

THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

John 12:1-8
Lesson #16
True and False Wealth
01/29/2023

“One of the greatest diseases is to be nobody to anybody.”



Mother Teresa

Social Justice is about respect for the “image of God” in every human.

How much is the distribution of material wealth an issue in a society that equates self worth with net worth and makes money a ticket to inclusion in society?



Both the “have-nots” and the “have-lots” can say **“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want”.**

The poor need to realize that peace, power, and dignity **do not require GAINING material wealth.**



Money can't buy you happiness

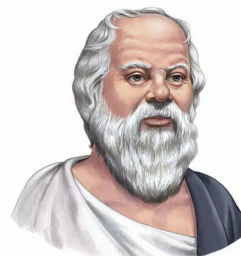
The rich need to realize that peace, power, and dignity **do not depend on KEEPING material wealth.**

“Materialism is a toxic preoccupation with material things

that can be expressed as a desire for financial wealth, an obsession with frugality, or even in a despising of material possessions.”



Both the rich and poor can be materialistic.



Socrates

“If a man is proud of his wealth, he should not be praised until it is known how he employs it.”

The “have-nots” of the world were chosen by God, not to become “have-lots” within this world **but to mock the world's values (1 Cor.1:26-31)**

by displaying peace, joy, and fulfillment **APART FROM worldly prosperity.**

A “have-nots” Widow with a “have-lots” heart

Mark 12

“41 And He sat down opposite the treasury, and began observing how the multitude were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums. 42 And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent. 43 And calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, “Truly I say to you, **this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury;** 44 **for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty,** put in all she owned, all she had to live on.””

6

Three observations and a point

- Her **substance was small.**
- Her **sacrifice was significant.**
- Her **significance was shocking.**

1. **Good gifts are “good” not by their size or affect on those who receive them so much as what they say about the heart and hope of the giver.**



7

Material wealth is most significant in what it says about and does to those who keep it.

The Gospels tells the story of two rich young rulers. One gave up all his wealth, the other did not.

Luke 18:18-27,
Matthew 19:16-26

8

Mary and Martha

Luke 10

“38 Now as they were traveling along, He entered a certain village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who moreover was listening to the Lord’s word, seated at His feet. 40 But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him, and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me.” 41 But the Lord answered and said to her, “**Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things;** 42 **but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part,** which shall not be taken away from her.””

9

How to make a good deed - BAD.

- Martha was **doing a good thing.**
- Martha was **distracted from the best thing.**
- Martha was **trying to distract Mary.**

2. **Good deeds can be made bad by misplaced priorities and short sightedness.**



10

Stewardship

The world makes it all about the size (effect) of the gift (act).

Jesus makes it more about the **bigger picture and broader perspective.**



11

John 12

“1 Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him. 3 Mary therefore took a pound of very costly perfume of pure nard, and **anointed the feet of Jesus**, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. 4 But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, said, 5 “Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii, and **given to poor people?**” 6 Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to **pilfer what was put into it.** 7 Jesus therefore said, “Let her alone, in order that she may keep it for the day of My burial. 8 For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have Me.””

Three applications of wealth

- Judas’ spirit - **selfish consumption**
- Martha’s spirit - **do your duty**
- Mary’s spirit - **sacrificial worship.**

3. Giving is worship.

Matthew 25:40

“Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, **you did it to Me.**”

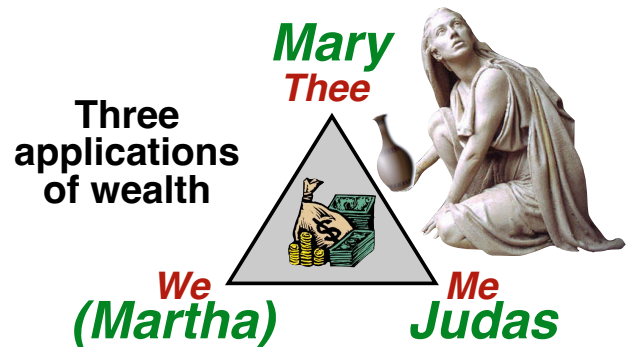
Wealth is an instrument of worship, not an object of worship or security.

Self sacrifice is a sign of respect, of affirmation, and showing honor.

Wealth is used to restore dignity to the poor by washing their feet - a sign of inclusion in community.



Three “poster figures” for handling material wealth.



The Judas spirit

Claiming compassion for others, while consuming what is not his and behaving like the world would.



The Martha spirit

Reducing Christianity to social action and compassion with expectations and hopes that are centered in this life and age.

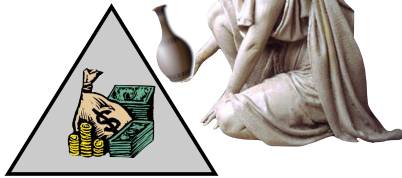


The Mary spirit

Recognizing that in the end it is all about worship -
respecting the image of God in Jesus and
the community of those he loves.

Spiritual
commemoration

Thee

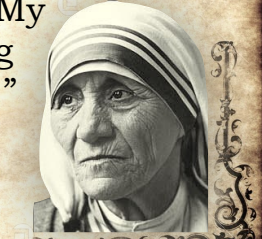


18

When asked about her ministry
as a social worker she replied,

“My ministry is not social
work, it is worship. My
care for the suffering
is my love for Jesus.”

Mother Teresa



19

“In the end, dear
friend, it is always
between us and God,
not between
us and them.”

Mother Teresa



20

Social Justice

This world
(economics)

financial
giving &
receiving

God's kingdom
(worship &
community)

sacrifice
& share

21

My challenge with material wealth is
not my lack of love for the needy.

**I have no problem being generous
with someone else's stuff.**

My problem is that I too often
view what I have as

“MY” stuff
that I need for
fullness of life.



22

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friend, it is always
between us and God,
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Mother Teresa



23

The **“Way of the Cross”**
was first motivated by **love**,



24

Generosity
is not a gift,
it is a sign.

Wealth is not a
sign, it is a gift.



25

*“A man stood before God, his heart
breaking from the pain and injustice
in the world. “Dear God,” he cried out,
“look at all the suffering, the anguish
and distress in your world. Why don’t
you send help?” God responded,*

***“I did send help
I sent you.”***

From David J. Wolpe’s
Teaching Your Children About God

26

A Berean’s look at ...



27