

THINGS MONEY CANNOT BUY

"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold" (Proverbs 22:1).

Ability to distinguish values is a mark of wisdom toward which all of us should strive. If we are to acquire this ability, we must study the Bible and learn God's standard of values. With many the only measure of a man is the amount of money he possesses. Knowing that life is far more than the possession of material things, Christ taught that "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Things must be our servants, and not our masters. In any society where the Lord's will is done, life is recognized as being of far greater value than material possessions.

Doubtless at times most of us are inclined to wish that we were rich. We are quite sure that riches would be of great advantage to us in many ways, and possibly they would. Quite contrary to a prevalent impression, the Bible never says anything against the desirability of the possession of money. It does point out that the inordinate or unlawful love of money is a root of all sorts of evil; but it does not condemn money or the possession of it. How a man makes, saves, uses, and spends money is one of the very best tests of his practical wisdom and soundness of character. Wealth is a blessing when rightly acquired and used. Money can enable its possessor to develop and enlarge his mental faculties, to increase his means of improvement, to enjoy many advantages, to extend his social circle, and to increase greatly his usefulness. The possession of money will enable a man to relieve poverty, to dispel ignorance, to ameliorate suffering, and to do many things for the welfare of others. Don't despise wealth. When it is used rightly, it is an immense blessing.

As valuable and as useful as money is, there are many things which are far more valuable. Moreover, there are many things of tremendous value that money cannot buy. Among them are the following:

I. A Good Name.

There are some strange things about names. One is that we do not have any choice in the matter of our names. The people who lived long ago usually named their children names which showed what they hoped they would become. And many of the main names which they gave their children are still used. Most of our parents did not name us in that way. They gave us the names of some relatives whom they loved, or their own names, or names of persons about whom they had read for whom they had great admiration, or names which they had liked very much. Some have disliked the names which were given to them so much that they have gone into the courts and had their names changed legally.

One thing of tremendous importance is what kind of a name a person makes for himself. A number of years ago a historical society issued a booklet commemorating the anniversary of the death of President William McKinley. The pamphlet was concerned chiefly with an accurate account of the visit of the martyred President to the Pan-American Exposition, but it had a brief introductory biography. It began with the boy in Niles, Ohio. There he was a lad like many others, probably barefoot in summer, playing in the lanes and the fields of Niles. The name of William McKinley meant little then. But through the years that followed he clothed his name with meaning and beauty. It matters tremendously what you make of your name.

A good name is one of the best things that a person can acquire in this life. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." Each possessor of a good name has a right to rejoice in a possession so valuable as an honorable name. A good name grows out of good character, is earned by right living, is a source of real satisfaction, goes with one to his grave, and embalms his memory ever after. One's riches must be given up, but his good name endures; therefore, the name is of far greater value than the riches.

Did you ever stop to think how many people there are who live for many years and soon after they die they are forgotten? How pathetic! They are forgotten because they did not do anything worth mentioning while they lived, and now that they are dead there is nothing to remember them by. It seems that they have lived in vain. It is because they lived to themselves, by themselves, and for themselves. They were not concerned about God or others. They never received Christ as their Saviour. They never prayed to God. They lived like the fool who said in his heart, "There is no God." They never did anything to advance His kingdom. Is it any wonder that they are soon forgotten? "The name of the wicked shall rot." But those whose lives are filled with little deeds of kindness, and little acts of love, can never be forgotten. The names of good men never die. They are always remembered by what they have done.

"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." A good reputation is more valuable than any amount of wealth. A good reputation implies a good character -- a character in harmony with the will of God. Such a character is infinitely more valuable than millions of dollars. A good reputation is connected inseparately with its possessor, but secular wealth is not. Sooner or later a man and his money will separate. Its only service is limited to earth. It is worthless beyond the grave. But a good reputation, founded on excellence of character, is inseparable from man. The memory of the just is blessed. The Bible says, "The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance."

A company, which was engaged in a business that was wrong, offered General Robert E. Lee an annual salary of fifty thousand dollars. This company simply wanted to use his name, and would not have required any work to be done. General Lee declined to accept the offer, and said, "If my name is so valuable, then I must be very careful how I use it. No, I cannot do it." So he kept the name Lee untarnished, and synonymous with all that is noble and true.

II. A Contented Mind.

There is no store at which contentment can be purchased at any price. No amount of money can ever procure happiness. Before one can ever have a contented mind, he must receive Christ as his Saviour and dedicate himself to the doing of His will.

III. A Thankful Heart.

It is good to receive gifts, but it is better to have a heart that recognizes the Giver, and is truly grateful to Him for what He is -- a God of holiness, justice, and love, for what He has given us -- His Son, His Spirit and His Word, and for the way in which He guides us in our personal, family and church life.

IV. A Happy Home.

Some think that if only they were wealthy they would have a happy home. But things do not make a home. These minister to the comfort of a family, but they do not produce happiness. Love, trust, faith, readiness to sacrifice, and willingness to do and to bear help so much in the family relationships. Living within the circle of God's will and rendering true service for Him and for others guarantee happiness.

V. A Heavenly Home.

No amount of money can ever buy salvation or a home in heaven. Eternal life in heaven is a gift. The best things of this life, and of the life to come, are available to us without money.