

How to Get Rich
September 8, 2013

I have three goals for the sermon this morning. That's two more than usual. First, I want to help you get rich. Second, I want to teach you to feel rich. And third, I want you give to missions.

This month we are sponsoring our special offering for State missions. This is the joint missions work that Southern Baptists are doing in Maryland and Delaware. In last week's bulletin were special offering envelopes and today we are distributing prayer guides. Both will be available on the table in the foyer. Or you can use any envelope and write State Missions Offering on the front, or on write it on your check.

When I speak of being some of you may be thinking of rich in terms of money. You might think of rich as being able to buy all things on your wish list. As adults you have a to do list, a chore list, a grocery list, a maintenance and repairs list. We have lots of lists as adults. Some of these we write down and some we just try to keep in our heads. Life for adults is full of lists.

I bet you also have a wish list. This is a list of things you want to own one day, or places you want to visit, or activities you want to do, or things you want to accomplish in your life. You might consider yourself rich if you have the time and money to fulfill your wish list.

But there is another kind of rich. Jesus speaks of this richness and encourages us to pursue it, rather than the money kind.

Matthew 6:19-20 (NIV) "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.

Jesus says there is a different treasure we might choose to pursue. He doesn't spell it out. We probably wouldn't understand it if He tried. Since we aren't yet in heaven, we probably couldn't understand the kind of treasure you collect there. We can assume though that it is better than riches or treasure on earth. For one thing, it is safe. We don't have to worry about it being lost, stolen, wasting away, or losing value. And it will be yours forever. Any earthly treasure you gain will have to be left behind. You can't even be sure who will end up with it when you are gone. Jesus says it is better to pursue the riches of heaven rather than the riches of earth.

We obtain these riches of heaven by serving Jesus. When you are obedient to Jesus, it lays up treasure in heaven. When you help others for Jesus it lays up treasure in heaven. When you show compassion, it lays up treasure in heaven. When you give to the poor it lays up treasure in heaven. AND... when you give to missions, to the spread of the good news of Jesus, it lays up treasure in heaven. Today I encourage you to lay up treasure in heaven as you give to missions work in Maryland and Delaware. I encourage you to pursue heavenly riches. This is my first goal for you today.

My second goal is to help you feel rich right now, in your current life. The writer of the book of Hebrews, in the Bible, has the secret to this. Here is it.

Hebrews 13:5 (NIV) Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

He says to be content with what you have. You can feel rich by being content with what you have. You might be thinking, "But I'm not rich so how can I feel rich?" The truth is, **Rich is a state of mind, not money.**

Feeling rich depends on what you compare your current situation to.

To feel rich, compare your current situation to those who have less.

There are two ways of looking at what you have. The first is to compare it to something less and the other is to compare it to something more. Let me illustrate with laundry.

When my wife and I first got married we lived in an old house with no access to a washer or dryer. Once a week we would pack up our dirty laundry and drive over to the seminary campus. The dorms and married housing had coin operated washers and dryers in the basement. In one building there was an old couch and chairs and a coffee table along with the machines. So we would spend a few hours sitting, studying, and doing laundry. Then we'd fold it all back up, put it back in our bags, and lug it back to the car and home.

When we moved to Maryland we lived in an apartment in Glen Burnie. The building we lived in did not have a washer or dryer. We had to haul the laundry to the basement of the building next door. There was no place to sit. So my wife would load the machines and then hike back to our own building. It was back and forth, back and forth, in the rain, the snow, the heat.

Then we moved to an apartment in Odenton. The building we lived in had washers and dryers, one floor down. There was no place to sit, but there was also no more hiking in the weather.

Then we bought a house in Odenton and it came with a washer and dryer in the house. Every time I remember what we used to have to do, I feel rich. I am very thankful for what we now have.

But big business doesn't want me to feel rich. They want me to feel poor. They want me to compare my current basic washer and dryer to the new machines. They want me to want a front loader which uses less energy, that sits on a stand so there is no more bending over. If I compare what I have to those machines, I don't feel rich, I feel poor.

Wanting more can make you feel poorer than you are. In doing research for this sermon I found an interesting survey that Fidelity Financial sponsors. They survey millionaires. In 2011 they received survey answers from more than 1,000 millionaires. One out of four, said they did not feel rich, even though they had at least 1.75 million dollars in investments. The average figure they said they needed to feel secure was \$7.5 million.

Rich is a state of mind. I know some of you have it nicer today than you have in the past. Compare your current lifestyle to the less you had in the past and feel rich.

Secondly, **To feel rich, savor what you have.**

I read an article the other day on enjoying food more. The writer said we eat hurriedly, thinking about the next bite of food instead of the one in our mouths. She encouraged us to slow down. Taste what we are eating. Feel it. Enjoy it. Savor it. I would add, give God thanks for it. Worship God for what you have to eat.

When you eat your favorite foods, savor those moments. Savor your hot shower. Savor your clean clothes. Savor your current riches. Thank God for His provisions. Start a blessings list and include running water, indoor toilets, and central heat. Don't forget air conditioning. Thank God for your microwave, your stove and oven, and your refrigerator. Look back in history and see how hard it was before people had these. And many in the world still don't. Today there are 1.5 billion people who have no electricity. Many have no toilets, not even an outhouse, and no toilet paper.

Come on. You are rich. Savor your riches.

To feel rich, create margin in your life. Margin is insurance. Margin is breathing space between what you have to spend and what you can spend. Live on less than you make, and save the extra. The difference is margin. Put what you don't spend in the bank and save it for a rainy day. That way when unexpected expenses come up, like a auto repair, you are prepared to get through it.

Many people live paycheck to paycheck and have no margin in their lives. You can live paycheck to paycheck no matter how much money you make. If you spend it as fast as you make it, you have no margin. Then any setback can ruin you. I have seen this working in our local food pantry. I've seen people drive up in a fancy car, and wonder why they need help feeding their family. The reason is because they had no margin. The chief wage earner got sick or injured and could not work and the income was lessened or removed. The family fell behind on their bills, and they don't have enough money to feed the family. They had no savings, no margin. They get behind on their bills and it pushes them over the fiscal cliff.

If you live without margins, you are in danger of losing what little financial security you have. Margin gives you options. Margin gives you freedom. Margin gives you security. Margin contributes to the feeling of being rich.

To feel rich, create margin in your life. And finally, **to feel rich, give to those in need.** By building margin, my wife and I have had money to help our nieces and nephews with books for college. We've had money to give to missions. I'm not bragging. I'm just telling you how rich it made me feel to be able to do that. I want you to have such experiences too. I want you to be able to help others and then praise God for the privilege of doing so.

That brings us back to missions. My third goal this morning is that you give to missions. Having margin gives you money to give to missions.

A few months ago I read in the newspaper about some young adults. These young adults have looked at the world we live in and wanted to make a difference. They read of millions of people languishing in poverty, in malnutrition, in disease, and want to do something. So they set their sights on a career that would give them a high income. They are not using their high income just to provide for themselves. They are using up to half of their income to save lives. They give to charities that provide wells for clean drinking water. They give to organizations that provide immunizations to children. Their donations purchase mosquito

nets to protect against malaria. They are saving people's lives through the money they are donating.

I was inspired by their compassion, their dedication, and self-sacrifice. It is a good thing to help people like these young adults are doing. How much better it is to also provide those people with the good news of Jesus Christ. That is our job. We are the ones with the good news of forgiveness of sin and eternal life. The people those young adults are helping my live longer, but without Jesus they won't live forever. Those people need Jesus too.

When you give to missions, your are making an eternal difference in people's lives. For that reason I encourage you to give to missions. Use the temporary material blessings God enables you to have now to make an eternal difference in the lives of others. In doing so you will add to God's kingdom. In doing so you will increase your heavenly riches. In doing so you will feel rich. Pray, think, and give out of your riches, to the Kingdom of God.

Invitation

We give to missions work because every person is lost and going to hell without Jesus. We believe heaven and hell are real places. Hell is just as real as heaven. God loves you and wants you in heaven with Him. To make that a reality He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for your sins. Through faith in Jesus' death and resurrection, God will forgive your sin and give you eternal life.

Today, accept God's promise of forgiveness through Jesus. Receive Jesus as your Savior from hell and turn your life over to Him, to live in obedience to Him.