

“Breaking Free from Debt ~ Hidden Treasure” [2.4.07]

Today, I would like to begin our time together with a story from archeology;

- In 1907, Theodore Davis & his team of American archeologists uncovered a small site in Egypt’s Valley of Kings;
  - A burial vault containing funeral artifacts w/King Tut’s name inscribed upon them.
  - Davis assumed this vault was King Tut’s complete tomb, & concluded the dig. In his report he wrote, “I fear that the Valley of Kings is now exhausted.”
- In 1922, British archeologist Howard Carter resumed the dig.
  - On February 16, 1923 Carter & his team opened the inner chamber of King Tut’s burial place which had not been entered [for over 3000 yrs].
- Theodore Davis’ team in 1907 had stopped digging ‘literally mere feet’ from where the dogged Carter’ had struck gold!

Howard Carter’s find was valued @ well over 680 million dollars

- Can you imagine what Theodore Davis must have thought about until the day he died;

Why did I stop digging just ‘mere feet’ away from that treasure?'

I can’t help but ask myself the same question!

- As I review my pastorate since May 2003 – I’ve concluded that much of WRCC has missed some ‘hidden treasure’ in scripture because of me.
  - I have been reluctant to teach the ‘full counsel of God’s word’ because of a tangible fear of sending the church the wrong message; that the...
    - ‘Church is only concerned with your money’ ☹
- I’ve intentionally avoided messages & sermon series on the topic of finances just because I did not want to confuse God’s church on what our mission clearly is:
  - Evangelize the Lost
  - Build Mature Disciples
  - & Become the Hands & Feet of Jesus in C. Indiana
- By God’s grace – our Heavenly Father is helping WRCC authentically live out & understand what He needs us to be about!
  - But I’ve neglected to teach that being financially responsible – being godly stewards of our time – talents - & treasures is a critical part of being a mature disciple!
  - Please forgive me for unintentionally neglecting the full counsel of God; this pattern ends TODAY;
  - I repent & come clean before you & God @ this moment!

This point on; we will diligently search for every ounce of ‘hidden treasure’ in God’s word!

Grab your Bible – there is some ‘hidden treasure’ in them thar pages ☺

- I. Hidden Treasure in scripture (just scratching the surface)
- A. (R) Matthew 5: 17 – 20 or p. 736 in pew Bible [foundational]
- In other words Don't neglect the 'full counsel' of God's word!
1. Listen to [v. 20] once again; Jesus says...
  2. Be cautious;
    - i. The Pharisee's weakness was that they were content to obey the laws outwardly w/out allowing God to change their ♥'s & attitudes ☹
    - ii. bottom line Jesus says that the quality of our inner goodness should be greater than that of the Pharisees
- B. (R) Deuteronomy 28: 1 – 13 or p. 159 in pew Bible
- Fully obeying God's word = abundant blessings
  - Do you believe this biblical principle church?
- C. Proverbs 11: 25 expresses,
- “The generous prosper & are satisfied; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed.”
- Do you believe this biblical principle church?
- D. Malachi 3: 6 – 10 or p. 729 in pew Bible
1. v. 10 “...Try it! Put me (God) to the test!”
  2. Two historically proven facts;
    - a. # 1 = Impossible for God to lie [deceit is not His nature]
    - b. # 2 = Honor God 1st & He will bless you!
  3. Do you believe this biblical principle of honoring God 1st w/the tithe?
- E. (R) Matthew 6: 31 – 34 or p. 738
1. Day to day God will give you all you need!
  2. Do you believe this biblical principle church?
- F. (R) Luke 6: 38 or p. 786 in pew Bible
1. Power packed verse; “Give, & you will receive.”
  2. “The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.”
  3. Jesus now speaking [hear words of Malachi in the distance]
- “Try it. Put me {Jesus} to the test!
- Do you believe this biblical principle church?
- G. (R) II Corinthians 9: 6 – 8 or p. 886 in pew Bible
1. Natural laws of the Harvest (measuring expectations)

2. Expect to reap what you sow!
  - a. [simple math] sow a few seeds = expect a small crop
  - b. 4 – H strawberry patch [planted a few plants = received few berries]

OR

- c. Sow generously = expect a generous crop
  - d. [natural laws of science] that validate God's word
3. Do you believe this biblical principle church?
  - H. (R) Hebrews 13: 5 – 6
    1. Coins in pocket aptly says, 'In God We Trust'
    2. Do you believe this biblical principle church?  
If so, what keeps us from putting them into everyday practice?

I believe there are @ least (2) contributors that inhibit us from being obedient to God's word:

II. # 1 is a Proper Mindset

A. (R) I Chronicles 29: 10 – 15 or p. 332 in pew Bible

Bible says, "God is the owner of everything!"

B. John Maxwell's story [congressman taking his son to McDonald's]

1. The dad bought his son a Coke & a large order of fries [sat down]
2. The dad took a sip of his Coke & reached over to get a fry from his son;
  - a. [All of a sudden] his son put his hands around the fries & pulled them back; the dad said – "That's OK son." ☹
  - b. Then the dad thought to himself;
  - c. Doesn't my son realize I'm the one who gave him the fries in the 1st place? Doesn't he realize that I can take those fries away from him anytime that I choose too?
  - d. He must not realize that I don't need any of His fries – I can get my own? Doesn't he realize all I wanted to do was share a couple of fries w/Him?
  - e. Then it hit the congressman – his son was simply acting like he'd been acting towards God of late ☹

C. Do you see the parallel?

1. God blesses us everyday and says, "I want to sit down w/you and enjoy some of those blessings!
2. So God sits down & when He starts to come to us – we put our hands around all our stuff and say – "No – no – no; this is our stuff God; we will decide what we are going to give to you!" ☹
3. And God in Heaven says,

- a. Don't they realize I'm the source of everything they've got?
- b. Don't they realize I have the power to take away whatever blessings I've given them?
- c. Don't they realize I can bury them in more blessings than they could ever imagine if they only trusted [Me = God]?
- d. Don't they realize I don't need anything they have?  
I just wanted to share it w/them!" ☹

[Moral of the story]

- Don't make the mistake of thinking you can achieve financial success on your own & ignore the sovereignty of God!
- DON'T FORGET –  
Those are His fries = God is the owner of everything! ☺

D. Understanding this biblical principle helps us to avoid (2) sins:

1. Coveting
2. & Greed

Jesus said in Luke 12: 15...

“Beware & be on guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions!”

2nd contributing factor that inhibits us from being obedient to God's word is...

III. # 2 is a Proper Attitude

- A. (R) Philippians 4: 11 – 13 or p. 901 in pew Bible
- B. Proper Attitude = Learning how to be content w/whatever I have!
- C. Being content is a 'lost art' in American culture ☹
  1. Most visibly seen in the amount of debt the majority of us carry!
  2. The Crown Ministries Class teaches that debt is a symptom of one or all the following; Greed – Jealousy – not being content w/what God has given you – impulsive behavior - & love of this world!
  3. Howard Dayton in his book, Your Money Counts quotes, “In a recent year more than 850,000 individuals filed bankruptcy – even more bankruptcies than during the Great Depression” ☹
  4. Gallop Poll found that (56%) of all divorces are a result of financial tension in the home ☹
  5. More accurate marriage vows should read, “Until debt do us part!”

Do you believe...

- God is the owner of everything?
- Are you content with the blessing that God has given you?

- If not, please come back these next (3) weeks & see what God has to say about how to “Break Free from Debt,” & put a contentment in your ♥ like you have never experienced before!
- God has ‘hidden treasure for all us’ – if we are only willing to honor Him 1st with all the blessing that are His to begin with!