

Liberty commentary September 29, 2008

We have been reminded recently with the \$700 billion dollar bailout package, of just how quickly our financial security both as a nation and individually can be decimated overnight. With a number of banks and investment companies in financial failure and the stock market plummeting, a state of crises has ensued, threatening both the U.S. and the world economy.

The reasons for the financial melt down are somewhat complex, yet at the root of it all is “greed”. Some lending institutions and investment companies who were greedy to make money, made risky loans to borrowers who became overburdened financially when the low variable interest rates readjusted to higher rates. Many borrowers were enticed to receive loans to purchase homes that they could not afford, gambling on the premise that the home value would continue to rise and they could become wealthy just by owning a home. The lending institutions thought the high-risk loans would prove profitable because even if they had to foreclose on the home they could recoup all their money because of the appreciating home values. When home values plummeted it set up a domino affect of financial failure that is threatening to sink our economy into a deep recession or even a depression of great magnitude.

Jesus says in Matthew chapter six, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”. Our earthly possessions are at the mercy of moth, rust and thieves. In modern vernacular, our monetary possessions are at the mercy of financial institutions, governments, natural disasters and our own choices as to how we decide to invest our resources.

The point is, economies ebb and flow. Material wealth may be here today, yet gone tomorrow. Materialistic riches do not last, they are only temporal. We often overlook the lessons that our parents and grandparents learned from the financial collapse of the great depression. Our attention to material wealth, social status, and retirement benefits has all too easily convinced us to trust in what man can provide rather than that which God has already provided and wants to continue to provide in the future.

The place in which we lay up our treasure is dependant upon where our citizenship lies. If we know Christ as our Savior the Bible tells us that we are citizens of two lands, one temporal here on earth and one eternal in the heavens. The place in which we place our treasure is dependant upon where our heart is. If our heart seeks for the material wealth of this world then our treasure is only in the temporal things that this world can provide, but that is guaranteed to pass away. The only way to escape the desires and natural instincts of materialism and greed is to invest our lives and resources in spiritual things, in our heavenly kingdom that will not pass away and not be subject to the ebb and flow of financial disasters.

The Bible tells us in First Corinthians chapter three, that since the time each believer received Christ as their Savior they have been sending material up to heaven. There are six kinds of material listed. Gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble. We are not exactly sure what each item represents, but we can draw a conclusion from the text that most likely the gold, silver, precious stones represent the treasures that we laid up in heaven that involves the things we did for God while we lived here on earth, the things we did out of motivation to share the love of Christ with others through the use of the resources that God had blessed us with. The wood, hay and stubble most likely involves the things that were accomplished here on earth out of a desire to do those

things that were self serving, self motivated and perhaps out of a heart of greed and pride.

The Bible tells us that one day at the judgment seat of Christ, the Lord will take his heavenly torch and our works will be tried by fire, “and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is”. What the fire cannot destroy, it will purify causing it to shine more brilliantly (gold, silver, precious stones). What the fire cannot purify, it will destroy (wood, hay, stubble,) and all that will remain will be smoke and ashes.

The only lasting wealth is the wealth that we send up to heaven in the form of lives that were touched and changed because we were willing to take what God had blessed us with materially and use it for His purpose.

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