

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

APRIL 24 - 28, 2023



Money Wi\$e

Sermon Series

April 16 - May 14

MONDAY

Read **Proverbs 13:11**

We can be easily tempted by a “quick fix,” an easy solution to our problems. This is often how new products are marketed. “Just buy our product and whatever problem you are facing will be instantly solved.” After all, why should you put in the hard work for a long-term solution, when an easy answer will do? This is also the mindset behind “get rich quick” schemes. Why put in years or decades of hard work when you can get rich in a matter of weeks or months? At first it sounds like good advice, until the wisdom of experience shows just how lacking it truly is. Things that come quickly, pass quickly. In the words of our Scripture today, “*Wealth hastily gotten will dwindle*” (Proverbs 13:11).

But the Book of Proverbs warns us against more than just the fleeting nature of money; it’s also concerned with our character. “*Wealth hastily gotten*” can also be translated as “dishonest money.” The truth is that wealth easily gained is often gained at the expense of others, through tyranny, extortion, injustice, and lies. God is concerned with *how* we live our lives, earning a living through virtues that have stood the test of time, such as patience, diligence, prudence, generosity, and faith. Living this way may not bring us into wealth quickly, but it builds character within us and, over time, can multiply what we have. There is virtue in patience.

Does God call His people to be rich? No. Without advertising for a life of privilege, this verse speaks to the wisdom of saving. The main point is this: God calls all of us, rich and poor alike, to live righteously, leaning into wisdom, embracing virtue, dealing honestly, and living in a way that shows the world God's character.

QUESTIONS

What is it about a quick fix that is so appealing? In what ways have you witnessed the truth of this proverb, that things easily gotten are easily lost? In what ways can you live virtuously with the money God has given you?

PRAYERS

For ZOE International

The goal of ZOE International is to rescue children from human traffickers and provide them with opportunities and support for a new path and future. Pray for the children whom ZOE International supports. Pray for their physical, emotional, and spiritual healing.

TUESDAY

Read Proverbs 13:22

Jesus once told a parable about a man who saw an enormous increase in his wealth. He decided the best use for his newfound wealth was to improve his lifestyle. He built bigger barns to store his grain up so that he could take it easy and live the good life. But it was all in vain, for he died before he could spend his money. This man chose to hoard his wealth to fund his own lavish lifestyle, but “*life does not consist in an abundance of possessions,*” as Jesus put it (Luke 12:15). His possessions could not save him. What could have he done instead? According to Jesus, he could have been rich toward God, utilizing his new found wealth for God’s purposes: helping the poor, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked (Matthew 25:31-40).

John Wesley, founder of the Methodist movement, believed financial stewardship to be a fundamental part of discipleship. In his famous sermon, “The Use of Money,” Wesley presented three guiding principles for a Christian approach to money: earn all you can, save all you can, give all you can. For Wesley, earning and saving money were not the end goal—giving was. Wesley saw many Christians earning and saving all they could, and becoming wealthy as a result. This concerned Wesley because he knew money to be alluring and greed to be a spiritual illness. He urged those whose income was increasing to upgrade their giving, not their lifestyle.

Proverbs has a lot to say about the righteous and the wicked, the wise and the foolish, the good and the sinner. The righteous cherish God's wisdom and put it into practice. Those who listen to wisdom and seek to implement it will most likely have good things to give to their children. This "inheritance" may include material wealth, but it is also more than that. Righteous parents pass on to their children wisdom, right living, and a love for God. On the other hand, those who seek their own ambition may have wealth for a season, but what they have not squandered themselves will surely be squandered by their children. Proverbs claims that the wealth of the wicked will be given instead to the righteous, to those who see it as a tool to be used for the Kingdom of God.

QUESTIONS

How does wisdom inform your own view of money? How might you be "rich toward God" with your finances? What are you passing along to your children?

PRAYERS

For ZOE International

Pray for restoration of purity, peace, uninterrupted sleep, family, and security for the rescued children.

WEDNESDAY

Read **Proverbs 27:23-24**

In the culture in which the Book of Proverbs was written, someone's wealth could be measured by the size of their flock of sheep or herd of cattle. Tending a large flock or herd could provide someone and his family with clothing and food. With a flock or herd large enough, the family might even have enough extra to create a business selling clothes and food to others. But this kind of prosperity doesn't just happen, it requires hard work. Knowing the condition of one's flock and giving attention to one's herd implies intimate knowledge. Good shepherds do not merely see their animals as a means to an end, they take time to know them and care for them. Exceptionally good shepherds know each and every sheep by face and name.

As with many proverbs, this passage does not speak only to cultures that tend livestock. The reference to a crown implies that this can be taken as a metaphor for a ruler or leader. The good shepherd and the flock can be understood as a good ruler and his subjects. A good king or queen knows the people under his or her care and seeks their well-being, and this establishes their crown.

This passage also speaks to the fleeting nature of money and power. They simply do not last. Perhaps it is inferring that those who are wise

will see positions of power and authority as a responsibility to tend to those under their care, and not as a means to wealth and privilege.

For Christians, the reference to a good shepherd brings to mind Jesus as our Good Shepherd, who knows us, cares for us, keeps us safe, seeks us when we are lost, and ultimately laid down his life for us (John 10:11-18). Jesus knows us by name, and as his sheep, we know his voice. Earthly kingdoms do not last, but the Kingdom of God is one that we can put our trust in always.

QUESTIONS

What other character traits would make someone a good shepherd? In what ways are we tempted today to put our trust in human “kingdoms” that don’t last? How can we set our minds on Jesus’ Kingdom instead?

PRAYERS

For ZOE International

Pray for the physical, mental, and spiritual protection and strength for the staff, missionaries, and entire ZOE family.

THURSDAY

Read **Proverbs 30:25**

We all love stories about the underdog. A team is outmatched in size and strength, yet they possess some wisdom or virtue that the opposing team doesn't, and this helps them overcome in spite of the odds. Underdog stories often bring to mind that old adage, "Brains over brawn," showing that there are more important things than brute strength or typical worldly power. Underdog stories remind us that looks can be deceiving and that one doesn't have to be the biggest or most powerful to succeed.

While our world worships physical strength and worldly power, the Book of Proverbs teaches the advantages of wisdom. And while physical health is important, bodily strength and positions of power are not the most important things. By focusing on the importance of wisdom, Proverbs often reframes our thinking and reminds us that wisdom brings advantages that brute strength and positional power do not. This is good news to the underdog, to those who are not particularly strong or who feel powerless.

Our Scripture today points to one of the smallest creatures to make this point. Ants may not be big like bears or fierce like lions. When they are attacked, they cannot do much to fight back. But ants can survive in spite of their size and limitations because they act with wisdom—

learning the seasons and saving what they need to survive in seasons when food is hard to find. This proverb points to the wisdom of saving. It should be noted that this proverb doesn't say the ants are *hoarding*.

Biblically there is a difference between saving up what one (or one's family) needs for a season of hardship and refusing to be generous with what you have so that you can live a more lavish lifestyle. There is wisdom in the way ants live, and they remind us of the importance of wisdom over strength and power.

QUESTIONS

In what ways might you feel like an “underdog” from time to time? How does today's devotional harmonize with Paul's writing, “*For when I am weak, then I am strong*” (2 Corinthians 12:10)? What are some practical ways in which you can be more “ant-like” as you walk with Jesus?

PRAYERS

For ZOE International

Pray for God's provision and financial support for the ZOE staff and missionaries who are bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ to unreached people and demonstrating God's compassion through rescuing and caring for orphans and children from human trafficking.

FRIDAY

Read **Hebrews 13:5-6**

The Bible certainly speaks to being wise with money, but it also contains strong warnings about money. Money brings with it the uniquely alluring temptation to acquire more and more. Jesus recognized this and warned against letting money become your master (Matthew 6:24). If I'm honest, money is a tempting master. Money seems to promise security, safety, and good living. I have found that sometimes there is a fine line between listening to wisdom regarding money, and letting the thought of accumulating more and more money consume me.

For a long time, I didn't think much about money. I worked honestly, lived frugally, and almost always had enough to pay bills and save a little (not much after that). In those seasons, money didn't consume me. Money was a tool to help us live, but it didn't play much more of a role in my life than that.

But in other seasons, when more money was coming in, I began to worry more about money. In fact, it seemed like the more money we had, the more I thought about (and stressed about) money. Rather than the increase in income making me feel more secure, it actually left me feeling like we didn't have enough, because there was always more we *could* have. Money was no longer a tool to help me live, it was a goal in itself, a prize, a *master*, determining my choices.

The Scripture for today reminds us not to strive for more and more, for no amount of money can save us from loneliness or fear. The key is remembering that God is our helper in a way that money never can be. Unlike money, God can bring contentment and peace. Unlike money, God will never leave us or forsake us. When we can know in our souls that God is the only true source of peace, safety, security, and happiness, we will be free from the love of money, and it will not be our master.

QUESTIONS

In what ways are you tempted to make money your master? How can you be diligent in seeing money as a mere tool rather than the goal? This week how can you lean more into the peace and security that only God can bring?



PRAYERS

For ZOE International

Pray for the projects that ZOE International supports around the world.



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