

# THE TRUE RICHES

## Focusing On the Right Priorities in Life

*“Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon [riches, money, and possessions], who will commit to your trust the true riches?” -Luke 16:11*

What do you value most in life? Where have you placed your deepest desires and expectations? Are they focused on the earthly or the eternal? Jesus said, *“Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also,”* Mt.6:21. What we continually think of is an indication of what we value most.

People spend most of their lives working toward having earthly things that perish—an education, an occupation, a comfortable bank account, security, a beautiful home, clothes, earthly pleasures, and the cares of this life. All of these demand our time, affection, energy and money. Yet in the end, none of these can be taken into eternity. None of these are the *“better and enduring substance”* mentioned by Paul in Hebrews 10:34.

What are *“the true riches”* of Luke 16:11? What treasures should we lay up for ourselves in heaven, Mt. 6:20? How should we use our time and substance? What investments will return the greatest eternal dividends? What can we take with us when we leave this earthly life and go into the next one? We want to invest in those things which last forever, Lk.10:42. Christ implied that worldly riches, money, and possessions are not the *lasting* riches. These are earthly! The better and enduring riches are *eternal*.

### THE RICHES WE SHOULD SEEK

1. A GOOD NAME- *“A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver or gold,”* Prov.22:1. An honorable name is *God’s respect* for us. He said, *“Those who honor Me I will honor,”* 1 Sam.2:30. What a treasure it is when a man or woman has earned God’s approval and favor! Even after death, God causes the *memory of the just* to be blessed, Prov.10:7 & Ps.45:17. A good name is a treasure that can be left on earth *and* taken into eternity as well.

2. GOLD TRIED IN THE FIRE- *“I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich,”* Rev.3:18. Gold is a symbol of *divine nature*. *“Gold refined in the fire”* refers to a divine nature produced in us while in the furnace of affliction, Is.48:10, Mal.3:2-3, & Rev.2:9. It means to be like God and to have His attributes. This quality of gold is much more costly than any natural gold on earth, for it speaks of the refining of a man's character. In earthly terms, the Church of Laodicea was very wealthy. They boasted, *“We are rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing.”* But God’s evaluation of them was quite different. He said, *“You are poor, blind and naked.”* Yet God desired them to be wealthy with *eternal* blessings, saying, *“Buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich.”*

3. TREASURES IN HEAVEN- *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,”* Mt.6:19-20. Likewise, wealthy believers are urged by Paul not to trust in the uncertainty of riches, but rather to be *rich in good works* that they may lay up for themselves the riches that endure forever, 1 Tim.6:17-19. One teenage girl had a dream of her father's home in heaven. It was beautiful and complete. Then she saw a few pieces of building material at a place nearby and she enquired, *“What are these?”* Much to her embarrassment she was told, *“This is your home. This is all you have given us to work with.”* The building material that goes into our eternal home is being sent up *right now* by our works on earth. Since that time, she too has been *building in the invisible*.

Our works follow us into eternity. Eternal life, of course, is a free gift from God and cannot be earned. *Rewards*, however, will be according to our deeds. Matthew 5:19 proves that everyone's reward will not be identical. See also Rev.22:12, Heb.10:32-35 & 1 Tim.6:17-18.

4. MAKING OTHERS RICH- "*As poor, yet making many rich,*" 2 Cor.6:10. The Apostle Paul possessed little of this world's luxuries. Yet, he was able to make many spiritually rich by the truths he imparted into their lives. As Paul invested his time, energy, teaching, and prayers into the lives of his converts, they were changed. The truths he deposited into these *earthen vessels* transformed them into a treasure for the Lord, 2 Cor.4:7. Paul's goal and purpose was to present the Church as a chaste virgin to Christ at His coming, 2 Cor.11:2-3. God will also entrust *a people* into our care, a people who will become our reward and our crown, Ps.2:8 & 1 Thess.2:19. Remember—what we invest *in people* is taken into eternity.

5. CONTENTMENT IS GREAT GAIN- "*Godliness with contentment is great gain,*" 1 Tim.6:6. A contented and happy heart is a priceless treasure. People go to endless lengths in search of happiness and contentment, but cannot find them unless they are granted by God.

6. TREASURES OF DARKNESS- "*And I will give you the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places*" Is.45:3. *Treasures of darkness* are the special insights we gather up in the *night* experiences of our lives. Certain truths can be found only in the dark, during suffering. They are very costly. Once we have received them, they can be shared with others to encourage them and to lift them up into higher realms of the Spirit. In heaven there is no darkness. This is the only time of our existence that we are able to find such treasures. Let us make the most of this opportunity.

7. TREASURE OF CHRIST'S REPROACH- Moses "*esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he looked to the reward,*" Heb.11:25-26. Moses considered the will of God more valuable than all the treasures in Egypt. The reproach of Christ is a treasure because we come to know Christ intimately through the *fellowship of His sufferings*, Phil. 3:10. It also prepares us for a throne of authority, 2 Tim.2:12.

8. RICH IN FAITH- "*Has not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith,*" Jam.2:5. Faith is another of God's sacred treasures. Not all men have faith, 2 Thess.3:2. Even among the redeemed every man is given a *measure* of faith, Rom.12:3. This faith, however, must continue to grow.

Anyone who possesses faith is very wealthy. Faith brings us through dark and difficult times. Faith calms all of our fears. Faith brings provision and healing. It is faith that overcomes the world, 1 Jn.5:4. Faith opens our understanding, Heb.11:3. Without faith, the words of God are merely "*cunningly devised fables.*" Truly, a man void of faith is a man of *indescribable poverty*.

"*Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have give I you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk,*" Acts 3:6. What education and diplomas could never accomplish, and what all the money in the world could never do, Peter had the authority to accomplish through faith. In just one instant a man who had never walked was "*walking, leaping and praising God,*" Acts 3:8. Peter and John had no medical degree from a university but they had *the priceless power of God* upon them because of a relationship of faith. These men possessed the true riches.

9. THE LORD OUR EXCEEDING REWARD- *“I am your shield, and your exceeding great reward,”* Gen.15:1. Here is the greatest treasure of all—the Lord Himself. As beautiful as heaven may be, the center of attraction will always be the Son of God. Jeremiah said, *“The Lord is my portion,”* Lam.3:24. Paul said he lived to *“win Christ,”* Phil.3:7-11. This is the central theme of Scripture. Life should revolve around seeking the approval of our Heavenly Bridegroom and to know His love which surpasses knowledge, Eph.3:19. Our whole purpose in life should be to dwell as near to His heart as possible, not only here on earth but in eternity as well, Ps.27:4 & 23:6.