



Belong

Start the group with an opportunity for community. We want this to be a place where the body of Christ can belong.

- What is one high and one low from this past week?
- Let's count our blessings! What are your "treasures" in life?

Start the group with prayer.

Believe

Ecclesiastes 5:8-20

8 If you see in a province the oppression of the poor and the violation of justice and righteousness, do not be amazed at the matter, for the high official is watched by a higher, and there are yet higher ones over them. **9** But this is gain for a land in every way: a king committed to cultivated fields. **10** He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity. **11** When goods increase, they increase who eat them, and what advantage has their owner but to see them with his eyes? **12** Sweet is the sleep of a laborer, whether he eats little or much, but the full stomach of the rich will not let him sleep. **13** There is a grievous evil that I have seen under the sun: riches were kept by their owner to his hurt, **14** and those riches were lost in a bad venture. And he is father of a son, but he has nothing in his hand. **15**

As he came from his mother's womb he shall go again, naked as he came, and shall take nothing for his toil that he may carry away in his hand. **16** This also is a grievous evil: just as he came, so shall he go, and what gain is there to him who toils for the wind? **17** Moreover, all his days he eats in darkness in much vexation and sickness and anger. **18** Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot. **19** Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God. **20** For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart.

1 Timothy 6:17-19

17 As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. **18** They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, **19** thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

You've likely heard the phrase "money doesn't buy happiness." However, you may have never connected the phrase with God's word. The writers of Ecclesiastes and Timothy, under the authority of the Holy Spirit, both agree that joy only comes from what is in your heart. There is no substance in wealth that satisfies the longing of our souls. None but Jesus can do such a thing. We brought nothing into this world and, regardless of neglected reality, we will take nothing out of it.

The Source of Satisfaction

10 *He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity. 11 When goods increase, they increase who eat them, and what advantage has their owner but to see them with his eyes? 12 Sweet is the sleep of a laborer, whether he eats little or much, but the full stomach of the rich will not let him sleep.*

There is no amount of money that will ever satisfy you. If you ever listen to country music you have probably heard the lyrics “I know everybody says money can't buy happiness. But it could buy me a boat. It could buy me a truck to pull it.” Yes, money can buy you things to enjoy in this world. However, money cannot buy you satisfaction for the God-sized emptiness in your soul.

There are those who may be rich now but 1 Timothy warns not to put your trust in “uncertain riches.” There are riches that will not last and there are riches that are eternal. The good news is, you can be financially poor yet rich in God’s terms. There is also warning to not be “haughty,” or in other words believe that you are more because you have more.

Many get the idea that the church asks members to tithe so that the church can have money. However, I believe scripture teaches that there is more priority of God’s people being givers rather than the church just simply needing funds. The rich are to be rich in good works, willing to share the wealth in order to advance the mission of God.

Questions:

1. Are you satisfied?
2. How are you advancing the Kingdom with your finances?

Hearses don't pull U-Hauls!

Regardless of how hard we work to provide for ourselves here on earth, we won't be able to take our treasures with us as we go. The writer of Ecclesiastes says “just as he came, so shall he go, and what gain is there to him who toils for the wind?” Everyone will die one day so we must live for something greater than ourselves.

We must strive to be content with our work for the gospel because we can not serve two masters. You will never find contentment in serving Jesus as long as you are self-serving your financial purposes at a higher priority. Since you can not give all of your attention to two masters, give attention to the vital one. Pursue eternal life and fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

You can't take your money with you as you go, but you can send it ahead by giving generously to God's work. Solomon tells us in our text in Ecclesiastes that even the wealthy have loneliness, sorrow, and anger. We hear so often of the stories of those with

all of the fame and wealth the world has to offer such as Elvis, Michael Jackson, or Robin Williams who still live a life battling depression or addictions.

Questions:

1. What things are you living as though they will have eternal substance?
2. Do you have two masters right now? What are they?

Is money your master?

It is no secret, it is better to live a life with money than not. The writer of Ecclesiastes knew that riches did not bring true meaning to life but he also understood that wealth is a gift that can be enjoyed rightly. He writes "Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God." It is not wrong to enjoy the blessings of the Lord.

Either you can use your money or your money will use you. A man you have likely heard of named Henry Parsons Crowell founded Quaker Oats. He gave 70% of his incredible income to help bankroll the Moody Bible Institute. This school has sent thousands upon thousands of missionaries into ministry. A man decided to be obedient to use his money well and in turn, has made an eternal impact. David Platt says "Maybe the most spiritual thing to do to support the promotion of the gospel is this: stay in your job, save and invest scrupulously, and keep pumping out money to support missionaries and pastors."

Enter into the joy of the Lord with the blessings He has given you. But as we know "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

Questions:

1. What do you enjoy doing that costs money?
2. Are you hoarding anything right now?

BECOME

19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust[e] destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also...24 "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money... 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Above all else, we must seek first the Kingdom of God. The Lord takes care of His people and we can take it to the bank (no pun intended) that the righteous will not be forsaken.

Earthly treasures are not bad in themselves but they have no ultimate value. Just as Paul says in 1 Timothy "Godliness with contentment is great gain." Whether you are the most wealthy person in Greenville county or the most poor, as a Child of God you can find contentment in His righteousness.

Questions:

1. Do you struggle to trust God with finances?
2. What's your next step?