



Preacher's Pen by Gene McCoy

Current television ads that feature celebrity and professional spokesmen tout the advantages of gold as an investment option in this volatile market. Gold has never been valued at zero, according to one ad. I suppose the same could be said of many commodities, all of which fluctuate in value.

Jesus related a story that provides the best possible investment strategy. Luke 16:1-13 records the account which, at first blush, seems to encourage unrighteousness. The manager of a rich man's wealth was called to account for his poor management. Knowing he was soon to be unemployed and on the street, the wicked servant weighed his options. He was physically incapable (unwilling?) of manual labor and too proud to beg. So he plotted a strategy to protect his long-term interests (see v. 4).

What Jesus highlights in the story is not the man's *practice*, but rather his *preparation* for the future. He quickly contacted all the debtors and drastically discounted their debt, offering them deals they couldn't refuse and that would put him in good standing with them in his imminent need. The wicked servant is praised for his shrewdness (see v. 8).

Jesus uses this example of preparation with regard to one's temporal or immediate future to teach His disciples the wisdom of making preparations for eternity. We should employ the same shrewdness in our investment for eternity as unrighteous people do in their temporal investments. What an indictment upon Christians who spend more time reading the Wall Street Journal than the Bible; who display more concern with trading stock than with nourishing the soul.

Note the eternal implications of our temporal investments, however. How

we manage material resources has an impact upon eternal returns and dividends. Jesus asks, "If you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you?"

Investing in ETERNITY

The focus of our Forward in Faith campaign is eternity. Although we are being challenged to make a sacrificial commitment over the next three years to cover the construction costs for our new building, we are urged to consider the physical plant as a tool that will enhance our ministry. The building is not, therefore, an end, but rather a means. Investing finances in the building is to be viewed as investing in the future of our congregation and the eternal salvation of souls.

The banquet on November 15, to which every member and friend of the congregation is invited, presents each of us with the occasion to commit a financial investment not merely in the temporal future of our congregation, but in the eternal future of souls that will be reached through the ministries that physical plant will make possible. Rather than bricks and blocks, think of the bodies that will comprise the body of Christ inhabiting that building. We are already planning creative ways in which the new building will open doors to ministering to the spiritual needs of people and to serving our community in various ways.

Your financial contributions representing true sacrifice will be converted into eternal dividends as sinners are converted into saints. Let us look beyond the immediate sacrifices to the eternal returns on our investments.

Be a shrewd steward. Prove yourself as a faithful steward of the Master's means by investing in eternity. Together let us move **FORWARD IN FAITH.**

