

Stewardship Under the Cross

The Treasure Principle

*Matthew 6:19-21 Jesus said, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. **For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**"*

Our Lord Jesus Christ said those words, so we know they are true – where your treasure goes, your heart will go also. But why is that so? It is because our income represents our lives – we had to put in a certain amount of time, a certain amount of our lives, to gain that income. So every purchase we make is a confession of how we want to spend our lives, what we think is important, where we want our hearts to be.

This is one of the reasons God's Word encourages us to cheerfully give a faithful, first-fruits, generous proportion of our income to God's work in the Church: God knows that where our treasure goes, our hearts will follow. Our tithes and offerings are a confession that we trust in God's provision and a response of thanksgiving for all His gifts to us. Christians are generous because God has first been generous to us in sending His Son to die for us and provide us with salvation and eternal life.

Randy Alcorn, a writer of several books on Christian theology, calls this The Treasure Principle. Consider these thought-provoking words from his book of that title: "God's money has a higher purpose than my affluence. Giving is a joyful surrender to a greater person and a greater agenda. Giving affirms Christ's lordship. It dethrones me and exalts Him. It breaks the chains of mammon that would enslave me."

Over the past years, this congregation has had Stewardship Sundays off and on and many of the members participating in Stewardship Sunday have taken the steps of giving more than a tithe (10% of their income) to God's work in the church. Some have started to tithe, and others decided to start working toward tithing a little bit each year. This year, as you consider the words of Jesus quoted above and your giving to God's work in the church – will you take another step? Finally, here is a thought to ponder from Martin Luther:

I have held many things in my hands and I have lost them all. But whatever I placed in God's hands, that I still possess.