

THE CHRISTIAN STEWARD'S CHURCH

Our Money

I Corinthians 16:1-2

Mention money in church and certain things happen. Some close their ears and wonder why they came this Sunday. Others will think, "There he goes again. All he preaches on is money." The committed Christian who is by definition "a good steward" will enjoy it. He will recognize it as a major part of Jesus' teaching, and the Bible's message.

Money is an interesting subject where ever it is discussed. Note some reactions:

- ❖ Woody Allen says, "Money is better than poverty even if only for financial reasons."
- ❖ Money has miraculous powers. "It greases the palm, feathers a nest, holds heads above the water, makes both ends meet."
- ❖ Carl Sandburg stated in one of his poems that "money buys everything except love, personality, freedom, immortality, silence, and peace."

All of this is interesting and no wonder we love it. Here-in is the problem. Not money, but "the love of money is the root of all evil" (I Timothy 6:10).

It's hard not to love money for it is necessary in so many areas and provides for so much good. Food, clothing, and shelter all require money. Medicines, doctors, and dentists all require money. Education, transportation, and recreation all require money. On and on we could go.

When we begin to love it, put it first in our lives, it becomes our master, even over God. When we elevate it to first place it becomes our object of worship.

What is the solution to the problem? Actually the solution is simple. In a word it is stewardship! Once we come to understand and accept our stewardship responsibilities the problem is solved. In simple steps:

1. Stewardship in one phrase is - God owns it all! He is the creator and owner of everything. "The earth is the Lord's...the world, and they that dwell therein (Psalm 24:1).
2. We are His stewards. We are responsible to Him for how we

- ❖ Receive what we have
- ❖ Use what we have
 - ❖ Give what we have
 - ❖ Leave what we have

This includes our time, talent, and treasure. It embraces time and eternity.

3. We are to give "offerings." Sacrificial gifts over and above our tithes.

Only love can bring one to the point of sacrificial giving.

A little boy saw his mother come to the house and leave her muddy shoes at the door before she entered. In a spirit of helpfulness he cleaned the shoes and polished them. Then he placed them by her dresser. The mother was so pleased with his thoughtfulness that she placed a dollar bill on his pillow with her note "Thank you!" The next morning the dollar bill with the note still attached was on the breakfast table. He added his note: "I did it for love!"

This is our response when we consider His love for us. It is the "love of Christ which compels us!" (II Corinthians 5:14) One translation states "the love of Christ leaves me no choice." We learned how to love from Christ and we love Him so much that our love leaves us no choice but to give - dramatically.

4. We are and shall be accountable to Him.

- ❖ "Give an account of your stewardship" (Luke 16:2)
- ❖ "It is appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27)

A man began to doze in church just before the offering. In his sleep he could see the ushers coming down the aisle. He reached reluctantly for a bill. The usher reached his seat. He was about to place the dollar on the plate, but the plate seemed to fade out. In its place was a nail-pierced hand waiting to receive his gift. Glancing up, he saw not the usher's familiar face but a face of deep tenderness and a thorn-crowned brow. For the first time in his life, it dawned on him that he was not giving to the usher, to the preacher, nor to the church but to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lord, I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that you own everything - including me. And you have placed some possessions and money in my hands and have given me "power to get more." Lord, I want to be a good manager - a good steward - of all that.

*Into Your hand and Your hand alone do I place my gift.
Use it (and me) for Your glory.*