

Tearing Down Our Idols – Part 3 – Mammon

Matt. 6:19-33: *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also...No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?...Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?...For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”*

A quote attributed to Martin Luther states the last thing to be converted to Christ in one's life is one's purse. Through the years I have found this to be true in my own life, as well as the lives of those to whom I minister and pastor.

The above statement of Jesus is not just exciting theory...this is the way He lived, and it's the way He expects all that follow Him to live. **You cannot serve God and mammon** (money and material riches). “Americanized” Christianity seeks to bring a synergism between the world system, currently dominated by the “prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2), and a Christ-centered lifestyle. A Christ-centered lifestyle means a life submitted to the control of the Holy Spirit where His life is manifested in and through us. Trying to reconcile the commands and lifestyle of the Lord Jesus and a lifestyle dominated by the powers of this age is impossible. It is my observation that this is the place to which many of us western cultured Christians have fallen. We are trying to love two different masters, and the one true Master will not be shared with another. Americanized Christianity embraces all of the elements and practices of the culture and adds Jesus to the mix, trying our best to fit Him into our thinking and lifestyles. This kind of mindset and action is demonstrated no more clearly than in our thinking and practices surrounding money.

The world system (*Babylon* in the book of Revelation) is built on a **cistern** or “get all you can” mentality and practice. The kingdom of God is built upon God's nature, and that nature is a **conduit**, or “give away all you can” mentality and practice. Jesus emphatically stated that we cannot serve God and money. One verse out of every three in the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) has a warning about money and its ability to affect our hearts with covetousness and idolatry. We can easily end up trusting in money, material and riches (mammon) instead of simple dependence and obedience upon Abba as our Source. This becomes idolatry.

The Lord tells us to put our financial wealth into kingdom/eternal investments. It has been my experience that most of us in western Christendom think that in the giving of our tithes and offerings, we expect things to operate according to the world's money system. If we give \$100, we will get a 30-, 60-, or 100-fold return as **money** (or as some heretically preach, a *miracle* for us). What if the Lord told us, as He did the “rich, young ruler” in Matt. 19:16-22, to give away

everything to the poor, and that we would never see worldly wealth or riches again, but in so doing we would store up heavenly treasures and develop a relationship close enough to the Lord to become like Him and do all that He did? Would we choose to “trade up” or go away sorrowful as the young synagogue ruler did? The world’s mindset is that if I invest financial resources, then I should see a reaping of financial resources with some kind of interest added. This is the world’s “success” mindset. This may or may not be true if we’re investing in (seeking) the kingdom of God first.

Here’s an example.... Chad Taylor is a good friend of mine, and part of what the Lord is presently having him do is a “basketball/tennis shoe” outreach. I love it! He is prayerfully giving away name brand, pretty high-end basketball/tennis shoes to young men who probably could not purchase them because of their present economic status. Many, if not all of these young men, are surrendering to Christ or at least awakening to the fact of the all-consuming love of God. Those who invest financially to purchase these shoes see NO financial return on their investment, but they do see an eternal/kingdom return. When was the last time, above our tithe, that we were even open to the voice and leading of the Holy Spirit to invest this kind of money into eternal/kingdom investments, with absolutely no thought of financial return? By the way, if you want to make a kingdom investment in what God’s doing through Chad, go to www.consumingfire.com for more information.

Many with this “Americanized Christianity” mindset will invest in what may appear to be successful according to the dictates of the world: appearance, professionalism, education, etc. This is how deep the demonic mindset of the age has penetrated our thinking and lifestyles. We need to repent of such idolatry and develop a mindset and lifestyle of becoming a conduit of the Lord’s resources, which includes finances. The world’s money system is about to fail. It will set the stage for either an antichrist system and figure to capture the hearts and minds of the people (Rev. 13), or the kingdom system of Jesus Christ to do the same. The former will result in bondage, death and destruction, and the latter in life, peace and protection (see Isaiah 25 & 26).

Jesus gave away everything the Father gave Him. He was God’s conduit to bring heaven to earth. He has called us to be the same...just like Himself. He told us to freely give away what we had been freely given (Matt. 10:8). Let’s not become a “Dead Sea.” The Dead Sea is always receiving fresh supply, and it hoards all it receives, never giving out. The Dead Sea is just that...dead! Nothing, except bacteria, can live in it and it cannot support any life from its reserves. What a cistern!