

ARM Prison Outreach International

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SERIES: "AN ETERNAL EDUCATION FROM ECCLESIASTES"

or "Answers to Life's Toughest Questions"

SERMON #5 - "How Much Money Is Enough?"

Ecclesiastes 5:10-15

Editor's Note: This "MM" is the tenth email message of 2009 in a series that ARM is sending as an encouragement to preachers, chaplains, and Christian workers around the world. This issue is the 94th "MM" sent. All are archived -- just [click here](#) to see links to all messages sent since January of 2002.

This month's message is the fourth of a series as we study Ecclesiastes. It is my prayer that this message will encourage you and those you teach, lead, and encourage.

May God bless your labors! -- **Rod Farthing, Development Director**

Ecclesiastes 5:10-15 "How Much Money Is Enough?"

Men who trap animals in Africa for zoos in America say that one of the hardest animals to catch is the ring-tailed monkey. For the Zulus of that continent, however, it's simple. They've been catching this agile little animal with ease for years. The method the Zulus use is based on knowledge of the animal. Their trap is nothing more than a melon growing on a vine. The seeds of this melon are a favorite of the monkey. Knowing this, the Zulus simply cut a hole in the melon, just large enough for the monkey to insert his hand to reach the seeds inside. The monkey will stick his hand in, grab as many seeds as he can, then start to withdraw it. This he cannot do. His fist is now larger than the hole.

The monkey will pull and tug, screech and fight the melon for hours. But he can't get free of the trap unless he gives up the seeds, which he refuses to do. Meanwhile, the Zulus sneak up and nab him. HOW MANY MELON SEEDS ARE ENOUGH FOR A RING-TAILED MONKEY? HOW MANY DOLLARS IS ENOUGH FOR YOU AND ME?

Solomon in Ecclesiastes asks "Life's Toughest Questions". Today, "HOW MUCH MONEY IS ENOUGH?" Pretty good question.

Boxer, Joe Louis said, "I don't like money actually, but it quiets my nerves."

One friend asked another how he was doing. "I've got back trouble! Back taxes, Back rent..." Maybe you can relate!

The truth is that we usually think that those above us have plenty.

People below us think we have plenty. But nobody thinks they have enough.

We need this message, lest we get caught in the "gotta have more" trap.

We're going to look at [1] what we hope money will bring and [2] what money actually brings. Next time -- [3] -- we'll see what attitude we should have toward money.

I. WHAT WE HOPE WEALTH WILL BRING.

1. Satisfaction- We think, "If I have more money, I will be happy!"

Problem with money- Our earning power seldom matches our yearning power.

Ecc 5:10 Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless. Wealth is no more satisfying than salt water.

I love the story that Philip Parham tells of a rich industrialist who was disturbed to find a fisherman sitting lazily beside his boat. "Why aren't you out there fishing?" he asked.

"Because I've caught enough fish for today," said the fisherman. "Why don't you catch more fish than you need?" the rich man asked. "What would I do with them?" "You could earn more money," came the impatient reply, "and buy a better boat so you could go deeper and catch more fish. You could purchase nylon nets, catch even more fish, and make more money. Soon you'd have a fleet of boats and be rich like me." The fisherman asked, "Then what would I do?" "You could sit down and enjoy life," said the

industrialist.

"What do you think I'm doing now?" the fisherman replied as he looked placidly out to sea.

2. Significance- We think, "If I get more money, people will respect me." [power & prestige]

Therefore we buy status symbols- Clothes with the labels on the outside --- or cars with names like --- _____ -- you pick.

Luke 12:15 Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." (NIV)

Important truth: Your net worth and self worth have nothing to do with each other.

3. Security- Rich Man in Luke 12: "Bigger barns." "I will be set for years to come."

Prov 23:4 Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint. 5 Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.

The source of your security becomes your god.

II. WHAT WEALTH REALLY BRINGS.

Remember that Solomon was an expert on what money brings.

1. More Expenses- Ecc 5: 11 As goods increase, so do those who consume them. And what benefit are they to the owner except to feast his eyes on them?

(Solomon's table took 30 cows, 100 sheep daily)

It costs more to have more. (accountants, attorneys, consultants)

If the grass is greener on the other side of fence, the water bill is higher. Usually, maintenance, insurance and upkeep, cause the downfall.

Says one wit: "Most of us today are wondering how we can make it on

what we thought was a fortune 20 years ago!"

2. More Worries- Ecclesiastes 5:12 The sleep of a laborer is sweet, whether he eats little or much, but the abundance of a rich man permits him no sleep.

The worry of the one with many goods: How can I save, invest, protect my money?

W.H. Vanderbilt said, "The care of \$200 Million is enough to kill anyone. Henry Ford said, "I was happier doing a mechanic's job."

3. More Pain if it is lost- Ecclesiastes 5:13,14 I have seen a grievous evil under the sun: wealth hoarded to the harm of its owner, 14 or wealth lost through some misfortune, so that when he has a son there is nothing left for him.

Stock market crash in 1929, people jumped out of windows- pain. Much lost, much pain. Losing a little doesn't hurt as bad. One guy said, "I have so little that I don't lose sleep over losing all my goods. If I did, it wouldn't take me long to earn it back again."

4. More Responsibility- Ecclesiastes 5:15 Naked a man comes from his mother's womb, and as he comes, so he departs. He takes nothing from his labor that he can carry in his hand.

Can't take it with you, so how you use it here is crucial!

Story about a guy who was about to die. He told his wife to take this bag of cash and hang it in the attic. He said when he died, he would grab it on his way to Heaven. After the funeral, she came home and retrieved the bag and told her sister, "I told the old fool we ought to hang it in the basement."

Alexander the Great was buried with his hands crossed and palms up so people could see he was taking nothing with him. Not only are you not taking it with you, but consider the importance of how we handle money from Luke 16:11.

So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? (NIV)

So we see that Money is a test! Money tests your character. How you use money reveals your heart. Jesus spoke about money more than about Heaven and Hell. You can't be a mature Christian without settling the

money issue in your life.

Thanksgiving is coming. Let's really celebrate it by living like GOD OWNS IT ALL AND WE ARE THRILLED WITH HOWEVER MUCH OR LITTLE HE ENTRUSTS TO US!

Leo Tolstoy once wrote a story about a successful peasant farmer who was not satisfied with his lot. He wanted more of everything. One day he received a novel offer. For 1000 rubles, he could buy all the land he could walk around in a day. The only catch in the deal was that he had to be back at his starting point by sundown. Early the next morning he started out walking at a fast pace. By midday he was very tired, but he kept going, covering more and more ground.

Well into the afternoon he realized that his greed had taken him far from the starting point. He quickened his pace and as the sun began to sink low in the sky, he began to run, knowing that if he did not make it back by sundown the opportunity to become an even

bigger landholder would be lost. As the sun began to sink below the horizon he came within sight of the finish line. Gasping for breath, his heart pounding, he called upon every bit of strength left in his body and staggered across the line just before the sun disappeared. He immediately collapsed, blood streaming from his mouth.

In a few minutes he was dead. Afterwards, his servants dug a grave. It was not much over six feet long and three feet wide. The title of Tolstoy's story was:

How Much Land Does a Man Need?

HOW MUCH OF THIS MATERIAL WORLD DO YOU NEED?

“Seek Christ and His Kingdom first and all these things will be added unto you.”

Remain faithful unto death .." Rev. 2:10B

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In 2008, ARM donated almost 40,000 FREE Bible courses to prisoners!