

THE ALLURE OF RICHES

(Luke 8:11-15)

I. Prosperity can be a hindrance.

- a. The word “prosperity” is found 17 times in the Bible, all in the Old Testament.
- b. Psalm 30:6.
 - i. Times of prosperity can result in the temptation to move away from God.
 - ii. David said that he would not allow his time of prosperity to take him away from God.
- c. Proverbs 1:32.
 - i. A foolish person lets money destroy his life.
 - ii. Think of the stories of people who came into sudden wealth.
 - iii. Many of them lost their wealth almost as suddenly as they obtained it.
 - iv. The old adage is “a fool and his money are soon parted”.
- d. Jeremiah 22:21.
 - i. God is offering a rich person salvation and spiritual blessings but there is no interest on the part of the rich person.
 - ii. 1 Corinthians 1:26 – look around and we can see that not many mighty or noble have answered the gospel call.
- e. These three examples show us that prosperity can be hindrance to having or keeping a good relationship with God.

II. Our possessions can possess us.

- a. On one occasion, a young man came up to Jesus asking the greatest question he could ask.
 - i. He wanted to know what he needed to do to have eternal life.
 - ii. In essence, he was asking what he must do to be saved.
 - iii. Matthew 19:16-22.
 - iv. Notice that he went away sorrowful because, though he had great possessions, his possessions had him.
- b. Riches can be deceitful, giving a false sense of security, and they are uncertain (1 Timothy 6:17).
- c. Moses had warned the Israelites what would happen after they came into possession of the promised land (Deuteronomy 8:10-20).
 - i. Notice that these warnings point to the enjoying of prosperity.
 - ii. As slaves in Egypt, they had never had to deal with this.
 - iii. The book of Judges points out how they handled prosperity.
- d. The parable of the rich fool exemplifies the wrong attitude toward riches (Luke 12:13-21).
 - i. This farmer must have been a good one.
 - ii. No doubt, those of the world viewed him as being very successful.

- iii. He made up his mind to keep his wealth to himself and tore down his barns to build bigger ones.
 - iv. Things didn't work out the way he had planned though.
 - v. God called him a fool because he didn't make plans for the next life, only focusing on this one.
 - vi. He failed to use the riches with which he had been blessed by God as a tool for spiritual growth.
- e. Jesus is the perfect example of the right attitude toward riches.
 - i. Jesus didn't care about things like that.
 - ii. It has been observed that we never read of Jesus saying, my house, my money, my farm, my books, my business.
 - iii. He did speak of my Father, my brethren, my friends, my disciples, my church, my name, my sheep, my peace, my words, and my joy.
 - iv. Jesus thought more of spiritual possessions than he did material ones.

III. Our riches can make us poor.

- a. We considered the life of Lot a few Sunday nights ago.
- b. He made his decisions based on what was best for his pocketbook.
- c. Notice the progression of what became his poverty.
 - i. Having many flocks and herds he pitched his tent toward Sodom because it was the best pastureland for his animals (Genesis 13:12).
 - ii. He then moved into Sodom, despite its apparently well-known wickedness (Genesis 14:12).
 - iii. He is then seen as sitting in the gate as one of the leaders of the city (Genesis 19:1).
 - iv. Lot became one of the Sodomites, referring to them as my brethren (Genesis 19:7).
 - v. Sodom entered into Lot's home.
 - 1. Lot had two daughters in his home, but had daughters that were married because his sons-in-law laughed at him.
 - 2. The angels mentioned sons, so it may be he had sons in Sodom as well as sons-in-law.
 - 3. Lot lost his wealth, but even worse, he lost most of his family.
- d. How tragic is the story of Lot!
- e. Too many sacrifice their children to this world through their negligence and then wonder why their children grow up and leave the Lord and His church.
- f. Think of all the things people have done to get money.
 - i. Lied, cheated, stolen, and killed.
 - ii. Risked their lives in heat, cold, and dangerous conditions.
 - iii. Yet not one of them has taken any of it from this life to the next.
 - iv. Many have instead, lost their souls to the pursuit of it.
- g. There is nothing inherently sinful about having wealth.

- i.** If you live in America, you are more than likely in the top 10% of the world's wealthiest people.
- ii.** Several of God's great servants were people of wealth.
- iii.** The problem is not with having possessions, but allowing them to be that for which we hunger and thirst and not God's righteousness.
- iv.** The problem is with making it, and not going to heaven, the aim of our lives.
- v.** It is the desire to be rich that is leads to evil, not riches themselves.

Sermon idea from an unknown source