

October 28, 2012

Satan's Favorite Lies

Money is the Key to Happiness

Matthew 19:16-22

Opening words:

This is my final message in my seven part sermon series, *Satan's Favorite Lies*. The adversary really is an excellent liar. His lies sound logical but his lies are not Biblical. His lies have a way of creeping into your belief system and eroding away your faith in God. If you have been with us each week then you will remember these lies:

God can't be trusted

Some things can't be forgiven

God grades on a curve

Suffering is not beneficial

The Bible can't be trusted

The church can't be trusted.

Today, we expose the lie; *money is the key to happiness*. May God give you ears to hear this morning's Gospel lesson, Matthew 19:16-22. May give you ears to hear.

Matthew 19:16-22

16 Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?"

17 "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments." 18 "Which ones?" he inquired. Jesus replied, "'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, 19 honor your father and mother,'¹ and 'love your neighbor as yourself.'" 20 "All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?"

21 Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." 22 When the young man heard this, he we away sad, because he had great wealth.

Austrian multi-millionaire Karl Rabeder made a fortune building his own business. He excelled at interior furnishings and accessories. He said for years that business was his life. He worked hard for one reason. He was determined to escape the poverty of his youth. However, somewhere along the way he lost contact with the real world so he decided to sell everything. Rabeder said, "My idea is to have nothing left. Absolutely nothing. Money is counter-productive – it prevents happiness. I had the feeling I was working as a slave for things that I did not wish for or need." So he began to sell everything. He is selling his \$4.2 million villa in the Alps. He is selling his \$1.8 million stone farm house. He has sold his six gliders valued at more than one million dollars and his Audi A8 valued at \$122,000. The cash he is raising is being given away to an organization, which makes small business loans to Central Americans. Let me go one step farther with his story.

He said the tipping point came while he was on a three-week holiday with his wife to the islands of Hawaii. "It was the biggest shock in my life, when I realized how horrible, soulless and without feeling the five star lifestyle is," he said. "In those three weeks, we spent all the money you could possibly spend. But in all that time, we had the feeling we hadn't met a single real person – that we were all just actors. The staff played the role of being friendly and the guests played the role of being important, but nobody was real."

Someone once wrote these words:

Money can buy a bed, but it cannot buy sleep.

Money can buy books, but it cannot buy brains.

Money can buy food, but not appetite.

Money can buy finery, but not beauty.

Money can buy a house, but not a home.

Money can buy medicine, but not health.

Money can buy luxuries, but not culture.

Money can buy amusement, but not happiness.

Money can buy companions, but not friends.

Money can buy flattery, but not respect.

If this is not news to you then say, "**Amen!**"

Let us look at the Gospel lesson for today.

Like last week's text, this week's story is found in all three of the synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke. It is only when you combine the three that you are able to see the whole picture. Each Gospel adds an important detail. According to Matthew, Jesus has withdrawn from Galilee and now is located in Judea. The Master was less popular there but the crowds still came. One of the people in the crowd was a rich young man. Only Luke tells us he was a ruler. However, all three tell us he had a problem. He was facing his own mortality. He had everything this world has to offer. He was rich, so he could buy the desires of his heart. He was young, so his future was in front of him. He was a ruler, so he had influence. The only thing he still required was eternal life. Listen to what I am about to say. The individual in the story is rich but the individual in the story is not content. He exposes Satan's lie. Money is not the key to happiness. Can I state the obvious? Our world is preoccupied with money!

As a disciple of Jesus Christ, it is important that you remember that money is amoral. It is neither good nor bad. It is what you do with your money that makes the difference. Rick Warren of the Saddleback Church says money exists for only two reasons. First, money pays for our basic needs, food and shelter. Second, money is to pay for your purpose. How many people do you know have accepted the lie, money is the key to happiness. How many people do you know who live above their income? How many people do you know who handle their money poorly? If someone pops into your mind say, "**Amen!**"

Today, I want to talk about three things that make your life complete. Without them your life would be shallow. This is the good news. Each one of these things is free. You can't buy your **friends!** You can't buy **love.** Third and finally, you can't buy **salvation.**

You see each one of these things every day. You see elements of these things in the story of the rich young ruler. So if you are ready to begin say, **"Amen!"** First, money can't buy friends.

Friends

One of the great things about working here at Western Reserve is the people. We have great members and we have great staff members. I can honestly tell you I consider everyone on staff a friend. I consider Mark, Bill, Stacy, Collin and Dee friends. I even consider David a friend, even though he reads books at Super Bowl parties. It isn't just true now. It has always been that way.

The other day, I saw our former Associate Pastor, Bill Johnson. I went to a continuing education event down in Sugarcreek. In July, Bill was appointed to the United Methodist congregation in that town. Can I be honest with you? I didn't get a lot out of the class. I had some fundamental problems with the presenter. The class began at 3:00 on Tuesday and lasted until 12:00 noon on Thursday. I only lasted until 11:00 on Wednesday morning. I said to the person sitting next to me, "I have to go to the rest room. I will be right back!" I didn't come back. I drove home. However, my time away was not a waste. The reason is I spent Tuesday night with Bill. It was great to spend time with him. We really didn't do anything. There wasn't an agenda. We just talked. He asked how Margaret did in the demolition derby at the Canfield Fair. He asked if Ricky still asked all those questions. He asked if the roof still leaked when it rained. I asked about his church and his wife, Janice. I asked about his grandson, Joey. We talked throughout the evening. We reconnected and it was like Bill had never left. We had a great time but we didn't spend a dime!

First, money can't buy friends. Muhammad Ali once said, "[Friendship... is not something you learn in school. But if you haven't learned the meaning of friendship, you really haven't learned anything.](#)" If you have one friend in your life say, **"Amen!"** First, money can't buy friends. Second, money can't buy love.

Love

Time is moving quickly. I am trying to figure out what I am going to preach during this coming Advent. The first Sunday of Advent is December fifth. I am thinking about building my sermon series around the classic Charles Dickens' story, *A Christmas Carol*. You know the story. It revolves around the lives of two men. Each one is rich and poor in their own way. Scrooge is rich in money but he is poor in love. Bob Cratchit is poor in money but he is rich in love. In the end Scrooge is transformed. He learns the valuable lesson. Money is not enough. Do you have a Scrooge in your life? Have you ever been called a Scrooge?

Second, money can't buy love. Elbert Hubbard once said, "*A friend is someone who knows all about you and still loves you.*" Love is the most powerful force in our world today. If you have ever benefited from someone loving you say, **"Amen!"** Money cannot buy friends. Money cannot buy love. Money also cannot buy salvation.

Salvation

During the Spanish-American War, Clara Barton was overseeing the work of the Red Cross in Cuba. One day Colonel Theodore Roosevelt came to her, wanting to buy food for his sick and wounded Rough Riders. But she refused to sell him any. Roosevelt was perplexed. His men needed the help and he was prepared to pay out of his own funds. When he asked someone why he could not buy the supplies, he was told, "Colonel, just ask for it!" A smile broke over Roosevelt's face. Now he understood--the provisions were not for sale. All he had to do was simply ask and they would be given freely.

Third and finally, money can't buy salvation. The greatest gift you will ever receive is your own salvation. That is something the rich young ruler could not understand. He could buy the desires of his heart but he could not buy his own salvation. I hope in time he learned Jesus did all the work on the cross. All you have to do is accept him as your Lord and Savior. The Apostle Paul once said, *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Romans 3:23) If you know Jesus as your Lord and Savior say, **"Amen!"** Money can't buy friends. Money can't buy love. Money can't buy salvation.

Karen Shand is a forty year-old coronary care nurse in Britain. She makes approximately \$75,000 a year and loves her job. She loves her job so much she refuses to quit it. Her family and friends told her to quit her job but she refuses. Do you know her story? On the spur of the moment she called the British game show and answered six questions correctly. She won approximately \$3,000,000. She said, *"The money will change my lifestyle but the money won't change me."* If you won millions, how would your lifestyle change? If you won millions how would you change?

Be careful how you answer that question. There are certain things money can't buy. Do you remember those words from a few minutes ago?

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Money can buy amusement, but not happiness.

Money can buy companions, but not friends.

Money can buy flattery, but not respect.

Money cannot buy **friends!** Money cannot buy **love.** Money cannot buy **salvation.** And all of God's people said, **"Amen!"**