so I tell you: use filthy money to make friends for yourselves, so that when it fails, these people may welcome you into the eternal homes. Whoever can be trusted in little things can also be trusted in great ones; whoever is dishonest in slight matters will also be dishonest in greater ones. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling filthy money, who could entrust you with true wealth? And if you have not been trustworthy

with things which are not really yours, who will give you the wealth which is your own? No servant can serve two masters. Either he does not like the one and is fond of the other, or he regards one highly and the other with contempt. You cannot give yourself both to God and to Money.

The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and jeered at him. He said to them, "you are the very ones who pass yourselves off as upright in people's sight, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed in human eyes is loathsome in the sight of God" (Luke 16.1-15).

In this story, seven lessons can be learnt;

1. Money is not true wealth.
2. Money by its very nature is unrighteous/filthy/tainted
3. The only right use of money is to give away to help other people and win them as friends.
4. There should be no limit in our giving. We should give away money until it finishes. When the money finishes, we shall be welcomed into an eternal home.
5. If you are dishonest in your dealings with unrighteous money, you will never receive true riches of the spirit. If you proved unfaithful in dealing with false earthly riches, then you cannot be given true riches.
6. You cannot devote your life to money (making money) and at the same time, devote your life to God. You can devote yourself only to one.
7. Money is highly esteemed in the eyes of men but it is loathsome in God's eyes

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon (Mathew 6.19-24).

The human eye can have only a single focus. You cannot set your eyes in two directions at a time. We can only look at one direction; either it is God or it is the evil god money. The eyes which look at both persons are evil eyes. The Lord hates this. You cannot serve the two at the same time.

The more money you have, the more it controls you. The longer you have it, the more you want to keep it. The more you seek it, the more it possesses you. Giving it away is the only means to be freed from its claws. We must be careful to know whose spirit we are; is it the spirit of mammon or is it the spirit of God. Until we purify our hearts of the filthy spirit of mammon, God cannot lead us. Drive away the evil Spirit of unrighteous money by letting go of his property (money and earthly possessions) and by helping poor people. It is the Lord's will that we sell our earthly riches and give the money to the poor so that we can have heavenly riches (Luke 12.33-34).

In another story, a man approached the Lord and asked him to settle an inheritance dispute that he had with his brother. The Lord rebuked him saying that he does not judge property issues. The Lord did not only rebuke him but gave a stern warning to all his disciples not to fight for properties or pursue inheritance claims (Luke 12.13-15). In today's world, an inheritance claim is legitimate but to the Lord it is greed. The Lord admonishes his disciples to be careful not to demand more than they need. Life is not about becoming rich or "making it big". We must be careful not to set such goals in life. A need is something basic that sustains our bodily life: shelter, food, clothing, water. Wearing a designers dress, living in a mansion, riding the most expensive car have surpassed the need level. We are to pray daily to the heavenly Father for our daily needs (Mathew 6.11).

The Lord does not ignore our needs. He assured his disciples that their every need on the earth will be met by the Heavenly Father (Luke 12.23-28). Still, it is a sin to direct your life seeking to be rich in earthly goods (Luke 12.29-30), We should rather direct our lives to righteousness. We should do all we can to obey him. If we do this, he will provide for our basic needs (Luke 12.31). Simplicity is the way of the kingdom of God (Mathew 6.19-34). If we are poor, we should not seek to gather more than we need and if we are rich, we should sell and help the poor. The Lord does not want anyone to be in lack but at the same time he does not want people to store up. Money does not give life

and it fades away. We are encouraged to pursue heavenly riches because they are true. He encouraged people to sell their earthly wealth and buy heavenly wealth. Heavenly wealth lies in the spirit of man (Luke 12.33-34). The Lord invited people to come to him for life and rest. He never invited people to come to him for material wealth. The world of today lies in the hands of the evil one. The fallen world has been structured by the evil one such that our whole day is given up to making money. If our whole day, week, month, months, then years is given to making money, then our whole life has been given up to service of money. We rise up as early as 5am to go to work in exchange for money and we return earliest by 6pm. The human brain and body cannot work indefinitely. Once the brain is tired, it can no longer receive or work properly. When do we then attend to the and His kingdom? When do we have time to even learn from the Lord? The Lord did not organize teaching sermons every Sunday at the synagogue for his disciples to come to learn the ways of God. The disciples gave up their lives entirely to learn from the Lord and to serve him. They learned from him as they walked with him daily. You cannot work full time six days a week and then hope to receive a life transforming impartation from God on Sunday. Even the human baby needs daily nutrition to grow properly. The children need daily training from their parents. He, who abides in the Lord Jesus, is the one who bears much fruit (John 15.5). Some Christians, instead of thoroughly surrendering to the Lord, have left their entire spirituality in the hands of some pastors who are still to become disciples themselves.

Working to earn a living is a good act. It is a wrong to be lazy. Notwithstanding, the choice of our profession should be one that is not a stumbling block to God's kingdom in our lives. Work should not be our goal rather it should only be a tool. A profession or anything that steals away our time and heart from God should be abandoned. We must lay aside every weight that keeps us from running the race. Professions that cause us to sin should be abandoned. For example; the Lord commanded us to give to everyone and to lend without expecting repayment to everyone especially the poor. The banking industry and even some churches disobey this commandment of love. Banks give loans expecting full repayment with an interest. They give mainly to the rich man who is credit worthy. They demand a collateral security. Another example; if you serve as a lawyer in a country that has ungodly laws, then you are working against the kingdom of God

Before the invention of money, exchange was done by trade and barter (exchange of goods). No single item/thing was the sole unit of measure or means of exchange. Today, almost everything earthly can be bought with money. Money is the center of almost everything. The more money you have, the “richer” you are because you can afford almost anything you want or desire. Money has become so attractive to the eyes and heart of man such that it competes strongly with God for the hearts of men. Very few Christians serve only God. Most Christians are attempting to serve both God and money.

The spirit of mammon manifests itself in different ways;

Lack of contentment: Complaining, grumbling, dissatisfaction or murmuring about your circumstances is a spirit of discontentment. Such a spirit is not of God but of mammon. Apostle Paul had learnt to be contented in every life circumstance such that nothing was a need to him anymore (Philippians 4.11). Desiring to have more than your basic needs is greed. The Lord hates discontentment and greed. We must learn to be contented with the basic things that we have and put our focus entirely on obeying God. We must stop fighting as the sinners do for the things of this world. We are pilgrims on the earth who are on the way to their true home which is in heaven (1 Peter 2.11). We must reject greed of every kind (Luke 12.15; Titus 2.11-12).

“Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have, for God has said, “I will never leave you or abandon you” (Hebrews 13.5).

Dishonesty: Stealing, cheating and defrauding and lies telling to get unjust gain are all fruits of the mammon spirit. We must abstain from it. (Luke 16.10-12).

Storing up: Storing up for tomorrow is not godly. The Lord Jesus wants us to trust God daily for our daily bread. We must not doubt God as the Israelites did in the wilderness. They were instructed to collect food as they needed only for each day. Some of them disobeyed and collected more which bred worms and stank (Exodus 16.16-20). Moses was angry with them because they did not believe that God will provide for them “tomorrow” as he did “today”. The Lord has taught us to pray to God in faith daily for the provisions we need for each day (Mathew 6.11). We must not worry about tomorrow (Mathew 6.34).

Stinginess: Refusal to share with others or giving very sparingly when you have much is not a fruit of the spirit of God. There was a poor widow who gave two small coins in an offering basket. There were also rich men who put huge sums in that same offering basket. The offering of the poor widow pleased the Lord much more than the offerings of the rich men for she had given away all that she had to leave on (Mark 12.42-43). A poor person can still share with others. You do not have to be rich to share or give. You must not hide your greed or lust for money under the coverage of wanting to have much so as to give to the poor.

Covetousness: Desiring to have your neighbor's goods or property is the spirit of greed.

Refusal to give away to the poor: The Lord commanded the crowd to sell their properties and give the money to the poor if they wanted to become his followers. A true disciple of Christ is one who has given up his earthly riches. The Lord and his disciples always kept a bag of offering for the poor. None had to be poor in the land of Israel for the Lord had blessed the land. The rich were commanded to give to the poor (Deut. 15.4). The early church sold their properties and distributed amongst themselves as each needed. Helping the poor was the only lesson the other apostles gave Apostle Paul, of which he was already very eager to do (Gal. 2.10). One who is still under the control of money cannot sell his earthly possessions to help the poor neither can he give up his ambition to become wealthy in earthly good.

"The whole community of believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but rather they shared all things in common. With great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, for all of them were living in an exceptional time of grace. There was no needy person among them, for those who owned land or houses, sold them and brought the proceeds of the sale. And they laid it at the feet of the apostles who distributed it according to each one's need" (Acts 4.32-35)

Money is not profitable

-- Money does not give Salvation/life (Mathew 16.26; Proverbs 11.4; 10.2,28)

-- Money is not true riches (Proverbs 13.7, Luke 16.12)

- Money does not give peace (Proverbs 15.16-17)
- Money does not cultivate uprightness (Proverbs 19.1)
- Money is unrighteous in itself (Luke 16.9)
- Money does not go into eternity: In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man's comfort was only for a short while and his torment for eternity. Money cannot give you everlasting comfort. Only Christ Jesus can give you a place of comfort in his Father's house (Luke 16:20-26). Rich people have already received their comfort here on earth. They will not be comforted again after death (Luke 6.24-25)
- Money can see corruption/be stolen: Earthly treasure can be stolen or be destroyed. True treasure is untouchable and indestructible (Matthew 6:19-21).

Money is the thorn

"And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection" (Luke 8.14)

Christians who attempt to serve both God and money are the hearts with thorns. They receive the word of God (the seed); they grow but never get to produce any fruit to perfection. They are the ground that drinks the rain but produces no good crop but thistles and bristles (Hebrews 6.7-8). No matter how much digging, watering and fertilizing is done on them, they will still be fruitless (Luke 13.7-9). Do not be deceived to think that you are a Christian if you have not thoroughly purified yourself of the spirit of mammon. It is the fruit that is gathered unto eternal life and not the tree. If you grow only to be fruitless, you will be dug out from the soil and burnt. You shall share the place of the wicked.

"People who long to be rich are a prey to trials, they get trapped into all sorts of foolish and harmful ambitions which plunge people into ruin and destruction. The love of money is the root of all evils and there are some who, pursuing it, have wandered away from the faith and so given their souls any number of fatal wounds. But as someone dedicated to God, avoid all that" (1 Timothy 6.9-11).

The True Riches of Heaven

The treasures that we receive in Christ Jesus abounds. In Him, we bear fruit and obtain many rewards of righteousness. We bear in Him the fruit of perfection of our souls and receive many resultant rewards. Both the fruit and rewards are all the riches we have in Christ Jesus.

1. Perfection of the Soul of Man

The soul of the fallen man which is corrupted by sin can regain its perfection in Christ Jesus. This is called the justification and sanctification of the human soul so as to bring it to complete restoration or salvation. The purpose of the justification and sanctification process is to bring us totally into the image of Christ, so that as Christ was, in both nature and works, in his earthly life, so too we must become on this earth. The human soul can attain this perfection (Mathew 5.48; Rev 14.4-5; Mathew 19.20-21; Luke 8.15). A child of God should not be rich in earthly goods rather he must seek to be rich in the sight of God (Luke 12.21; Romans 14.17). We must earnestly seek perfection. Only then, can we follow the Lord till the end. The sinful man enjoys sinning and desires no purity/sanctification at all but the children of God must desire to bear much fruit i.e. become increasingly like Jesus. As we draw life from the vine, the Lord Jesus, and abide in him daily, we become increasingly like him each day. The Lord Jesus is the vine and his disciples are the branches. The branches can bear fruit only if they abide in the vine. The life of Christ in the life of a believer is meant to bring the believer to perfect restoration from sin. One who is rich in spirit is one who has taken the likeness of God's firstborn son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus is calling on believers to buy from him three things so that they can truly be rich:

You think you are rich and have piled up so much that you need nothing, but you do not realize that you are wretched and to be pitied, poor, blind and naked. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see (Rev 3:17-18).

a) Gold of faith

Faith is spiritual riches (James 2.5) and it is tested in fire just as gold in a furnace (1 Peter 1.7). Faith just as gold can be quantifiable and measurable. Some can have great faith while others can have little faith (Mathew 8.26; Mathew 15.28; Mathew 8.10). The Lord Jesus brings to perfection the faith of those who look at him always (Hebrews 12.2). True faith is evidenced by works (James 2.1). There are many works of faith;

--Faith is deep acceptance and confession of the Lordship of the Lord Jesus. It is acknowledging the Lord Jesus as the savior of the world.

--Faith is stern obedience to the commandments of the Lord

--Faith is acknowledging that the Lord is great and powerful. It is to know that he can give all that we ask of Him. It is to know that he will execute his promises (Matthew 21.22).

--Faith is doubtless acknowledgement of the great authority in the name of Jesus. He commands all creation and all beings in heaven and earth (Matthew 17.20) and does mighty works.

--Faith is to trust the Lord Jesus to bring you to complete salvation and life.

Unbelief is a sin. Those who truly believe God do mighty works that astonish the sons of men. They glorify the heavenly Father by their works. Those who truly believe God will be saved from death. It pleases God when we believe in him. Those who have faith are rich in God's sight.

b) White garment of good works

The Lord Jesus Christ went about doing good (Acts 10.38). Those who desire perfection must go about doing good. They must clothe themselves with the garment of good deeds (Rev 19.7-8).

These good works include loving people, preaching the good news to the poor, liberating those that are bound, healing the sick, raising the dead and performing wonders. Of all these good works, loving people is primary, commanded and mandatory. The Lord commanded that we love people (John 13.34). The other good deeds are useless without love. If we do not obey the command of love, we will be rejected by the Lord no matter the measure of our other works (Mathew 7.22-23).

To love people is a great work that demands strength. Love does not come to us naturally, so we have to exercise ourselves in it. Love can be known by its names; patient love, loving kindness, enduring love, gentle love, humble love, hopeful love, and peace loving. Love is not expressed based on feelings rather it is based on the will. One who says he loves another must exercise patience with him; be kind to him; cannot be rude to him; must endure being mistreated by the other; cannot be proud but forgive even the most disgraceful hurt; must not be quick to anger but seek peace; and stay joyful at all times. He must place the needs of the other before his. He must help the poor. We must love others as God loves us. The Lord God is slow but dreadful in anger. He is merciful and very forgiving. The Lord Jesus was humble even to the death on the cross (1 Corinthians 13). To love people demands great strength. This strength can only be provided by the Lord. He is the one that can enable us to love.

God is love (1 John 4.8) and he who abides in love abides in God and God in Him. He who does not love abides in death. He who loves completely can do no wrong for love covers a multitude of sins. Holiness is the fruit of Love, for love purifies.

We were created in Christ Jesus for good works (Ephesians 2.10). Our good works is the light to the world (1 Peter 2.12). When the people of the dark see our good works, they will glorify our Father in Heaven. God wants our light to shine especially the light of love. He does not want us to put our light under the table. It is by this light that men will come to know and glorify Him (Mathew 5.14-16). The cloth of good deeds is great wealth in the sight of God.

Pray to the Lord.

Father in Heaven, enable me to walk in love. I seek to exercise complete dominion over selfishness. Enable me to love my brethren as you have loved me. I truly want to love. I

want to become changed from self to love. I want to be given completely to you and my brethren in the faith. How can I become part of you if I belong to self? I desire to be one with my brethren united in love. Heavenly Father, complete your work of Grace in me. Do not consider me strong. I am not strong. I am weak and dependent on you. Glorify your name in me. In Christ Jesus name I pray, Amen.

c) Eyesalve of Truth (knowledge of God)

The truth sets us free from the power of sin and darkness. Sight gives knowledge. People who are spiritually blind cannot receive nor can they know spiritual things. A person may be seeing physically but is blind in spirit. The Lord God can blind people (Mathew 13.13). The devil also blinds people (2 Corinthians 4.4). The Lord God hides the truth from the “wise” and reveals them to children (humble people) (Mathew 11.25). God desires that we know him (Hosea 6.6). He desires that we seek him. If we seek him, he will let himself to be found but if we forsake him, he will cast us off forever. David instructed Solomon to get to know God (1 Chronicles 28.9). To live uprightly, we must know his will regarding all things (Romans 12.2; Titus 1.1; Colossians 1.9-12; Phil 1.8-9; Colossians 2.2-3).

We do not get to know God by a vigorous study of the Bible. Doctrines and Bible Reading will give us some mental knowledge but it cannot help us to know God by heart. Only the Lord Jesus knows the Father (John 10.15). He is the truth. Only the Lord Jesus Christ can reveal the Father to us through the Holy Spirit. Such spiritual knowledge is deposited in our spirit and it is life transforming. Except the Lord opens our eyes to see and know, the heavenly Father, we will never know Him. If we do not know him, how can we discern his will so as to live right? And if we do not do his will, we shall never inherit eternal life. To know God is eternal life (John 17.3). Unless we know the truth, we will fall prey to the lies of the evil one and the deadly erroneous teachings that have crept into the church.

2. Peace and Joy

Earthly riches cannot give peace or joy. The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. The Lord gives peace and joy to his disciples. It is not the

worldly kind of peace and joy. His followers have peace and they remain joyful even in tribulation.

3. Eternal Life

The fallen dying man needs life. Every man is a sinner and everyone who sins is doomed to die. Our forefathers are dead. We will soon die and our children will follow next on the death roll if we do not accept Christ. In the first Adam, we lost our entire spiritual heritage from God including access to the tree of life. Life is crucial to man. Without life, there is no dream or desire. Without life, there is no “you”. Without life, there is no need for food, water, shelter, health or even peace. What can a man give in exchange for his own very self? What will it profit a man if he has the riches of the whole world but loses his own very self (Mathew 16.26).

Money can buy almost everything in this earthly life but it cannot give life. It may be used to sustain the bodily life for a very short season but it will never buy eternal life. If money could give life, then no rich man will die neither will any rich woman ever be barren. No matter the amount of comfort which we have in this earthly life, we will still perish if we do not seek life.

Life in our spirits and bodies are crucial to human existence. If we do not have life in our spirits, we cannot operate properly as humans. The loss of spiritual life is the cause of the aches and bad choices in this present world. It has caused us to eat up one another even our supposed “loved ones”. Without the spiritual life, we cannot love. Without the spiritual life, we become like the wild animals that eat up one another.

The Lord God has promised to let all those who believe in his name to eat of the tree of life found in paradise and live forever (Rev. 2.7; Rev 33.14). If we have eternal life in our spirits, our bodies too will live forever. If Adam and Eve had eaten of the tree of life, they will still have been alive today. It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh can do nothing (John 6.63). Those who are completely made whole in spirit will inherit eternal life.

The Lord God strengthens believers on the earth with his own life so that they can overcome sin and thus, gain the right to eat of the tree of life (John 6.34-35). The Life of the Lord supplied to every believer (the Holy Spirit) Is such a precious gift. The Holy Spirit who resurrected the Lord from the grave will also quicken our mortal bodies to life

(Romans 8.11). Those who feed on Christ, the vine of life, will eventually bear fruit. They are the ones who will eat of the tree of life and live forever. The Lord God also provides all that the believers need for bodily life (food, water, clothing, shelter and healing) (Luke 12.22-31; Mathew 6.11; Psalms 127).

4. God

God is the greatest treasure of all. God is most precious than all his creation. God is beautiful. The moment we behold His profound beauty, the world and all its cares will begin to grow dim. The things he can do for us are nothing compared to who he is. To know him is a treasure. To love Him with your whole being provides a deep sense of self-fulfillment. God is love. He shows faithful love to His own. He is abounding in mercy. He is gentle (Mathew 11.29). He is humble in forgiving our sins. He is holy. The death of the Lord Jesus was the physical expression of this sacrificial love. He is slow but dreadful in wrath. He is jealous over His own unlike us who are jealous over another's'. Unless we totally deny ourselves, we cannot fully have Him because He Himself is selfless. He is altogether beautiful and lovable (Song of Songs 5:16).

God will be an inheritance for some. He was the inheritance of the Levites amongst all Israel. The Levites had no property in Israel, God was their inheritance. God has promised that some will inherit Him. Those who are changed to the complete image of his son, the Lord Jesus become his sons also. They will be joint heirs with Christ of all that the Father has (Romans 8.17; Gal 3.28; James 2.5). To go into sonship is the perfection attained through the work of the cross. The work of salvation goes far beyond the forgiveness of sins. The heirs are the bride of Christ who will become co-heirs by marriage (Ephesians 5.28). The bride will obtain an unbreakable union with God (Rev 3.12). The bride is the first fruits of the entire harvest. They will inherit God. The Holy Spirit is working with/in us each day to transform us into the image of Christ until we become as he is (2 Corinthians 3.18). The sanctification work of the Holy Spirit is aimed at forming us into sonship. We must grow into becoming sons of God. Our Lord is the first begotten son of God. It has pleased the Father to have many sons (Romans 8.29). Those who find him have found the greatest treasure of all (John 17.3). He takes care

of his own (1 Peter 5.5-7; Isaiah 43.1-3). Those whose hearts are set on attaining perfection of spirit through obedience receive daily bodily provision.

5. Paradise

Paradise is the place in the heavens that God gave man before the fall. Those who bear the fruit of perfection will be restored to the lost paradise. They will be given access to eat of all the trees that the Lord God had made for them including the tree of life.

6. The future earth and all its substance

A hundredfold earthly return will be given to those who lost their earthly lives for the sake of the kingdom of God. For anything that was given up for the sake of the kingdom of God, a hundredfold shall be restored. A hundredfold of lands, houses, family or property will be restored to each person accordingly (Mathew 19.27-30). This present earth and heaven will be destroyed and a new one will take its place (Rev 21.1). The future earth and all its substance will be inherited by the children of God.

7. Kingship and Priesthood

Priesthood and a crown of kingship will be given those who overcome (Rev. 5.10). They will rule the world to come. The size of authority of each of them will be based on the measure of our works (Luke 19.16-26).

8. Other Rewards

The Lord promises varying rewards to the Christians that overcome the trials of the seven churches:

The church of Ephesus: He shall eat of the tree of life found in the middle of paradise.

The church of Smyrna: He shall not be hurt by the second death

The church of Pergamos: He will eat of the hidden manna. He will receive a white stone with a new name written on it

The church of Thyatira: He will have power over the nations. He will receive a morning star.

The church of Sardis: He shall receive white raiment. His name will not be blotted out of the book of life.

The church of Philadelphia: He will be a pillar in the temple of God. He will have the name of the Heavenly Father, the name of the city of Jerusalem and the new name of the Lord Jesus written on his forehead.

The church of Laodicea: He will sit with the Lord Jesus on his throne.

How to Become Rich in Spirit

Buy!

The only way to be rich in spirit (the perfection of soul and its rewards) is **to buy the heavenly treasures**. To buy means to give away something you own in exchange for the new thing you seek. The Lord Jesus is inviting the church to buy from him all these spiritual treasures. He has all these spiritual treasures and he is ready to give to anyone who is ready to receive.

You think you are rich and have piled up so much that you need nothing, but you do not realize that you are wretched and to be pitied, poor, blind and naked. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see (Rev 3:17-18).

The Lord is inviting us to buy from him gold, white garment and eye salve. Every human can buy these treasures.

The Lord Jesus told his disciples the parable of ten wedding attendants.

“Then the kingdom of Heaven will be like this: Ten wedding attendants took their lamp and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were sensible: the foolish ones though they took their Lamps, took no oil with them, whereas the sensible ones took flasks of oil as well as their Lamps. The bridegroom was late, and they all grew drowsy and fell asleep. But at midnight, there was a cry, “Look! The bridegroom! Go out and meet him.” Then all those wedding attendants wake up and trimmed their Lamps and the foolish ones said to the sensible ones, “Give us some of your oil, our lamps are going out.” But they replied, “There may not be enough for us and for you; you had better go to those who sell it and buy some for yourselves.” They had gone off to buy it when the bridegroom arrived. Those who were ready went in with him to the

wedding hall and the door was closed. The other attendants arrived later, "Lord, Lord," they said, "open the door for us." But he replied, "In truth I tell you, I do not know you." So stay awake, because you do not know either the day or the hour" (Matthew 25:1-13). In this parable, ten wedding attendants were qualified to attend the wedding, but five failed to attend. They did not **buy** sufficient oil that will last them for the journey as the wise ones had done. Their oil ran out. They had gone off to **buy** oil when the groom came and the door was shut.

The Lord told them again another parable of the kingdom of God.

"The kingdom of Heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which someone has found; he hides it again, goes off in his joy, sells everything he owns and buys the field.

Again, the kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls; when he finds one of great value he goes off and sells everything he owns and buys it" (Matthew 13:44-45).

Spiritual riches are of great value. We must buy them from the Lord.

What is the price of these riches?

What should you give to the Lord in exchange for these spiritual treasures? Your all! Everything you have/are. You need to give up all that you own and all that you are. You must give up your possessions and then surrender yourself to his Lordship.

"If anyone wants to follow me, he must deny himself, pick up his cross and follow me continuously. Whosoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it, because what profit will a person have if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what can a man give in exchange for his life?" (Mathew 16.24-25).

1. Give up all that you own

The heavenly treasure is a treasure of great value. Its price is fixed but variable. The fixed price is your all. The all varies from one person to another because all do not have the same amount of goods or quality of life. To you, your all is the price of the kingdom of heaven. To me, my all is the price of the kingdom. The kingdom of God is more expensive for the rich man than for the poor man. The rich man finds it difficult to sell all

his goods (his comfort) for the kingdom because he has so much goods to part away with unlike the poor man who has very little goods. It is easier for a poor man to enter because his all (earthly worth) is not as much as the worth of a rich man. Very few rich men will accept self-denial as the way of the kingdom. It is easier for a camel to enter a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. The poor man is the target of the gospel (Matthew 11.5; Luke 4.18; Luke 7.22),

The spiritual riches that are in the heart of a believer cannot be shared because they reside with our persons in our spirits. We can never really know if or when we have attained the spiritual perfection that Lord demands of us. In the parable of the wedding attendants, the five foolish ones had asked for some oil from the wise ones but they refused because they did not know if their oil will be sufficient to take them to the feast. The foolish ones had the choice to buy extra oil from the start as they wise ones but they did not. They kept their money with them and bought just enough oil as they thought will get them to the wedding feast but they eventually failed to enter the wedding feast. If we want to get to the wedding feast, we must buy as much spiritual riches as we can by giving up as much as we have. Sell as much as you have and remain just with the basic things (needs). Some make themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of God (Mathew 19.12). It is foolish to think that we shall make it to the wedding feast by just meeting the basic requirement of believing and confessing the Lord Jesus, because the Lord may find us unworthy. We must do all we can to become disciples of the Lord so as to become like him. It is by walking daily with the Lord and following him that we become like him. The whole purpose of salvation is to bring many to sonship through discipleship.

One day, when large crowds were walking along with Jesus, he turned and said to them,

"If you come to me, without being ready to give up your love for your father and mother, your spouse and children, your brothers and sisters, and indeed yourself, you cannot be my disciple.

Whoever does not follow me carrying his own cross cannot be my disciple.

Do you build a house without first sitting down to count the cost to see whether you have enough to complete it? Otherwise, if you have laid the foundation and are not able

to finish it, everyone will make fun of you: 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' And when a king wages war against another king, does he go to fight without first sitting down to consider whether his ten thousand can stand against the twenty thousand of his opponent? And if not, while the other is still a long way off he sends messengers for peace talks.

In the same way, none of you may become my disciple if he doesn't give up everything he has. However good the salt may be, if it has lost its taste, you cannot make it salty again. It is fit for neither soil nor manure. Let them throw it away. Listen then, if you have ears!" (Luke 14.25-35).

Large crowds followed the Lord Jesus but very few were truly his disciples. Many came to him but very few were ready to truly follow him. Many were not able to give up everything that they had for the Lord. He told them the cost that they had to pay to stay with him and receive the riches of heaven. Very few could pay the cost. Many are believers, but few are followers. Many believers do not believe in self-renunciation. Some accept the teaching, but they have not given themselves to it. Many believers are afraid to lose their lives completely to the Lord Jesus. They want to enjoy some of the things of the world. They wrongly believe that they have salvation even if they are not carrying a cross. Many believers are not ready to let go of everything for the Lord Jesus. They do not want to suffer any loss in their life. He who loses his life for the Lord is the one who will gain it. You will only win your life only after you have lost it. Those who will win the crown of life are those who lost their earthly lives to the Lord Jesus. They gave up their own dreams, comfort, personality, possessions, and even their breath of life for the sake of the Lord. Though they lose their lives, they will eventually find it again (Mathew 16.24-25).

There was a rich young ruler who wanted to be perfect to inherit life. He was unable to sell all his goods and give away to the poor so as to be fit to follow the Lord Jesus to perfection (Matthew 19:16-22). There was another rich man called Zacchaeus. When Zacchaeus heard the gospel of salvation, he immediately decided to sell half of his property and give to the poor. The Lord replied saying, "*Salvation has come to this house today...*" Dispossessing ourselves of earthly wealth and possessions is evidence

of our faith. There was a poor fisherman called Peter who left everything to follow the Lord (Mathew 19.27).

Sell your possessions and give those in need. Get yourself purses that do not wear out, treasure that will not fail you, in heaven where no thief can reach it and no moth destroy it. For wherever your treasure is, that is where your heart will be too” (Luke 12:33-34).

The kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls; when he finds one of great value he goes off and sells everything he owns and buys it (Mathew 13.44-45). The merchant must sell all his treasures to obtain this one treasure. If you want to obtain the treasure of the kingdom of Heaven, you must sell all your earthly treasures.

2. Surrender to the lordship of the Lord Jesus and follow Him (Discipleship).

Losing your earthly treasure is not enough. You must be willing to obey and follow only him. You must refuse to lead yourself or control your life. The journey will be full of new experiences and teachings. Only those with open, humble and purposed hearts can receive from the Lord and become changed. Wherever He sends you, you must be willing to go, and whatever He says, you must be willing and ready to obey, looking unto him for the strength to obey.

The young ruler had to go and sell and give to the poor and then follow the Lord. Selling your treasures gets you purses in heaven and discipleship gets you treasures in the purses.

Your heart must be ready to learn in all humility. It is a big mistake to go and sell your possessions, only to go on the journey without the Lord as your Lord. You must look up to him to supply you with his strength to follow and obey him. If you do not have complete dependence on the Lord, you will not reach the end of the journey. You must see your weakness and wretchedness, ignorance, poverty and then come to the Lord as a little child who needs to learn every basic thing (to walk, talk, eat, etc.). If you see yourself a little strong to do anything on your own, you will not make it to the kingdom of God. If you see yourself, a little wise to do things by yourself, then you are not the qualified for discipleship. The Lord works only with children. It is to them that the kingdom of God belongs. Selling your treasures is not enough, you have to give up yourself (self-confidence, self-reliance, self-righteousness, self-wisdom, self-strength

and self-glory etc.). There is nothing that we can do apart from him. Apart from him, we will bear no fruit to perfection. We must have zero confidence in ourselves and complete trust in the Lord. It is the Heavenly Father that works in us to prepare us for discipleship. He who has learned anything from the Father goes to the son. On our own, we cannot bring ourselves to true submission and surrender. We must ask the heavenly Father to work in us to become His sheep.

Without a complete surrender to his Lordship, you cannot be His disciple. Total surrender is the test of discipleship. The whole point of preaching is to bring us to this place of utter surrender to the Lord. He becomes our Lord indeed when we have given up all to obey him. You must fear the Lord and obey him. You must fear and reverence only him. God is slow but dreadful in anger. On the Day of Judgment, all shall know that He is a God to be feared. He judges and punishes sin.

You must have a personal encounter with the Lord and King himself because only he can place his nailed hands on your head and fill you with his Holy Spirit. The Lord is spirit and we walk with him by spirit. We must not be contented with religious exercise or any fake baptism of the Holy Spirit. Until we stop leading ourselves, we are not ready to be led.

Summary

The Lord told the rich young ruler, *“If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me”* (Mathew 19.21).

The Lord told the crowd, “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14.26).

To obtain the perfection of soul, we must;

1. Give up all that we own

--**Property**; sell, give the money to the poor and keep only the basic needs.

--**Human relationships**; we must love the Lord more than everyone. We must love him with our whole being

--**Yourself**; you must deny yourself (dreams, values, comforts, mind, self-confidence, self- defense, self-righteousness etc.)

2. Carry your cross of total renunciation and follow the Lord daily. As we abide in Him daily, we shall bear fruit.

“.....and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it” (Mathew 19.12)

His Sheep will Hear His Voice

A Pharisee took offence at the Lord Jesus because of his teaching on adultery. But he said unto them, *“All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.”* (Mathew 19.11).

The word of God is spoken to everyone, but it is not meant for everyone. The good hearts will receive his word and understand it and bear fruit. The pathway, rock and thorny hearts will hear his word but stumble on it. They will look but will not perceive; hear but not understand. The teachings of the Lord are considered hard by some and thus rejected, but to others it is a gift. Some, because they cannot receive his word, modify it to fit their selfish desires. Many false teachers have risen to preach another “gospel”. They teach errors that please the heart and ears of many hearers who cannot receive the “hard” teaching of the Lord.

Throughout the Lord’s earthly ministry, he preached one thing: the arrival of God’s kingdom and how to get into it. He is the way. All who come to him must carry the cross of self-denial and follow him. He admonished people to stop storing up earthly riches but should rather store up heavenly riches. He encouraged selling possessions and giving the proceeds to the poor. Gathering of earthly goods is not the way of the kingdom of God but of this fallen world.

The Christian should beware of the tares that have been sown among the wheat. The tares are those who teach that earthy wealth is the will of God for his children. A rich man’s heart can never be set on God’s kingdom because it is already set on his riches. The heart cannot be loyal to both God and money. Before we can set our heart on God, we must first let go of our earthly riches. You can only follow him if your heart has really been set on heaven. If you are still attached to the things of the world, then you will

never be his disciple, nor will you ever attain the perfection of spirit which the Heavenly Father desires of his children.

His sheep listens to Him and they know his voice. They would not follow another. Many false teachers and wolves who desire to feed on the flock are corrupting those who are not yet matured in the faith. These wolves usually quote Old Testament verses to support their claim for wealth. The Old Testament is obsolete and can no longer produce life (Hebrews 8.13). The people of the old covenant had lesser light, so God did not burden them more than they could bear (John 1.9). More so, the kingdom of God had not yet arrived, so there was no need to preach the way to enter it. Christ Jesus is the word of God made flesh (John 1.1). He has the fullness of God and in Him is no darkness at all (John 1.14). He was the complete revelation of God to us in the last days (1 Peter 1.20). He brought to us God's word and was the sacrificial lamb that reconciled us to God. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him. His word is ultimate and must be obeyed. If we do not obey His teachings but choose to follow the sayings of the old and obsolete covenant, then we are of the old covenant and not of the new covenant. The words of the Lord are plain and simple. Those who seek life will walk in them.

In the last days, many shall deviate from the truth and shall seek another gospel; they will have itching ears to hear that which pleases the flesh. The wrong gospel because many accept it does not necessarily mean it is the truth.

We must redirect our hearts to what is true and valuable and not on what is passing away. We must redirect our hearts to heaven and not on the earth. We must redirect our minds to the things of the spirit and not things of the human body. He who sows on the flesh will reap death because flesh and blood cannot inherit eternal life. He who sows on the spirit will reap eternal life because it is the spirit that gives life. The world and its pleasures are passing away but he who does the will of the Father abides forever (1 John 2.17).

Be on your guard; let not your hearts be weighed down with a life of pleasure, drunkenness and worldly cares, lest that day catch you suddenly as a trap (Luke 21.34).

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