

Church Must Drain Their Own Swamp of Dirty Money

Filthy lucre is mentioned several times in the New Testament, especially in regards to ministers. Filthy lucre is dirty money, or money obtained through greed. Ministering with a motive for money would qualify as filthy or dishonorably motivated by the advantages and profits belonging to a ministry office. Love for money disqualifies you from the ministry and from the kingdom of heaven.

Not only is the love of money the root of all evil (1 Tim. 6:10), but money in itself is also deceitful. The deceitfulness of riches is one kind of thorn that Jesus said chokes the Word and causes it to be unfruitful in one's life (Mark 4:19). Money by itself is not bad or evil; it's a tool and can be a great blessing. We all need it, but it's deceitful.

Paul warned Timothy about it and told him not to fellowship with anyone who considered gain to be godliness. Sounds like what many preach today, doesn't it?

"and supposing that financial gain is godliness. Withdraw yourself from such men. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out. If we have food and clothing, we shall be content with these things" (1 Tim 6:5-8).

The Jews Equated Wealth With Godliness

In Bible days, the Jews equated wealth with godliness. To them it was a sign of God's blessing. In other words, if you were blessed financially, it was because you were righteous and good. So you can see that from the doctrine and belief system of that day, many rich Jews thought they would inherit eternal

life and go to heaven based on their riches. This is the reason Jesus told the story of the rich man and Lazarus. This is not just an account of the reality of heaven and hell, but the main subject here is money (Luke 16:19-31). That is why the rich man seemed surprised when he found himself in hell (v. 24).

“But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things. But now he is comforted and you are tormented’” (v. 25).

That is also the reason the disciples were greatly astonished when Jesus told them that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven (see Matt. 19:23-26). The backdrop to this teaching was when they heard Him tell the other rich young ruler to sell everything he had and give it to the poor and then follow Jesus if he wanted to inherit eternal life (see Matt. 19:16-22). As they say, money makes a great servant but a lousy master. Unless you become a bond servant to Jesus and can give it all away if He asked you to, money could just be more of a master to you than you think. Be careful. Recently the Lord dealt with me about being in a fully consecrated position so that, if He decided to bless me with large amounts of money, I would not be ensnared or fall into temptation. If you want to be rich and desire wealth, it can be a great temptation and a snare or trap that could hurt and destroy you.

“But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and harmful lusts, which drown men in ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evil. While coveting after money, some have strayed from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, escape these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness” (1 Tim. 6:9-11).

Can it be any clearer than this?

The Church Of The Laodiceans

The Church of the Laodiceans had the same problem. They trusted in their riches and believed they had favor with God because of it. They thought they were rich, increased with goods and had need of nothing, but Jesus told them that they were wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked (Rev. 3:17). What a deception.

Many Bible scholars believe the Laodicean church is the apostate church of the last days just before the return of the Lord. Just like the two rich men, they equated wealth, riches and possessions with the blessing of God. They didn't know their true spiritual condition. Yet all that was necessary for them was to know what the Scriptures really said concerning money, instead of just believing what the rabbis and spiritual leaders of that day told them. Then they could've gotten in touch with their own hearts on the matter by communing with God, and He would've revealed the true condition of their hearts.

Isn't that what we are seeing in our day? Many Christians believe more of what the elevated teachers in our Christian culture say than what the Bible really teaches. I can tell you right now that some of the most popular teachers and preachers in the marketplace of Christianity today are on their way to destruction or will lose their reward if they don't experience a rude awakening. Wealth and riches have become a snare that is causing many to fall into foolish and hurtful lusts. The ensuing result is that some are erring from the faith and piercing themselves through with many sorrows. May God have mercy on their souls and help them to recover.

The Young Demoniac I Cast The Devil Out Of

I don't have time to go into the details of this marvelous deliverance, but I will share the high points. Several years

ago I cast the devil out of a 19-year-boy while conducting meetings in the nation of Gambia, West Africa. We brought him to Jesus, got him filled with the Holy Spirit and enrolled him in Bible school afterwards. Praise the Lord.

Immediately following his deliverance, I interviewed him. I discovered that evil spirits had visited him since he was 7-years-of-age and enticed him to enter into a covenant with them. For a dozen years or so, the devil would grant the boy pleasures and then inflict pain upon him and beat him, more pleasures and then more pain, until it became almost unbearable for him. I asked him if he had sought freedom and help from other Christians and churches. He said he had, but none were strong enough to help him. In one incident the evil spirit in him ransacked the office of a large Charismatic church and slapped the pastor in the face when they tried to cast the evil spirit out of him. Here's what the evil spirit spoke: "This church has no power because they don't live holy, and all they talk about is money!" Can you believe a devil said that? Demons know churches. Demons know men.

"The evil spirit answered, "I know Jesus, and I know Paul, but who are you?" (Acts 19:15)

This church had no power over the evil spirit in this boy because they were unholy and full of greed and covetousness. Their powerlessness was due to these impurities. Don't think that these things don't matter because they do. A house divided against itself cannot stand. I know God's gifts and callings are irrevocable, and God may use individuals for a time even when they are living in sin, but soon judgment catches up with them if they don't repent. But when it comes to the corporate anointing and power in a church, money, impurities and greed dilute it and make the church ineffective.

We've got to repent and drain the swamp of dirty money in the church before true restoration can come. God's house must be a

house of prayer and not a den of thieves. {eoa}

Make sure to check out Bert's fourth book of a compelling tetralogy, *The Real Jesus*. Is the Americanization of Jesus veiling our eyes from truly knowing Him?