

Healthy Money

Christ will teach us to move past the supposition that giving money is, all by itself, a spiritual accomplishment. Giving money does not necessarily accomplish anything in God's kingdom... oftentimes, it's even a hindrance to God's spiritual goals.

Since we are unable to accomplish anything spiritual by ourselves, we depend on Christ to work out every spiritual accomplishment on our behalf. (This truth, by the way, should eventually discourage all our religious activities in general). We will take a step in the right direction when we quit trying to feel better about ourselves by giving money.

If we have money, let's surrender it to God for His kingdom use. Our place is to trust Him, that He will use us however He sees fit.

In the mean time, [be encouraged](#) that there is no such thing as one part of God's kingdom contributing spiritually whilst another hangs limp and paralyzed. This is all to God's credit, because He is dauntlessly faithful. No matter what our circumstances, His Spirit will teach us our genuine, spiritual contribution to His kingdom. And, until we let go of ourselves, so that Christ is our singular, solid Foundation, He will continue to be the fresh, cleansing Water that soothes our searing sin.

Driving home from an exhilarating little conference where they listened intently to a missionary about the great wide-world, the aforementioned audience gathers themselves for another busy workweek. Now that they've done their duty and given money to the kind-hearted missionary, it's back to the real world of busy bread-winning.

Well-meaning missionaries or churchy speakers do their best to put things in perspective using big monetary figures versus small ones, or visa versa. And the average churchgoer feels satisfied with these big and small figures. These are things that the working-class westerner can relate to. However, there is a subtle message that continues to soak into the minds of these audience members as they drive home. This message is destructive to God's kingdom because it belittles God's Spirit, glorifies money and discourages the sincere Christ-seeker.

By their actions missionaries and churchy speakers say, "Cut your check and your work is done." Churchgoers whose unit of measurement for everything is the dollar might think to themselves, "Ten percent is pretty good, but I gave fifteen percent this week!" Thus, church folk can feel better about themselves. Consequently, missionaries and churchy speakers feel good for making their supporters feel good. Both parties work together to accomplish a common goal, which is to quench each other's consciences and feel good.

In this way, mainstream church-leaders are employed by a church-system that encourages spiritual lethargy in most of its adherents in order to pave the way for the religious aristocracy to accomplish all the "real" spiritual work. Such thinking says, "That comfy little world you churchgoers live in works for me, so long as you keep your monthly pledges rolling in."

This error is subtle because it embraces pseudo-obedience as a whole church. Yet it is gobbled up by fleshly westerners because it seems practical to them. For every westerner who says, "Tell me what to do and how much it's going to cost," there is a church somewhere to answer. This is task-driven religion, where it doesn't matter how our weekly duties get done, so long as they get done.

This also goes hand-in-hand with daily-planner-faith, where churchgoers narrow their obedience to God down to fulfilling their churchy agendas. Hectic, religious absent-mindedness is practical for Sunday-morning Christians who have no desire to be left in a room alone with God.

However, we westerners still have every reason to be encouraged in Christ. He is not impressed with either an excess or lack of wealth. Nor do religious money-handlers thwart His kingdom goals. He will clear all distraction out of His Father's house one way or another. Nor does He worry when His disciples' stock of bread and fish runs low, even when there are thousands of hungry people to feed. But Christ is invariably successful in addressing these issues because, above all, He remembers the preeminence of God's kingdom. First He remembers that God is great, then He attends to this other detail, which is a lot of needy people standing all around Him. Jesus Christ effectively cares for and fulfills people's little concerns by placing these concerns second to God's priorities.

Please be encouraged, hopeful seekers, that with man it is impossible, but with God anything is possible. He is in the business of picking self-centered people out of their down-spiraling patterns of self-indulgence, for no other reason than because He is great. Don't overcomplicate things. Just ask. Christ is God's Way to every possibility. Be encouraged not by your imaginary ability to tell the future, but rather, be encouraged by God's unalterable Truth. If you are God's, then you are His unique workmanship, created to carry out the work that He knew you would do before you were born. Put your confidence in Christ, who is saving and purifying a people for His own heavenly purposes.

As for “having money” or “being blessed with wealth,” these things will never be the ultimate end of any of God's children.

By God's Spirit we can move on from the unconstructive, short-sighted discouragement that plagues westernized Christendom. So long as we set our confidence in Christ, anything will be possible. He will humble us and re-teach us in all the areas that we presume to have Him and His kingdom figured out.

Christ continues to be our Motivation for casting aside all our miniscule self-images along with any dependence on anything that isn't Him. As we continue to depend on Christ, we will be transformed into His likeness.

I don't want to inspire greater pride in our heritage or anything else that might distract us. I would rather spur people toward exploring their heavenly citizenship in Christ. Nor am I trying to throw a pity party for Americans or any westerners. In Christ we can cast aside all these childish things.

By God's grace, we can look forward to heavenly glory in the next life while we expect nothing more than the cross in this one. As we obey our heavenly Savior, we can expect at least as much difficulty, rejection and suffering as He endured during His physical stay on earth.

We will get to know an indescribable quality of joy in Christ, superior to all the fame, money and instant gratification that this world has to offer. And we will share in Christ's joy as we faithfully obey Him. We can walk exclusively by whatever strength His Spirit supplies, bearing necessary hardship for a brief time, however long this life lasts.

by Patrick Roberts

This is an excerpt from *To the Church of the West, Scattered Throughout the World*. Find this book and similar articles at www.BooksByPatrick.com

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