

True Riches

1 Timothy 6:17-19

Sermon Outline

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A. Earthly Riches, Temporal - Uncertain (v. 17):

1. Command – Timothy is commanded to give a proclamation (public statement, an announcement) charging the people in the church to understand this a command they must follow.
2. Command – This is a command that must always be in place as believers in a world, led by Satan (1 John 2:15-17; 5:19), which could have their hearts become divided towards God (Matthew 6:24).
 - a) The structure of the passage is simple. Paul gives six admonitions built around five imperatives: do not be haughty, do not set one's hope on riches but on God, do good, be rich in good works, be liberal and generous. He follows with the result of following these actions—the rich will lay a good foundation for the future—and He concludes with the reason that they should do these things—in order to grasp true, eschatological, eternal life.¹
3. Rich – To be rich is to be able to pay bills, provide a covering over one's head; food and clothes are more than enough and can create a sense of security.
 - a) The very wealthy usually derived their income from landowning; they rented out the land to tenant farmers or residents, or derived profits from crops grown on the land. A socially inferior but nonetheless wealthy class of merchants also arose, especially of ship owners. Wealth could be obtained by a variety of means, not all of them immoral.²
 - b) The rich are tempted to think that their greater monetary value indicates that they themselves are of greater worth or value. Paul forthrightly charges them through Timothy "not" (μή) to think this way (cf. Rom. 12:16; Jas. 1:10).³
4. Present world – The focus is on a person's immediate circumstance and the present circumstances that surround them. Tomorrow belongs to God (Matthew 6:34). Implicit in the text is that wealth is temporary.

¹ Mounce, W. D. (2000). *Pastoral Epistles* (Vol. 46, p. 365). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

² Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* (1 Ti 6:17–18). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

³ Knight, G. W. (1992). *The Pastoral Epistles: a commentary on the Greek text* (p. 272). Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

- a) Paul's beginning reference to the "present world" suggests that the wealthy can have their wealth only in this age. It is good for this present world, but it does not convert automatically into blessedness in the world beyond.⁴
- b) *I advise you to buy gold from me refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.* (Revelation 3:18; NASU)
5. Present world – This is a world that is rebellious against God, under the influence of Satan (1 John 5:19) who uses money to divide people's heart (Matthew 6:24; 1 John 2:15-17) which is also the source of all forms of evil (1 Timothy 6:10).
6. Conceited, high minded – Those who are rich must continuously not allow their resources to make them proud and arrogant so that they view themselves, just because of their resources, to be better or above someone else.
7. Conceited — Our finances should not cause us to be proud or arrogant (Deut. 8:12–14).
- a) *"When you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery"* (Deut. 8:12–14).⁵
- b) *"Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: 'that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,' declares the LORD"* (Jer. 9:23–24).
8. To fix their Hope – Those who are rich must be completely committed to not put their trust in the uncertainty of money rather than fully surrender to the Word of God expecting it to fulfill the Lord's promises.
- a) In 6:3–10 Paul condemned those who were seeking wealth, but in 6:17–19 he addressed those who are already wealthy. For Paul, wealth and property are not sinful in themselves, provided that one is not seeking them. Wealth can be used for good or for evil, for selfish or for beneficent causes; Paul says that Christians must use it for good.⁶
- b) *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; 21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. " The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. 23 "But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! 24 " No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the*

⁴ Lea, T. D., & Griffin, H. P. (1992). *1, 2 Timothy, Titus* (Vol. 34, p. 175). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

⁵ Larson, K. (2000). *I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (Vol. 9, p. 249). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

⁶ Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* (1 Ti 6:17–19). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.
(Matthew 6:19-24 NASU)

7. Uncertainty – Riches are uncertain. They only provide a temporary sense of security because money cannot sustain anything permanently. Example: oil reservoirs can dry up, droughts can take place, fires just burned homes in LA or termites can eat our houses, if left untreated. All animals can become barren – no more meat and no more vegetables.
 - a) Each day we see the evidence of his warning—bankruptcy cases increase, the stock market fluctuates, governments fall and their monetary systems fail, prices can escalate, re-estate prices can fluctuate, and money drains away. There is no predictability when it comes to money; trusting it is risky.⁷
 - b) The wealthy have special challenges in the area of pride and contentment. They are to see their wealth as given by God, not by their own abilities. The purpose for their wealth is to enjoy by giving, not to covet or hoard. If the rich are free to give (6:18), they will be able to take hold of true riches (6:19). The material goods of this life are a mere shadow of the eternal reality to come.⁸

8. Uncertainty of riches – All the events that lead up to a person having money belongs to God (Deut. 8:11-20; Proverbs 8:17-21).
 - a) “An abundance of possessions exceeding the norm of a particular society.” This is to live above the norm for what is average in a society. This is not Bill Gates rich, this is above the upper middle class with some savings in the bank. This is having groceries for several days even months (Rich man building barns – Luke 12:13-21). Bill Gates’ rich is wealthy. In this passage it is said rich and he is not writing to Americans. If a person has too many cars they are resourceful because if one car breaks down they have another one. So since they are resourceful they, by whole standards are rich.

9. God supplies – This is a presentation of God in His eternity, totality and as creator. Because He creates all things there is no way He can be fully seen by any creation He created. This is God in His essential essence.
 - a) Living a righteous life blesses a believer because they will do what God instructs them to do concerning their finances (Prov. 10:22; 11:6).
 - b) When God establishes a righteous believer, nothing can permanently tear them down (Job; Matthew 7:24-29).
 - ☐ Righteous living leads to faithful giving which produces God’s financial rewards (2 Corinthians 9:11; Hebrews 11:4)
 - ☐ God rewards righteousness living (Proverbs 8:17-21; 21:21; Psalms 112:1-3; 128).

⁷ Larson, K. (2000). *I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (Vol. 9, pp. 249–250). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

⁸ Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). *Tyndale concise Bible commentary* (p. 640). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

- ☐ Sinful people will be blessed but God says that He will store this for the righteous (Proverbs 13:22; Eccl. 2:22, 26).
- ☐ Work hard (Proverbs 10:4; 12:11; 13:4; 14:23; 21:5; 22:4).
- ☐ We will be rewarded for working ethically even if it is a mean boss (Colossians 3:22-25).

10. Supplies – Because a believer commits to use God’s Word to determine how they spend their money God takes ownership to provide jobs, even when the job market is bad. He sustains health (money is not eaten up with medical expenses), scholarships for kids going to college etc. In their culture rain, crops keep growing, animals multiply and they are protected from their enemies who may seek to steal their crops.
11. All things; Whatsoever – His love is so great, it is available for everyone. There are no special people that are the only ones. It does not matter your background or what someone may be into; it is for His entire creation that He has lost to the prince of the world, (1 John 5:19) Satan, because He gave mankind a free will. ‘It means not only all things in their totality but also each thing with that totality came into existence through Him (Jn. 1:3).’
12. All things – ‘Every good and perfect gift comes from above.’ (James 1:17)
13. Enjoy – God supplies us so that we find joy, not the temporary nature of happiness (Proverbs 10:22; 11:6; Ecclesiastes 2:24-26; 3:12-13).
 - a) It is the blessing of the Lord that makes us rich, and He adds no sorrow to it. (Proverbs 10:22; NASU)
 - b) Eccl 5:18–20: *“Behold, what I have seen to be good and to be 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 which God has given him, for this is his lot. Every man also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and find enjoyment in his toil—this is the gift of God. For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart.”*⁹

B. Heavenly Riches, Unfading - Forever (vs. 18-19):

1. Command – Paul continues to command Timothy to make this charge to believers to remain focused on how they manage their money God’s style.
 - a) Two negative commands against pride and trusting in their riches are followed by a series of positive commands; first, they are to recognize that it is God who provides for their needs and indeed their enjoyment and to put their trust in him; and, second, they are to do good, to display their wealth in the performing of good deeds, to be generous and share their possessions. In doing so they will lay a good foundation for the future. Their ultimate future and so attain to the ‘real’ life of heaven.¹⁰

⁹ Mounce, W. D. (2000). *Pastoral Epistles* (Vol. 46, p. 367). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

¹⁰ Marshall, I. H., & Towner, P. H. (2004). *A critical and exegetical commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (p. 669). London; New York: T&T Clark International.

2. To do good – We are commanded to continuously do what is honest and acceptable in the sight of God based on His Word. This therefore becomes beneficial to all those around us (Philippians 2:1-5).
 - a) These final four actions are the natural result of realizing that all a person has is a gift from God. Paul starts with the general “do good” and moves to the more specific “be rich in good deeds,” and then clarifies that by “good deeds” he means sharing generously with others. The three infinitives are grammatically dependent on παράγγελλε, “urge,” in v 17.¹¹
3. To be rich in good works - The object of doing good richly is to see a project to completion, beyond what is expected, no matter the energy or sacrifice it takes. This could be the cumulative effort of everyone so that the tasks, directed by the Word God, are executed to completion no matter how burdensome.
 - a) Good works are solid evidence of salvation and assure us that we have eternal life. Paul may have based these thoughts on such words as contained in Matt 6:19–21. The godless, on the other hand, lay up treasures for themselves of a different kind (Jas 5:1–5).¹²
4. Generous – Our heart should be ready to supply whatever it takes to accomplish God’s purposes like the believers in Acts 2:44-47.
 - a) “To be generous” demands a liberal sharing of wealth with others. One who is “willing to share” shows that the generous act of giving is to spring from internal generosity. Paul was suggesting that genuine wealth is found in what we give, not what we have.¹³
5. Ready to share – To share is the sense that what God has provided is not just for that particular person, it belongs to God so it belongs to His work (Acts 2:44-47; 5:32-37).
 - a) The material blessings of God are to be enjoyed and used for the advancement of His kingdom, not for self-centered living.¹⁴
6. Storing up a treasure – Doing all the above is to continuously and actively gather together resources that are more valuable than any earthly riches any person can accumulate. This is a banking system that lasts forever. This can be compared to those in Laodicea (Revelation 3:15-18).
 - a) The NT passages indicate what constituted treasure in antiquity: gold and silver coins (Jas 5:3; Matt 2:11), luxurious clothing (Jas 5:2b), which are damaged by moths (Matt 6:19f.),

¹¹ Mounce, W. D. (2000). *Pastoral Epistles* (Vol. 46, p. 367). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

¹² Lea, T. D., & Griffin, H. P. (1992). *I, 2 Timothy, Titus* (Vol. 34, p. 176). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

¹³ Lea, T. D., & Griffin, H. P. (1992). *I, 2 Timothy, Titus* (Vol. 34, pp. 175–176). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

¹⁴ Radmacher, E. D., Allen, R. B., & House, H. W. (1999). *Nelson’s new illustrated Bible commentary* (pp. 1606–1607). Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers.

reserves of grain and food (Luke 12:16–21), which decay or are eaten by animals (Jas 5:2a; Matt 6:19f.), and expensive perfumes (Matt 2:11).¹⁵

7. Storing up a treasure – Focus on receiving priceless everlasting returns from God (Matthew 6:19-20; Luke 12:29-34).
 - a) By being generous, the rich are not losing their wealth. Rather, they are laying it away in heaven, and by doing so, they are establishing a firm foundation for eternity, for life that is truly life. Lock translates, “in this way they store up true treasures for themselves which form a firm foundation on which they can build for the future.” (73)¹⁶
8. Good foundation – The storing up of treasure builds something that is more superior and therefore of greater value than storing up earthly possessions. As a result God establishes a solid base for a great future.
 - a) Such eternal treasure becomes a firm foundation for the future, recalling in a mixed metaphor perhaps another of the Lord’s teachings (cf. Matt. 7:24–27; Luke 6:47–49). Wealthy Christians should invest their riches for eternity. “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose” (Jim Elliot). Paradoxically it is in this giving away of the possessions which the world considers the key to the good life that a Christian may take hold of (cf. 1 Tim. 6:12) the life that is truly life.¹⁷
 - b) A believer’s daily obedience to God builds a good foundation for the time to come. The Scriptures teach that a believer’s works will be evaluated to see what his or her life in Christ has produced (1 Cor. 3:10–15).¹⁸
9. Future – Storing up God’s way establishes a Biblically outlined systematic process that cannot fail because God’s Word does not return void. This is a future that would last forever.
10. May take hold – Because it is held with a firm power gift that is sustained by God, there is no way to lose it.
11. Life indeed - Believers who trust this process may go through financial issues like Job did, but their righteousness will restore them twice over what they had. As a result of being rich in heaven and earth they experience the true blessings that living a saved and sanctified life provides. God always sustains them no matter what the economy is doing, lets them see all their days, (Psalm 128:5-6) and allows them to enjoy their hard labor.
12. Life indeed – When God sustains our lives the benefits we gain becomes a daily experience of God’s blessings.
13. Life indeed – Being generous blesses us on earth and in heaven – Abundant life!

¹⁵ Balz, H. R., & Schneider, G. (1990–). *Exegetical dictionary of the New Testament* (Vol. 2, p. 150). Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans.

¹⁶ Mounce, W. D. (2000). *Pastoral Epistles* (Vol. 46, p. 368). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

¹⁷ Litfin, A. D. (1985). 1 Timothy. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 747–748). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹⁸ Radmacher, E. D., Allen, R. B., & House, H. W. (1999). *Nelson’s new illustrated Bible commentary* (pp. 1606–1607). Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers.