

THE SECOND CONVERSION (LUKE 18:18-30) 10/28/12
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, ATCHISON, PASTOR LEE HENDON

ST. AUGUSTINE WROTE ABOUT THIS PASSAGE THAT THERE ARE ***TWO CONVERSIONS*** FOR EVERY PERSON - FIRST A PERSON'S **HEART** & THEN THEIR **MONEY**. UNTIL **BOTH** ARE CONVERTED TO THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS, CONVERSION IS NOT COMPLETE. WOW, WHAT A CONCISE EXPOSITION OF THIS PASSAGE! CONVERSION INCLUDES YOUR HEART & YOUR MONEY - THE TWO CANNOT EVER BE SEPARATED - NOT EVER - SO WE BEST NOT GO FOOLING OURSELVES OTHERWISE! A MODERN LIE OF MANY A BELIEVER IS THAT YOU CAN GIVE YOUR HEART TO JESUS & KEEP YOUR MONEY ***AS YOUR OWN***. NOT TRUE, NOT TRUE. **WOE, WOE, WOE ARE WE** - WE ARE TO BE PITIED IF THAT IS OUR JOURNEY OF FAITH! IF SUCH IS THE CASE WITH YOU - CHURCHED OR UNCHURCHED - IF YOU ARE A BELIEVER WITH THAT ATTITUDE THEN YOU ARE NOT REALLY TAKING JESUS SERIOUSLY! HOW WE USE OUR MONEY FOR JESUS ABSOLUTELY DOES MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE! AND YES, **THIS ONE - IS ON - THE TEST!!!**

WHEN MOTHER TERESA VISITED AUSTRALIA A NEW RECRUIT OF THE FRANCISCAN ORDER WAS ASSIGNED TO BE HER GUIDE & "GOFER" DURING HER STAY. THRILLED & EXCITED AT BEING SO CLOSE TO THIS GREAT WOMAN HE DREAMED OF HOW MUCH HE WOULD LEARN FROM HER & WHAT THEY MIGHT TALK ABOUT. DURING HER VISIT HE BECAME FRUSTRATED - ALTHOUGH HE WAS CONSTANTLY NEAR HER - THE FRIAR NEVER HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SAY ONE WORD TO MOTHER TERESA. THERE WERE ALWAYS OTHER PEOPLE FOR HER TO MEET.

WHEN HER TOUR WAS OVER SHE WAS DUE TO FLY TO NEW GUINEA. IN DESPERATION, THE FRIAR SPOKE TO MOTHER TERESA, "IF I PAY MY OWN FARE TO NEW GUINEA, CAN I SIT NEXT TO YOU ON THE PLANE SO I CAN TALK TO YOU & LEARN FROM YOU?" MOTHER TERESA LOOKED HIM IN THE EYES & ASKED, "YOU HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO PAY AIRFARE TO NEW GUINEAS?"

"YES," HE EAGERLY REPLIED.

"THEN GIVE THAT MONEY TO THE POOR," SHE SAID. "YOU WILL LEARN MORE FROM THAT THAN ANYTHING I CAN TELL YOU."

JESUS SAID TO THE RULER, "SELL ALL THAT YOU HAVE & DISTRIBUTE IT TO THE POOR & YOU WILL HAVE TREASURE IN

HEAVEN & COME, FOLLOW ME.” JESUS’ WORDS MADE THE YOUNG MAN VERY SAD BECAUSE HE WAS VERY RICH. LIKE IT OR NOT, THIS PASSAGE IS A BLARING, GLARING ACCUSATION ON THE LIFE OF MANY OF US TODAY - GIVING OUR HEARTS TO JESUS WITH OUR HANDS GUARDING OUR MONEY ALL THE WHILE. JESUS WENT ON TO SAY, “HOW HARD IT WILL BE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE RICHES TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN!” WOW, AS YOU KNOW, ACCORD-ING TO BIBLICAL STANDARDS, WE - IT IS US - THAT ARE THE RICH PEOPLE OF THE WORLD. **OUCHY! OUCHY!**

THE SIRENS ARE TO BE GOING OFF IN OUR CONSCIENCE - IF WE HAVE A CONSCIENCE - THAT JESUS WAS SERIOUS ABOUT OUR HEARTS & OUR POCKET BOOKS. WE R TO CHANGE OUR DIRECTION WITH JESUS - HERE JESUS TAKE OUR HEARTS & OUR POCKET BOOKS - **WE GIVE IT ALL!**

THE POWER OF THIS STORY OF JESUS’ ENCOUNTER WITH THE RICH RULER IS THAT IT INEVITABLY FORCES US INTO **THE RULER’S** ROLE. IT IS SO EASY TO REPEAT THE MAN’S RESPONSE TO JESUS. WHO WOULD ACTUALLY “SELL ALL THAT YOU OWN & DISTRIBUTE THE MONEY TO THE POOR?” LIKE THE RULER, WE ARE FORCED TO RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE WE PLACE ON THE SECURITY OF OUR POSSESSIONS. JESUS’ DEMAND IS SO HIGH THAT WE TOO ARE APT TO TURN AWAY SAD, FEELING DEEPLY CONFLICTED BUT BEING UNABLE TO DO WHAT JESUS COMMANDS. LIKE THE RICH YOUNG RULER, OUR TREASURE CAN BE IN OUR POSSESSIONS RATHER THAN IN OUR DESIRE TO SERVE GOD & GIVE GOD OUR ALL - EVEN OUR MONEY. THE DILEMMA IS CERTAIN - IF WE CANNOT BRING OURSELVES TO SURRENDER OUR MONEY THEN JESUS CANNOT OVERCOME OR IGNORE OUR IMPOTENT/INEPT RESPONSES. JESUS CANNOT, WILL NOT FORCE US TO MAKE THE CORRECT CHOICES ABOUT OUR TREASURES. THE GUT WRENCHING REGRET OF THE MOMENT IS THAT THE RULER HAS THE SPIRITUAL SENSITIVITY TO BE SADDENED BUT IS SO CONFLICTED ABOUT HIS ATTACHMENT TO \$\$\$ THAT HE WAS PARALYZED & COULD NOT MOVE TOWARD JESUS & AWAY FROM HIS \$\$\$.

THE RICH YOUNG RULER WAS FURTHER ALONG THAN MANY OF US. HE HAD FOLLOWED ALL THE JEWISH COMMANDMENTS SINCE HIS YOUTH - WHICH WOULD HAVE INCLUDED TITHING & GIVING ALMS TO THE POOR & HOSPITALITY TO THE STRANGER. MOST, YES MOST CHURCH MEMBERS GET STUCK ON THE TITHING

THING - WE CAN & DO WITHOUT CONSCIOUS REGRET, USE UP ALL OUR 90% & SPEND INTO THE LORD'S 10%. PROTESTANT CHURCH MEMBERS AVERAGE A MEASLY 2.3% IN GIVING. WE TEND TO TAKE SPIRITUAL PRIDE IN NOT GIVING THE LORD HIS 10% BUT IN EXERCISING OUR FREEDOM TO SPEND IT FOR OURSELVES! **WOE, WOE, WOE ARE WE!** THE STARK REALITY IS THAT MOST CHRISTIANS ***DO NOT BELIEVE IN THE BIBLE*** WHEN IT COMES TO THEIR MONEY!

THE STRIKING THING ABOUT THIS EVENT WITH THE RICH YOUNG RULER IS THAT **JESUS WANTS IT ALL** - YES, JESUS WANTS 100% OF IT. WE PROBABLY SNICKER WITH, "DREAM ON, JESUS, NO WAY." MOST LIKELY WE ARE NOT VERY RESPECTFUL ABOUT HOLDING OUT ON THE LORD. IF JESUS' DEMAND BOTHERS US, & IT DOES, THEN JESUS WLD HAVE US KNOW WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO BECOME KINGDOM DWELLERS! PURE & SIMPLE AS THAT! JESUS WILL HAVE IT NO WAY BUT THE LORD'S WAY. HERE'S HOW IT WORKS: 10% OFF THE TOP TO THE LORD'S WORK AT CHURCH.

90% OF THE REST FOR THE LORD OF MY LIFE: PAY THE HOUSE NOTE, THANK YOU JESUS! PAY THE UTILITIES, OTHER BILLS, SOME MONEY TO EAT OUT & ENTERTAIN, THANK YOU JESUS FOR THE GOOD LIFE. MONIES FOR EMERGENCY, MEDICAL, ETC. THANK YOU JESUS IT ALL BELONGS TO YOU! ALL THAT WE HOLD, WE HOLD IN TRUST, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LORD. HOW ABOUT THAT DRUG HABIT OR ALCOHOL OR GAMBLING ABUSE, NOPE, NONE -ZERO - NADA OF THE LORD'S MONEY CAN BE USED FOR THAT. SEE HOW IT WORKS? WE JUST THOUGHT OUR BILLFOLDS & PURSES, CREDIT CARDS & CASH WERE OUR OWN - NOT SO, ***GRASSHOPPERS***, NOT WHEN WE GIVE OUR LIVES TO JESUS! IF WE CANNOT BUY & SPEND WHAT WE ARE BUYING & SPENDING WITH JESUS' HAND ON THE PURSE STRINGS, THEN WE CANNOT HAVE IT! PURE & SIMPLE! OUR SUCCESS & CONTENTMENT MUST BE FOUND IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS. IT IS ALL ABOUT JESUS.

JESUS REALLY **HAMMERED** THAT RICH YOUNG RULER & JESUS IS HAMMERING US TOO! IF YOU DON'T THINK SO THEN PER-HAPS YOU DO NOT HAVE EARS TO HEAR? BUT, BUT DID YOU HEAR - ARE YOU PAYING ATTENTION TO - THE **PROMISE**? IT IS PERHAPS A LITTLE EASIER TO PAY THE PRICE, TO COUNT THE COST WHEN THE PRIZE, **THE JEWEL IS IN SIGHT**: THOSE WHO GIVE IT ALL ***"FOR THE SAKE OF THE KINGDOM WILL RECEIVE MANIFOLD***

MORE IN THIS TIME & IN THE AGE TO COME ETERNAL LIFE."

HELLO...THAT IS MUCH, MUCH MORE THAN A MONEY BACK GUARANTEE - IT IS A MONEY BACK GUARANTEE WITH A HUGE BONUS IN THE BAG! JESUS WAS NOT LEAVING ANYTHING TO GUESS WORK. I DO NOT THINK WE SHOULD EVER FOLLOW THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS BECAUSE WE ARE BETTING ON THE RETURN OF OUR INVESTMENT - BUT IT IS STIMULATING TO KNOW BEYOND THE SHADOW OF A DOUBT THAT JESUS WILL NEVER EVER LEAVE US HOLDING THE BAG. WE SIMPLY CANNOT OUT GIVE GOD - GOD'S RESOURCES ARE MUCH GREATER THAN OUR OWN. DISCIPLESHIP FOR JESUS IS ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS WORTHY OUR RISK & ADVENTURE! AFTER ALL, IT IS ONLY FAITH THAT WILL BE USED AS CURRENCY IN THE KINGDOM - LET THAT SOAK IN - ONLY FAITH ENDURES. HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED THE SECOND - NEEDED - CONVERSION OF YOUR \$\$\$?