

## Would You Like to Be Rich?

To some degree just about everyone wants to be rich. The sad part is that most want to be rich in earthly treasures and care nothing for true riches. "Rich" is a relative term and does not say how much wealth one must have to be considered rich. It would depend entirely upon comparison with others. The word does not tell the nature of the wealth. One may be rich in one thing and poor in another.

### *The Love of Money*

The Holy Spirit warns: "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. 6:9-10). Here those who "will be rich" are those who "love money," and while they covet after it, they depart from the faith and bring upon themselves many sorrows. I suppose there is nothing that has not been done or will not be done "to be rich." One sure way to make a fortune is to devise a scheme which promises to make men rich and then offer it for sale. The greed of men will drive them to invest in or purchase the plan in the hope of becoming rich

### *False Concept of Riches*

I can tell you how to be rich! But unlike some of the get-rich-quick schemes, I do not propose to offer the "uncertain riches" that fade away with time. "Charge them that are rich in this world, that be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Tim. 6:17). The tendency to trust in uncertain riches is plainly taught by the word in a parable of a certain rich man whose ground brought forth plentifully. His major concern was to find the room to store his wealth, and when had he made ample arrangements he thought to say within himself: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." God called him a fool and said he would die that night. Now what about his riches? Jesus concludes by saying: "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:21).

The man who thinks he is rich because he has much money, property, stocks and bonds, and all that is considered wealth in this world, is miserably mistaken. The lukewarm church in Laodicea considered itself rich. "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing . . ." (Would not a man in this state be considered secure and successful?) ". . . and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:17). I could hardly imagine a worse condition, yet these people thought of themselves as being rich, increased with goods, and have need of nothing. In reality they were wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.

### *True Riches*

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich . . ." The real wealth comes from God and we must "buy" it. "Buy the truth, and sell it not" (Prov. 23:23). This suggests that the truth is obtained by some effort on our part and at some expense to us. Whatever you have to pay for it, do not sell it for any consideration.

Now, do you really want to be rich? I mean rich in the full sense of the word, with riches that cannot be taken from you. The Laodiceans were to "buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich." "Buy" cannot mean that value for value is given, because there is no price man can bring to purchase the priceless riches in Christ. This simply indicates the effort on the part of the one desiring these riches to obtain them. The "gold tried in the fire" is the pure gold refined by fire and separated from the dross. "That you may be rich" is that true wealth in contrast to the riches of this world.

Jesus taught that men should "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21).

### *How to Become Rich*

The true riches come from God through Christ "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19). They come through Christ by the gospel. Paul said he had been made a minister "to fulfill the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the **riches of his glory of this mystery** among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:25-27). "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches **of the full assurance of understanding**, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid **all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge**" (Col. 2:2-3). Again Paul said: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles **the unsearchable riches of Christ**" (Eph.3:8).

All this means that you can be rich if you will hear the word of truth concerning the unsearchable riches of Christ and understand it. But you must do something to receive these riches.

Both Jew and Gentile must call upon the name of the Lord to be saved (Rom. 10:13). In order to call upon him, they must believe; and in order to believe they must hear; and in order to hear, there must be a message given and a messenger to preach it. In the verse leading to this point we read: "For there is no difference between the Jew and Greek: for the same Lord over all is **rich** unto all that call upon him" (Rom. 10:12). The Lord is rich only to those who call upon him, and this is done by obeying the truth believed.

James 2:5 says that the poor in this world are "rich in faith." Of course, this does not mean that one who is poor in things of this world is automatically "rich in faith." Since the whole context is dealing with "respect of persons" even in the assembly, based upon how much of this world's riches one possesses, the "poor" would be those saints who are not rich in goods, but rich in faith. A wealthy man may be "poor" in that he does not regard his wealth as important when compared to his faith in Christ.

The Lord said unto the church in Smyrna: "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan" (Rev. 2:9). This church was in poverty, yet they were rich! How can this be? The answer, of course, lies in the difference between the riches of this world and the riches of faith in Christ. Moses elected to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; "esteeming the reproach of Christ **greater riches** than the treasures in Egypt" (Heb. 11:25-26).

### *False Values*

Not many can be persuaded to accept the riches that come by faith in Christ. They are not nearly so interested in the treasures in heaven as the treasures of this world. In this affluent society in which we live anything that is not valued in terms of dollars and cents is not important. The great majority would not turn around for the privilege of learning the truth of God's word. Most are not concerned about what their children are taught by way of television, movies, books, magazines, not to speak of back alleys and lonely roads in parked cars. Just so they can "make plenty of money" to "provide for their children," nothing else makes any difference. Your child needs money less than anything else in this generation. He needs to become rich in things that extend beyond this life. He will never be rich, even if you leave him a million dollars, unless you teach him the wisdom of God that he may be rich in faith. Find the riches of the wisdom of God in Christ, and obey it; you will be rich beyond anything this world can offer.