

Manna

A publication of Peter Tan Evangelism

© 2007 by Peter Tan

Volume 3.6

The following is an extract from a new book that is still being written. After the Spiritual World experience, I saw things differently, especially how the poor and the rich fare in the Spiritual World. This book is written to guide Christians in the Laodicean age that we live in.

Blessings or Curses of Wealth

Through much of the Faith Movement in the latter part of the 20th Century, the understanding that material wealth and prosperity is a part of God's Will in a believer's life has been well expounded and brought to the fore front of Christian consciousness. Thus by the end of the 20th Century, it is a common assumption that all wealth is good wealth. There are sufficient Scriptures to show that it is definitely a part of God's perfect Will to provide abundantly for His people (Deuteronomy 28; Proverbs 3:9, 10; Matthew 6:33; 2 Corinthians 8:9-15; Philippians 4:19; 3 John 2). Additionally, there are examples in the Bible of people of God who were blessed with great wealth and position (Abraham - Genesis 13:2; Isaac - Genesis 26:12-14; Jacob - Genesis 30:43; Joseph - Genesis 41:40-43; Daniel in Daniel 2:48). Even when the Israelites left their slavery in Egypt, they were blessed with great wealth (Genesis 15:14; Exodus 12:35, 36). All these blessings were, of course, conditional blessings based upon their obedience to the Lord.

Unfortunately, many Christians were not told that there is also a curse of wealth – wealth that comes from the devil. Firstly, we need to establish the fact that although all the silver and gold and the cattle on a thousand hills are the Lord's - Yes, indeed, the whole earth is the Lord's - and although every good and perfect gift comes from the Lord, the

Lord because of the free will of men and because He allowed (due to His permissive Will) evil to continue to exist upon this planet temporarily, has also allowed the devil to bestow upon men great wealth and power; which although it looks like a blessing in the physical eyes of men is actually a curse that will eventually destroy them. When Jesus was tempted by the devil, He was offered all the wealth and power of the world (Matthew 4:8, 9). And to those who through unbalanced faith teaching say that the devil cannot make this offer any more to humans because of his defeat at the cross of Calvary, may I remind them that after Jesus' resurrection, Paul still says that the devil is the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4). The paradox that Jesus has all the keys of heaven and hell, and all the power and authority in heaven, on earth and underneath the earth, and yet the devil is still running around with some semblance of power as the prince of the power of the air is easily explained by the fact that there are humans still giving and living their lives under the devil. Over such, he rules and works among them (Ephesians 2:2). It should be no surprise then that he can still offer the part of wealth and power which is still under his control to entice people to follow him.

The Curse of Wealth

Everyone accepts the fact that the devil comes to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10). What they fail to see is that he might not *directly* kill, steal and destroy. He might pursue the same end indirectly through wealth instead of a direct attack of poverty. Whilst the blessing of the Lord does not contain sorrow (Proverbs 10:22), the curse of wealth from the devil contains much sorrow. A blessing can become a curse (Malachi 2:2); especially if the Lord is not in it. When anyone loves the world, the love of the Lord

is not in his heart (1 John 2:15, 16). Cursed wealth becomes the hindrance to the entrance of God's kingdom (Matthew 19:23, 24). Cursed wealth becomes a mammon and a master over its possessor (Matthew 6:24). Before you claim the blessings of wealth in Matthew 6:33, you need to reject the curse of wealth in Matthew 6:24.

It is pure greed that causes people to take on themselves cursed wealth in their lives. Achan brought the curse of death upon himself and his whole family (Joshua 7:23-27). He also caused the defeat of Israel in Ai and the loss of thirty-five lives (Joshua 7:1, 5). The curse of ill gotten wealth caused Gehazi and his descendants to suffer the leprosy of Naaman (2 Kings 5:27). Lot looked at all the outward wealth of the land but ignored the curse upon cities of Sodom and Gomorrah where the wealth was (Genesis 13:10). He lost his wealth the first time as his cursed lot was thrown in with the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah; and Abraham had to rescue him (Genesis 14:11, 12, 16). Finally, he lost all his wealth, lost his wife and nearly lost his own life (Genesis 19:24-30). He wanted to live in luxury in the cursed fertile valley but ended up in an empty cave.

Recognising the Curse of Wealth

It is obvious that in this world, one can lie, cheat and rob others to gain worldly wealth. There are three areas that determine whether the wealth comes from God or from the devil – a blessing or a curse. Wealth from the devil involves wealth from acts of sin, is maintained by acts of sin and propagates more acts of sin. The source of the supply of this money is evil. All wealth that involves the breaking of the Ten Commandments is wealth from the devil. It continues to sustain the breaking of the commandments of God and encourages others to be wealthy by the same wicked means. In the New Testament, this includes wealth that promotes selfishness and lust for the world. The love of money is the root of all evil (1 Timothy 6:10). All that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life – IS NOT of the Father but is of the world (1 John 2:15, 16). If

you have an offer of wealth or position that involves the above three areas, they are not blessings from God. They are the offers of wealth from the devil tempting you in the same manner as he tempted Jesus (Luke 4:5-7).

The question is often asked as to what to do with the money that is accumulated when one who is wealthy through the above evil ways becomes born again and wants to remove it from their life? All wealth that is obtained through such means usually robs and steals from victims of the same particular type of sin or evil indulged in. Personally, I think that such money that is tainted with sin and blood should be given to the poor or if possible directly into an area of ministry that directly helps people come out of that same particular sin or wickedness that the wealth was originally obtained from. Although some of the victims might have died long ago, it at least helps other new victims of the same sin. There would be a sense of returning to the original "owner" what was taken from them; although in this particular case the "owners" are those newly affected by the propagation of the same sin.

There are four groups of people who deserve the help of the wealthy: the poor (Luke 4:18; 18:22), the sick (Matthew 25:38, 39; Luke 14:2), the widows (Deuteronomy 24:17; Acts 6:1; 1 Timothy 5:3-16) and the orphans, especially children (Deuteronomy 24:17-19; James 1:27; Matthew 18:6). The rich are encouraged to be rich in good works (1 Timothy 6:18-19). It is in giving that those who have the blessing of wealth will be made perfect (Matthew 19:21). In the church in Acts, the wealth that one has was distributed to those who do not have (Acts 2:44, 45). The abundance of those who have was distributed to those who have none (2 Corinthians 8:14). For those who worry about the mismanagement of such distribution and the abuse of such system by those who are lazy and not worthy of such help (2 Thessalonians 3:6-10; 1 Timothy 5:5-16), then let those who have the blessings of wealth retain ownership of the wealth but be in charge (or through their personal appointees) of the distribution

themselves. In this manner, they can be in control (as it is their gifting), of both the accumulation and the distribution of wealth.

Learning to say 'No' to the Curse of Wealth

Many are the prophecies of these last days as being the times of God raising His Joseph generation, His Joshua generation, His David and Daniel generation. No doubt such men and women of God who prosper in the dimension of wealth in the physical world by spiritual means will rise. But each of them will first be tested like those before them in the Bible.

Abraham had to say 'No' to the wealth offered by the King of Sodom before God's revelation of great blessings upon him and his generations was revealed (Genesis 14:22-24; 15:13-14). He had taken an oath that he will not even take a thread or a shoe string. He only wanted wealth from God and not from the devil.

Joseph had to say 'No' many, many times to daily temptation but he ended up being the most powerful and wealthy men after Pharaoh (Genesis 39:10-20; 41: 40-45). Besides suffering the rejection by his brothers, he endured humiliation in prison but remained faithful until the day of his exaltation by God. Moses had to say 'No' to all the wealth and riches of Egypt but through the Lord's power ended up inheriting all the wealth of Egypt for the people of God to build God's house (Exodus 3:21, 22; 12:35, 36; Hebrews 11:24-27). He was completely emptied of all ambitions of wealth, fully contented with his humble lot before God deemed him ready to receive great power and might (Exodus 4:12). David had to say 'No' to getting power, wealth and might by his own hand twice but he inherited the entire nation of Israel and built it into a wealthy nation for God (1 Samuel 24:3-7; 26:10-12). By saying 'No' he endured many years of suffering, pain and rejection but he became the standard by which every other king of Israel and Judah was measured. He laid aside his wealth for the building of God's house (1 Chronicles 22). Daniel said 'No' to all the rich foods and privileges of the Babylonian palace but

received the gift of wisdom which promoted him to become the most powerful man in the Babylonian empire after the king (Daniel 1:8, 17; 2: 48). Even in his great power and wealth, riches still mean nothing to him (Daniel 5:17).

Jesus said 'No' to all the temptations of the devil, even his offer of the whole world but instead conquered the devil by his humility at the cross and inherited all authority in heaven, on earth and under the earth (Matthew 4:1-11; 28:18; Luke 4:1-13; Philippians 2:9-11).

All the mighty men of wealth in the Bible have no interest, nay, not even a thread of a desire, for wealth and power that comes through the devil. They had been offered a short cut, a compromise but they choose not to accept it: rather enduring the greater difficulty of receiving the blessings of wealth correctly; making sure that the source is God, the accumulation and maintenance of wealth and power be from God, and the end use of the wealth was for the glory of God.

The Gift of Giving – A Gift of Prosperity

It is an error of modern Christianity to teach that God wants all His people to be millionaires or to handle great wealth. God does promise to be our shepherd and meet all our necessary wants and needs (Psalm 23:1; Philippians 4:19). Even to the Corinthians (to whom Paul said that Jesus became poor that we might be made rich - 2 Corinthians 8:9), Paul acknowledged that there were not many noble or mighty among them (1 Corinthians 1:26). Paul himself does not seem to be a financial millionaire, instead making mention of his hunger, thirst, and nakedness (2 Corinthians 11:27). He even went as far as saying that he was poor while making many (not all) rich (2 Corinthians 6:10). He could not be a man of great means if he had to rob other churches (or rather take wages from them) to minister to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 11:8). If it is God's Will for everyone to be a millionaire, then why didn't all the New Testament Christians under the greatest of the apostles become the richest and most powerful people on earth? Instead Paul acknowledged that some of them had

abundance and some of them had lack; and he encouraged those who have to share with those who had none (2 Corinthians 8:12-15). The key teaching of Paul in regard to finances was that we should learn to be contented with what we have (1 Timothy 6:6-8), and be willing without being burdened to share (2 Corinthians 8:12; 9:5-8). Paul warns that those who desire to be rich fall into many temptations and snares (1 Timothy 6:9). Let the warning thus be sounded that it is NOT God's Will for every one of His people to handle great wealth. To those who do not have the gift or calling to handle great wealth, they will be destroyed and be unfruitful spiritually. Like thorns, the wealth will stifle their spiritual life (Luke 8:14). In the Spiritual World, they are paupers even though they were materially rich in the world. There are far too many good and noble people who are totally destroyed by the love of money.

The following Scriptures express the value of things better than money:

It is far better to be poor and have your integrity than to be rich and have no integrity (Proverb 19:1).

It is better to be poor than to be a liar (Proverb 19:22).

He who has mercy on the poor is happy (Proverb 14:21).

He who mocks and oppresses the poor reproaches God (Proverbs 14:31; 17:5).

Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure with trouble (Proverb 15:16).

Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a fatted calf with hatred (Proverb 15:17).

He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city (Proverb 16:32).

Better is a dry morsel with quietness, than a house full of feasting with strife (Proverb 17:1).

He who has compassion on the poor lends to the Lord, and He will pay back what he has given (Proverb 19:17).

Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, will also cry himself and not be heard (Proverb 21:13).

He who loves pleasure will be a poor man; he who loves wine and oil will not be rich (Proverb 21:17).

There is no difference between rich and poor in the eyes of the Lord (Proverb 22:2).

Better is the poor who walks in integrity, than one perverse in his ways though he be rich (Proverb 28:6).

The rich man is wise in his own eyes but poor who has understanding can see through him (Proverbs 28:11).

He who gives to the poor will not lack (Proverb 28:27).

The king who judges the poor with truth will have his throne established forever (Proverb 29:14).

Blessed is he who considers the poor, the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble (Psalm 41:1).

Better is a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king who will be admonished no more. For the former can emerge from a prison to become king; while the latter, even though born to kingship, can become a pauper (Ecclesiastes 4:13, 14).

The end of a thing is better than its beginning, and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit (Ecclesiastes 7:8).

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22).

Having clarified the above, it would be appropriate now to mention that there is a genuine gift of prosperity. This gift is called the gift of giving in Romans 12:6, 8. Not everyone is called to this area for this is a definite and unique call to handle prosperity. It is an anointing to handle prosperity as a steward of God. Just like the preparation of any other fivefold gift, the calling to this gift and ministry of giving involves a process of purification. Not every one who is wealthy has wealth as a result of this gift; for if they had, they would be greatly involved in the ministry of giving. On the other hand, if one has this gift, than wealth is a naturally result after the purification process.

(To be continued in next issue: The Gift of Prosperity)

Those who would like to contribute to the ministry of Pastor Peter Tan may send their contributions crossed to:

Peter Tan Evangelism

PO Box 27

Belconnen

ACT 2616, Australia.

Email: spiritword@bigpond.com

Donations by Bank Telegraphic Transfer, please send to:

Account name: Logos Network

Bank Branch Number: 032730

Account number: 138278

Bank: Westpac Bank, Dickson Branch

Bank address: Corner Badham and Woolley Street, Dickson, ACT 2602, Australia

SWIFT code: WPACAU2S

For credit card donations, please use pay pal Credit to spiritword@bigpond.com

All those interested in enrolling in Online Logos Bible School please write to spiritword@bigpond.com. There are still scholarship programs available.