

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.*

(Philippians 3.13-14 NASB)

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DO NOT WEARY YOURSELF TO GAIN WEALTH, CEASE

I first began to write this issue back in August before the tumultuous month of September. I even considered just putting what I wrote in the archives for another day or even year. However, as I searched news articles on one of my email provider pages, I noticed an article titled *Foreclosures: Did God Want You To Get That Mortgage?* (Time CNN, October 3, 2008). This article, along with what I have heard spoken from the pulpit lately in regard to giving (e.g., tithing, sowing seed), and along with all that I have written about the great financial storm, has put my mind into "think mode," so I offer a few comments based on what came to me as I considered this matter.

I truly believe that many Christians, especially in the US, have gotten their eyes off the Lord Jesus and have become lovers of wealth and prosperity, and the prosperity and wealth-building preachers and pastors are taking advantage of this heart and even fostering it. Unfortunately, this heart has been exported to other nations around the world and has given false hope to many who live in poverty.

Frankly, I am tired of all the begging and coercing that goes on in the name of Lord so that "ministries" or "churches" can continue doing what they do, and of the teaching concerning what the giver will get in return for giving or "planting a seed." We are told to give or be cursed, give to get blessed, sow a seed (of course, to "my ministry) so that you will reap, and place a demand on your seed so that it will increase (that is, you will get a profit). Giving today is all about what *I*, the giver, will get out of it. God loves a cheerful giver, but after listening to all this coercion, all the cheer is sucked out of me. I plan to write on this matter later.

Don't take me wrong; I am not against wealth; the heart of the issue is the love of wealth, which is a **root of all sorts of evil** (1 Timothy 6.10), and I believe, to their shame, many pastors and preachers are reinforcing this love and steering hearts away from loving the Lord. But there is something even more subtle than loving wealth, and it is related to trusting wealth or the things that make wealth, and these things becoming our security, rather than the Lord. We will know how much these things have a hold on us when they begin to falter and we see them evaporate before our eyes, much in the way that it has occurred recently during the global financial crisis.

The Lord Jesus taught His disciples: **"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"** (Matthew 6.21 NASB). I believe the current global crisis is designed to expose the heart of the Lord's people. If our treasure is in the things of this world, especially the financial system that I claim is part of mystery Babylon, then we are in for a rude awakening. We need to heed Paul's exhortation to **set your mind above where Christ is seated, not on the things that are on earth** (Colossians 3.2), or, as Jesus exhorted: **"But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal"** (Matthew 6.20 NASB). If we do not learn this essential lesson in this day of great uncertainty, then we will have missed the Lord's purpose in bringing this judgment upon the world, just as many missed the lesson of 9/11. Be assured that this is the judgment of God on mystery Babylon. When it will finally fall is God's business, but be assured that the day will come, for the kingdom of Christ must come.

Remember what Solomon, the son of David who was given the wisdom of God and great wealth, had to say on the matter of wealth.

Do not weary yourself to gain wealth, cease from your consideration of it. When you set your eyes on it, it is gone. For wealth certainly makes itself wings like an eagle that flies toward the heavens. (Proverbs 23.4-5 NASB)

Solomon should know that it is a wearisome thing to gain wealth. The Hebrew word for *weary* means “exhausted.” Trying to gain wealth is exhausting. Just turn on the television and watch one of the business channels. People sit in front of cameras all day long talking about every miniscule detail of what the Stock Market is doing. After a few minutes of watching such stuff, I am exhausted. It is wearisome to watch people discuss *ad nauseam* the gaining or losing of wealth each minute of the day. Of course, lately it has been all about the loss of wealth. I can speak from experience; when you rely on this system of wealth-building, it is wearisome. You are continually monitoring it to see if you are gaining or losing and trying to figure out what you are to do when you are losing. I realize some people truly enjoy doing such things, but, as Christians, we need to ask the spirit of God to examine our hearts to see where our treasure truly is.

“Cease, which means “desist,” from your consideration” of it should ring from Christian pulpits and airwaves. Look at the amount of wealth (trillions) that made itself wings in the last few months. I am sure that many Christians have been affected by this great flight of wealth, most of which, to me, was merely phantom wealth. Much of it has been paper wealth made through innovative investments that were valued based on what the hungry beast of the Stock Market felt they were worth. When it decides they are worth little to nothing, then that is what their value will be.

We need to be reminded of the word delivered through John: **“Come out of her, My people”** (Revelation 18.4). This coming out is not a physical movement but a change of heart.

I am fascinated by what I am hearing stated by so many in this day. Recently, I heard a news report state that the world is looking for a leader that can lead the world out of this mess, but that there is no one at the moment. There have been many references to Barack Obama being a messiah. I realize that a statement like this conjures up all sorts of conspiracies and so-called prophecies, so I merely report it as something being stated, without placing any value judgment or political statement on it. Some people state that one political party is better at solving the financial crisis than the other. Don't be fooled; God is in control and the wisdom of man is foolishness to God. Others are stating that this crisis will pass and the world economy will continue to grow. Be assured, it will fall, and in the next eon or age, the world economy will truly flourish because righteousness and justice will rule the day. Praise God; the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ is coming!

Man's way through this crisis is to print more money and place the people under greater bondage to debt, usury, and higher taxes. One day, this all will come home to roost as its weight becomes so burdensome that it will fall because its foundation is made of sand. Jesus warns us.

“Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.” (Matthew 7.26-27 NASB)

As Daniel saw, **the Stone Kingdom**, which is the kingdom of Christ, will crush the kingdom of this world (mystery Babylon), and it will become like chaff from the summer threshing floors that is carried away by the wind so that there will be no trace of it (see Daniel 2.31-35).

People of God, where is your treasure in this day? Is it in heaven *in* Christ, or is it in the world system that will be crushed and its dust blown away like chaff? Store up your treasure in heaven where Christ is seated. Set your heart above. Repent! Cease your consideration of wealth. Let all that can be shaken fly away. Seek God's kingdom and His righteousness while it is today!

As the nation's leaders seek man's solutions, not God's, and try to calm fears, where are the voices of righteousness that declare the truth to the world? The answer is God's Son. God has set His King upon Zion, His holy mountain, which is His kingdom. Let us begin to declare that Jesus Christ is the King of the nations and His kingdom is the only answer to the many challenges the world is facing. He alone is the Messiah! Let us proclaim the King and His kingdom of righteousness and justice and peace and love!