

# Words for the Rich

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[ 0 : 00 ] 1 Timothy chapter 6, starting in verse 17. I ask 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.

They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may hold, they may take hold of that which is truly life.

Let's pray together. Father, we thank you this morning for the privilege of gathering. We thank you, Lord, that in your mercy and providence, you have saved us and you have joined us in this local church.

We ask, Lord, that in this moment that you would speak to all of our hearts from your word, that you would care for your people, that you would feed your people from your word.

Lord, would you grant us all attentive hearts and ears to hear what you would say to us from these three simple but powerful verses of scripture.

[ 1 : 53 ] Lord, I ask once again for your help, acknowledging my many limitations.

Would you be pleased to pour an abundant grace upon me as I bring your word to your people, as you seek to, through these words, care for them.

Lord, help us this morning, we ask. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. But as you can see, we are nearing the completion of our sermon series in the letter of 1 Timothy.

And we have come to a section of the letter that yet again addresses a topic that was addressed just a few verses earlier.

It is a topic of riches and being rich. And you may remember that in verses 9 and 10, the Apostle Paul warned those who desired to be rich.

[ 2 : 55 ] And here in these three verses that we just read, he turns his attention to those who are rich. They don't desire to be rich.

They are rich. And what Paul does in these three verses is he tells Timothy to charge or to command the rich regarding how they are to relate to their riches and how they are to handle their riches.

And what is clear is that Paul, from these three verses, has concerns for rich Christians as well. He's not just concerned about Christians who desire to be rich, but he's also concerned with Christians who are rich.

I imagine it could have been easy for the rich Christians who would have been hearing this letter to be somewhat distracted and not as interested when Paul was warning those who desired to be rich because they were actually rich.

And probably they were surprised as Paul turned his attention to them and called Timothy to command them to consider how they relate to their wealth and how they handle their wealth.

[ 4 : 15 ] And Paul helps us to see that there are dangers and duties that accompany being rich. And when we consider these three verses, I think the clear point is that rich Christians are commanded to avoid the dangers and embrace the duties of being rich.

Again, this is quite an interesting point because Paul helps us to see that there are dangers associated with desiring to be rich and there are dangers in being rich.

And in addition, he helps us to see that there are duties and responsibilities that the rich are called to embrace in terms of how they use their riches.

For those of you who are taking notes, I've developed my thoughts this morning around two simple points. And they are, number one, the dangers of being rich.

And number two, the duties of being rich. So let's consider the first point, the dangers of being rich. Paul expresses two important dangers of being rich in verse 17.

[ 5 : 33 ] Look at what he says. He says to Timothy, as for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches.

The first danger that Paul points out is that those who are rich face the danger of developing a false sense of superiority.

It's expressed in this word haughty. Riches can be a temptation towards haughtiness. We can so easily accept the lie that because we have more than other people have, we are better than other people.

That we don't need other people. Paul says this is a real danger. And I believe that most of us in this room have lived long enough to see that this is a reality.

This is a danger. This having more than others, having more than we think we need or will need for a long period of time, tends to fuel pride.

[ 6 : 52 ] And the more riches that one possesses, the greater the danger of becoming haughty, of allowing possessions to cause us to think of ourselves more highly than we should and to look down on other people who have less.

And while we understand that's the way the world operates, how sad it is when this attitude, this attitude that is to be foreign to the people of God would find its way among us.

It is actually, when you consider it, a betrayal of Jesus Christ. That's the first danger that Paul identifies.

This danger of developing a false sense of superiority. The second danger that he identifies is the danger of allowing riches to give a false sense of security.

And notice how he expresses that in the latter part of verse 17. He says that Timothy is to warn the rich not to set their hopes on this uncertainty of riches.

[ 8 : 22 ] People who are rich are faced with the temptation of seeing their possessions as providing them with a sense of security, a sense of stability, a sense of predictability.

When we have material riches and possessions, they promise us that they will take care of us, they will take care of our families, and they'll take care of our needs.

And all the financial demands that life would bring, they would answer those demands. And so we can easily fall prey to the temptation of looking to and trusting in and setting our hope on riches and not on God.

The danger is hoping in money rather than hoping in God. And how often have we seen hope set on riches that have been dashed?

We've seen it. Brother David alluded to just a number of ways that riches and things we accumulate and things we possess can be gone in just a moment.

[ 9 : 38 ] In his commentary on 1 Timothy, college president and pastor, Dr. Philip Ryken writes the following. In the year 1923, nine of the world's wealthiest men had a meeting at the Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago.

In attendance were the presidents of the world's largest steel, gas, and utility companies. The world's greatest REIT speculator.

The president of the New York Stock Exchange. A member of the presidential cabinet. A Wall Street tycoon. The head of the world's largest monopoly.

And the president of the Bank of International Settlements. The men who met at the Edgewater that day knew all the secrets of generating and manipulating capital.

They could own anything and everything that money could buy. And then Dr. Ryken goes on to make a very shocking observation.

[ 10 : 50 ] He writes, there was one more thing they held in common, which is that within the next decade, they all lost everything they had.

And then he goes on to share an account from Patrick Morley's book, *The Seven Seasons of a Man's Life*, that details the losses that these nine men experienced.

He writes, the president of the largest independent steel company, Charles Schwab, lived on borrowed money for the last five years of his life and died bankrupt.

The president of the largest gas company, Howard Hobson, went insane. The president of the largest utility, Samuel Insel, died in a foreign land, penniless, and a fugitive from justice.

The greatest wheat speculator, Arthur Cotton, also died abroad and insolvent. The president of the New York Stock Exchange, Richard Whitney, was sent to the infamous Sing Sing Penitentiary. [12:06] The member of the presidential cabinet, Albert Fall, was pardoned from prison so he could go home to die. The Wall Street tycoon, Jesse Livermore, committed suicide.

The head of the world's largest monopoly, Ivan Kruger, committed suicide. The president of the Bank of International Settlements, Leon Frazier, committed suicide.

The massive fortunes of these men, Sloan left them, or they left them. Left them through catastrophic loss, or they left them through suicide.

And I think, what it reminds us of, is it reminds us of what we're reading this morning.

It reminds us of the folly, of setting our hopes, on the uncertainty of riches. None of the wealthiest men in the world, they show us that there's no wisdom in setting our hopes on the uncertainty of riches, yet, we who have far less face the temptation to set our hopes on the uncertainty of riches.

[13:33] though I reference these men who are far away from us, far removed from us, and we aren't able to identify with them so much.

We don't have to go far to learn a story and to see a living example of how easily hopes can be dashed when they are set on anything other than the living God.

I think all of us know too well the Bahama Project, a \$3.5 billion project, a project that was in the making for some 10 years, and that was literally called the Savior of the Bahamian economy.

It promised to provide 7,500 permanent, well-paying jobs. And we all know the story.

I could remember exactly where I was sitting and what I was doing when I received a phone call that Bahama had filed bankruptcy. I thought it was a joke.

[14:41] Just couldn't believe that it was true. And I went online and I checked it and sure enough, it was true. And what we experienced after that was shock after shock and surprise after surprise because even at that point when we looked at it, there still seemed to be some measure of control of steering this thing to some kind of completion.

And then liquidators were appointed. And then more than 2,000 individuals, Bahamians and non-Bahamians were sent home in this economy, which is a difficult one to find work in.

And then more recently, we learned that the bank has had the courts to appoint a receiver and in essence, sending the developer home.

And when you pass by Bahama and you look at that place, you can't help but see many hopes wrapped up in it.

And they've all been dashed. And if only we are able to hear the stories, to hear the personal stories, many people who perhaps would not be considered wealthy, but nonetheless had set their hopes on that particular project.

[16:06] No doubt, the developer, Mr. Smerlian, had expected to earn tens of millions of dollars from that project for himself and for his family. And it has turned in another way where it would be the reason for the loss of tens of millions of dollars for him and his family.

It's quite sad. It's quite unfortunate. But it is a current reminder to us of what happens, what can happen if we place our hope in the uncertainty of riches but not on the Lord.

Look at what the Apostle Paul says at the end of verse 17. At the end of verse 17, he says that it is God who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

And really, herein lies the issue. God is the one who is the source of everything and he richly provides us with everything to be enjoyed. And therefore, our hope should be set on the giver and not on the gift.

He is the one who gives us all that we have. He is the one who gives the rich the riches they possess. And yet, the tendency and the temptation is to set our hopes on the gift given by the giver as opposed to the giver himself.

[17:41] God has given us riches. God has given us things in abundance to be enjoyed, not to be trusted in. not to set our hopes on them.

And so, it is a betrayal of God's generosity when we don't enjoy his gift and instead set our hopes on his gifts.

So, Paul is addressing the rich. And on that basis, I want to ask you a question this morning. is Paul addressing you?

The Apostle Paul is addressing the rich. And my question to you is, is the Apostle Paul addressing you?

Do you see yourself in the audience of those who are being addressed this morning? do you see yourself in the audience of the rich?

[ 18 : 52 ] Those who face these real dangers that are being laid out for us this morning. The danger of being haughty and thinking of ourselves more than we ought to, having this sense of superiority over others.

The danger of seeing what we have as our security. Is Paul addressing you this morning? Now, obviously, that's not a question to be answered out loud, but I suspect that most of us are saying no.

I want to ask for a show of hands. I can tell by the smile some of you are saying no. you may be thinking, well, Paul can't be referring to me because I don't have a large bank account and I don't have, like Brother David said, you know, I don't own my own house or the bank has a lien against my house through a mortgage.

And we may be comparing ourselves to people like Mr. Brent Semonet or the people who live in Leifert Key or in Old Fort Bay or the people who live in Albany or over in Ocean Club Estates. And really, I think if we do that, yes, it is easy to say he's not talking about us, but the truth is that you could probably go in Leifert Key and read this and some people will say, well, he's not talking to me because I'm not as rich as Mr. Dingman and I'm not as rich as Sean Connery and I'm not as rich as the other one and soon you're able to see that riches are relative.

[ 20 : 36 ] But I want to submit to us this morning that Paul is talking to almost every single one of us. Now here's a test whereby you can know if you are being addressed in this passage.

Here's a test. If your financial circumstances are such that you can feel or you can be tempted to feel superior to other people who are less than you, you're being addressed.

If you can face that temptation where because of what you possess, because of what you are able to even access, through your financial circumstances, through the earning power that you have, through the job that you have, and that is able to present a temptation to you.

We're not talking about yielding to that temptation, but just the reality that this can present a temptation to you. Maybe you may want to consider how others in your similar circumstances do think that they are more superior than those who have less.

Whether you fall prey to that or not is a separate issue, but the mere fact that you can be faced with that temptation, if you can be faced with that temptation, I want to submit this warning that the Apostle Paul is addressing you.

[ 22 : 12 ] Because you face this danger that is in this passage. And second, if your financial circumstances could tempt you to hope less in God and more in your money, in your material possessions, in your job, in your earning power, then you are rich enough to be addressed in these three verses this morning.

And I submit to you that you are being addressed. If you're praying, give me this day my daily bread, and that is more of a rote prayer, and you're not praying in a real sense of dependency and awareness that you need God, I want to submit to you this morning that you're rich.

And you are being addressed because you can be faced with the very real temptation of hoping in the infrastructure of your financial situation as opposed to hoping in the Lord.

God. As you think about your futures, you plan out. It's not an awareness as much about God as much as there is about how much I earn and how much I have saved and what I'm able to access. And if that is our case this morning, we are rich and we are being addressed. And if you are aware this morning that you are being addressed and that you do have access, you do have more than many others and that there is this opportunity for you to trust in your wealth and if that is not your situation this morning where you are not trusting in your wealth and you are not feeling superior to other people because of what you have and what you're able to earn, then you should rejoice this morning because God in his mercy and in his providence has kept you from falling prey to these real dangers that we see the Apostle Paul.

[ 24 : 51 ] laying out for us this morning. But maybe through the power of the Spirit and his conviction you are aware that yes, you do identify with what you possess and you do identify with what you are able to earn and the lifestyle that you're able to access because of the income that you're privileged to have and you're aware that that has sometimes affected how you think about yourself and how you see yourself and how you see other people, then this is God's mercy to you this morning.

To see this as a very real danger of haughtiness and what the scriptures say is that pride goes before a fall and a haughty spirit before destruction and so we're being warned and adjusted and we're being corrected in that way.

And maybe you're aware this morning that your hope really is in what you have. You've really set your hope on your possessions or your ability to achieve and to accumulate resources both for the present and for the future and you can see how things are going to work out.

You have the numbers and you have it all budgeted out and if this happens and the promotion comes, I'll be able to do this and I'll be able to do that and my kids will be okay for college and I'll be able to acquire this asset and the other and I'll be able to retire.

If you're thinking in those terms and it is absent, thinking about God, then God is convicting you this morning. He is in mercy bringing to your attention this very real danger.

[ 26 : 51 ] As hard as it is to lose possessions and many of us saw, as David referred to, individuals in rather video clips or in pictures, standing in the midst of rubble.

many people lost the largest possession they had which is their home and some of those islands perhaps didn't have them insured.

As devastating as that loss is, it is compounded when we have set our hope upon it. When our hope is set upon something that we have lost, lost, the loss itself is compounded.

And so God is caring for us this morning. He is caring for us, those of us who live in a fallen world where catastrophes happen, where setbacks happen, where reversals happen, where it is true that we can go to bed tonight with all of our needs met and everything okay and we can wake up in the morning and be set on a path that will lead to poverty.

There are some people whose lives changed because of a health diagnosis. There are some people whose lives changed as a result of divorce.

[ 28 : 18 ] And we can go to bed, as I said, tonight, wake up in the morning and it will be night and day. And therefore the Lord cares for us in his word and he tells us, do not set your hope on these things.

Again, we understand the world doing it. The world will set their hope on those things, but not so for the people of God and that is who is being addressed this morning.

So those are the dangers of being rich. the apostle Paul then goes on and he tells us that in addition to there being dangers of being rich, there are duties of being rich.

There are duties of being rich. And this brings me to my second and final point. we see these duties outlined in verse 18.

Look at verse 18. Paul says they are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share.

[ 29 : 46 ] they are to be rich in good works. Those of you who are rich he is saying you need to be rich in good works as well to match your riches.

There should be some correlation between the riches that you have and the good works that you do. You should be willing to give and do good, Paul says, and then you are also to be generous and have a heart that is ready to share.

Now why should the rich be generous? Well the reason the rich should be generous is because what we just read a short while ago at the end of verse 17. God richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

That's why we should be generous because God gives and God provides. And it doesn't matter who we are, it doesn't matter how we can give a reason for how we've come into whatever we own, ultimately every good and perfect gift that comes to us in this world comes from the Father of lights. And so the rich should use their riches to do good and they should have a generous heart ready to give because of the generosity of God who has given to them, given them things richly to enjoy.

[ 31 : 17 ] Now Brother David read the story of the rich young ruler and it's quite interesting that he is the only man that we see in scripture who is told to do that, to go and sell all of his possessions.

And I make that point because scripture is not opposed to riches. And what that young man was told to do is not normative. It was what he was required to do because Jesus was addressing, as Brother David said, his heart.

He was claiming to obey all these commandments but he was disobeying the very first one which was to love the Lord his God above all else. And the scripture records that he ran to Jesus saying, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

And when Jesus told him what to do, scripture says, he walked away sorrowful. Ran to Jesus, excited, when Jesus said, part with what your heart is attached to. He walked away sorrowful. A couple of observations from what Paul is saying to us in verse 18. notice that Paul is not laying down rules for giving.

[ 32 : 39 ] Instead, he is laying down principles for giving. He is not talking about the amount that the rich should give. He is not talking about how frequently they should give. You see, that's going to vary from person to person and Paul is not able to say, do this or do that.

And this is one of the reasons why it is not equitable for us as a church or for any church to come to all members and say, I want everyone to give this amount.

That's inequitable because we all give that from a different set of circumstances. Some are able to perhaps give much more than that amount requested and some are really only able to give less. And so the Apostle Paul does not get into numbers and he doesn't get into frequency but he deals with the principle and he says, you ought to do good.

Do good for whatever your circumstances of riches happen to be. You ought to be rich in good works. Rich in good works for you will be determined by your circumstances of riches.

[ 33 : 48 ] Not based on what somebody else does or does not do. And Paul does not call them to give away large amounts of what God has blessed them with.

He's not calling them to give away so much so they can cease to be rich. There are some people who wrongly believe that Christianity is socialism. I had a professor in college who I got into trouble with as a freshman.

It was unwise. he was from Korea and he in one class, an introduction to political science he got up and he said D.

Jesus, D. Jesus. He was a communist. He said if you have one coat, if you have two coats, you give him one and you keep one.

And I said well Professor Rhee, I said Jesus was not a communist. Jesus said that we should meet the needs of others. So if I have ten coats, he doesn't call me to give away five to my brother or give away one to nine other people so that we're all equal.

[ 35 : 01 ] He didn't teach that. He taught that we are to be kind and we are to give but not that we are to make every single person equal. And that was the reason that I couldn't minor in political science anymore.

I had to drop out of that section. He did not like me after that. Really, he didn't. But Christianity does not support socialism and income distribution.

It doesn't support that. I mean governments get involved in that. And as our prime minister loves to quote one of his famous quotes that you're to do it to the least of the brethren.

Yeah, you're to do it to the least of the brethren. But that does not mean income redistribution. That does not mean taxing and taking away from those who you think have too much and trying to give it to those who you believe don't have enough.

Paul is not addressing that. Paul nor the scriptures are opposed to people being rich and in particular Christians being rich.

[ 36 : 13 ] The riches are from God who has given them to us to be enjoyed and to be shared with others. So the owner gets to enjoy them, the owner gets to share them with others, being generous with others.

It's also important to see that the apostle Paul is not just making the point about giving. He's not just into rote giving. He's concerned about our attitude as well.

before we give we need an attitude that sees giving as a duty, as a duty because God has blessed us with enough riches to be able to give and to be able to do good.

In other words we need an awareness that when God blesses us with riches, he is not just thinking about us, he is thinking about others as well whom he desires to bless through us.

And so we need an attitude that delights to be generous and is ready to share. Paul is also not talking about giving out of a guilt complex.

[ 37 : 27 ] There are some people who would just give because they feel guilty because they have and others don't. That's not why we give. We don't give because we feel bad that people are poor and that we are rich.

We don't give just to get rid of people because they pester us and they beg us. We don't give just because we don't want to get involved in some situations.

There are some times when part of doing good is not just giving to some good cause but it is also getting involved in doing good. Putting our hands in it. Not just because we have money we can throw money after it.

There are some Christians who take that approach but part of doing good is to put ourselves in it as well. And it comes out of this recognition that God has blessed us and he has positioned us both to enjoy and to share the riches that he has given to us.

And if you have a hard time this morning saying the duties of being rich as duties just remember that all that you have was given to you. The apostle Paul says it this way he says what do we have that we didn't receive?

[ 38 : 46 ] All that we have we have received as good gifts from the hands of a generous God. And when he gives us more than we need he enables us to give and to do good.

And when we give of our riches what we do is we increase our dependency upon God and we increase our dependency upon God and we decrease the temptation to set our hopes on riches. Oftentimes behind not giving is a fear of not having enough. A fear that our needs are not going to be met. And ultimately that's reflected on our view of God.

How we view God. That God has been good to me but he will not be good to me. He has provided for me but he will not provide for me in the future. And therefore we hold on to and we seek to hoard what God has given to us to enjoy and to share.

So in light of these duties that we have I notice now I'm not talking about just the rich I'm talking about we because as I said I believe that largely we are being addressed in this passage this morning.

[ 40 : 13 ] Different definitions and sizes of riches in the room this morning but we're all being addressed and therefore we need to ask and sincerely answer some questions.

First of all am I doing good? Am I doing good with the resources that God has blessed me with? Am I doing good with them? Am I honestly able to say that I'm rich in good works?

I'm rich in good works for my circumstances and for the size rich that I am. Am I rich in good works? Am I rich in good works?

And then would our hearts be described as generous? Am I generous and am I ready to share?

And you know I've lived long enough to see generosity expressed in all kinds of circumstances. have lived long enough to see generosity expressed in the midst of what we would consider to be poverty. One of the experiences that come to mind is a time when I was attending a conference in Atlanta some years back and a friend and I were to stay in a hotel.

[ 41 : 51 ] we had planned to stay in a hotel and there was a family in the church that was hosting the conference. They were supposed to host a brother from India and he was traveling for two days to get to the conference and missed the flight and was not able to come to the conference because by the time he got a connection it would be just too late to come.

And we got a phone call from the person coordinating housing and he told us that this family so desired to have someone staying with them if we would be willing to go and stay with them.

And we went and it was in October just like this month where I was in Indiana I was in Mindy's home state and I was freezing this week. Freezing.

Literally. I mean and then the room was freezing. We went to this home and it was quite a poor family.

I remember going in this house in October in Atlanta. The house had no heat. It was cold. I remember laying in bed and being able to look through the side of the wall, the siding.

[ 43 : 09 ] It was a wooden framed house and you can look through the siding. I can look outside. I remember going in the shower and just smiling at the shower.

I won't tell you what I did. But this family was generous. One of the things that came to mind as I was there, I thought it would be rare for a Bahamian under these circumstances to be eager to open their homes to others.

And by the way, that's not a commendation. That's an indictment on our pride. That oftentimes we think we have so little or oftentimes we want to impress and therefore we're not generous because it is not what we would rather be able to share and extend to others.

We don't think it's enough, it's not good enough, but yet it is what God in his providence has allotted for us. And out of that he calls us to be generous.

So generosity has nothing to do with how much we have. It's a hard attitude. Am I generous and am I willing to share?

[ 44 : 45 ] When we think of these things this morning, it is so easy to think of them absent-mindedly. When we think of being rich, when we think of this duty to share and to do good and to be generous, it's so easy to think of it in an absent-minded way.

And we can easily think about riches as being more permanent than they really are. You know, the truth is, just imagine if the Lord came right now, everything that's been accumulated is of no more value to anybody.

I don't know that this exactly translates, but I remember when I was a little boy, and we used to be shooting marbles, sometimes, you know, my mother would just stand in the door of our little house and she would call our names wherever we, she didn't even know where we were, but she would just call our names, and we would be somewhere shooting marbles, and you know the time I used to hate for her to call me?

When I was winning. When I had a lot of marbles, I just hated for her to call me then because I wanted more marbles. If the Lord comes right now and all the things that we have, we have not enjoyed, we have not shared with others, they have no more value.

And whether he comes or not, the truth is that if we die, and one day we will, we're going to leave it all behind. And that day may be sooner than we actually think.

[ 46 : 30 ] And so when we think of these things, we tend not to think of the Lord's return, we tend not to think of the day of our death. And the Apostle Paul actually, it's easy to miss it, but he actually brings in view eternity in verse 19 for us.

Look at what he says in verse 19. Let me start from verse 18. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, and ready to share, 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.

Paul is connecting what we do now with what we have. Our willingness to share, our generosity, our doing good, he is connecting it with the future.

And the opposite of that is true. Our unwillingness to share, our unwillingness to be generous and to do good is also connected and has some future effect in our lives.

people who put us in touch with reality in verse 19. Some people get so caught up in protesting and questioning the duties that they forget that there is something more beyond these duties.

[ 48 : 02 ] Paul says that as a result of fulfilling the duties of being rich in verse 18, there are blessings for us in verse 19. they are stored up treasure for us as a foundation for the future.

And exactly what does it mean? What is this treasure that they will lay up for themselves? Well, deceased pastor and theologian John Stott put it this way, the treasure for themselves which the wealthy lay up by their generosity is clearly not material treasure.

For Jesus specifically told us not to do this. It is rather spiritual treasure which is literally a good foundation for the future.

Enabling the generous to lay hold of the authentic life which begins now and ends in heaven. sadly many rich Christians are not mindful of this reality of storing up future spiritual treasure in heaven.

[ 49 : 21 ] But brothers and sisters verse 19 should be a vivid reminder to us that when we use our riches to do good they not only benefit others but they also benefit us.

We have this future treasure that we store up for ourselves and we reduce the likelihood to trust in our wealth when we do that.

In their commentary on these verses pastors Kent Hughes and Brian Chappell helpfully summarize this duty of rich Christians. Listen to what they say.

Of course neither Jesus nor Paul thought that one could buy salvation or promoted moralism based on human merit. Far from buying shares in heaven Paul is emphasizing that true riches have nothing to do with earthly wealth which is uncertain and for this age only.

the only riches that will survive this world are those invested by God's people through generous giving. God reconciles us through his free grace moves us to serve him and then accepts our services flawed as they are and bestows on our services a reward they do not merit.

[ 50 : 55 ] Those who give never suffer loss but get richer and richer and richer in the age to come. What we hold on to and do not give will eventually be consumed either through use or through the coming fire.

But what we give in doing good in being generous would cause us to truly be richer and richer and richer.

That is the riches that endures beyond this life. I believe that as we consider this issue of giving it really brings into view the greatest example of giving.

It's one thing to give of our riches. It's one thing to give of our possessions. It is another thing to give our very lives. And scripture says that Jesus left heaven he left all that he had equality with God did not consider it something to grab on to but he came not just to bring us a gift not just to give us something but he came to give his very life.

And so as we consider this whole issue of being called to give what God has given to us let us be provoked by our Savior's example.

[ 52 : 38 ] that he gave himself. He gave himself to the undeserving. He gave himself to those whom he knew and for them through and through.

And yet still he gave sacrificially on the cross for sinners. brothers and sisters let us all be aware this morning of the dangers of developing a false sense of superiority.

And if by the grace of God this morning that is not a temptation for us that we are yielding to let us remember that that does not mean that five years from now or ten years from now the circumstances may not be different.

This is something that we must guard against in an ongoing way. This is a danger that will continue to be with us until the end of our lives.

and present experience and past experience are no guarantee of future experience and we need to stay near to Christ pleading for his mercy helping us to be sober in our assessment of ourselves and our assessment of others.

[ 54 : 09 ] And let us also be aware of this danger of developing a false sense of security from what we possess. Again may not be an issue for us this morning but it doesn't mean that it may not be so in the days ahead.

And this danger will be with us until the day that the Lord returns or until the day that we die. And so may the Lord help us to heed these words that we have heard this morning as God addresses us about the dangers of being rich.

Let's pray together.