

Sermon Series: “Hilarious Generosity”—9/17/2000—Lord of Life Lutheran

“God loves a cheerful (hilarious) giver.” 2 Corinthians 9: 7

Title: Enjoying the Benefits of Generosity

Text: 1 Timothy 6: 6-10, 17-19

Introduction: ILLUS.: “UNSELFISH TIP”

Theme: When we learn that the Heavenly Father “shall supply all our needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus”, we begin enjoying our possessions and our generosity with those possession because we have learned the secret of true enjoyment of the life that God has given back to us.

Two problems that always keep us from enjoying our blessings

C *Envy*—discontent with what you have **NOW**

1. **ILLUS.: WHERE THE GRASS IS GREENER**

2. Snare of current version of the American dream is open-endedness—always looking away from what have—“enjoy what God has given to you” (vs. 17)

3. **“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights without variation.” Jms1:17**

4. **“A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.” Proverbs 14: 30**

C *Greed*—never being satisfied even if you get what you want **THEN**

1. Even if you get it, you can’t take it with you (vs. 7)

2. Even if you get it, life doesn’t consist in it. (vs. 17)

3. **“Watch out! Be on guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” Luke 12: 15**

4. **ILLUS.: THE SOFA TRAP**

How to enjoy the blessings which I receive from God

C *Fostering an attitude of contentment* with God’s short and long term plans for me

1. **“godliness with contentment is great gain”**

2. Holding temporal things loosely and eternal things with tenacity (vss. 7, 19)

– when “asked by God” giving away because others need it

– **ILLUS.: AIN’T NATHIN’ BUT A THING**

– Maybe “the thing” is causing me to lose my grip on what is really life

3. Keeping our present material essentials to a minimum (vss. 7, 8, 18)

– Learn to live with the circumstantial limits that God has laid down for your life

a. Living with satisfaction and hope of God’s present care so don’t sink into pessimistic doubt and grumbling

b. Live within your means so that consequences of reckless spending doesn’t swamp your joy

– **“For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.”**

– “Travel light; expend your resources to make a difference; and be quick, thoughtful, sensitive, and current in your gifting.”

C *Forging a character of godliness* in the way I approach my “things”

1. Invested in a relationship with God through Jesus

– **“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all this shall be added to you.” Matt. 6: 33**

– **ILLUS.: WHO WILL PROVIDE??**

2. Enjoying a lasting return on the things you have

– Look for that which is immune to global/temporal changes—the eternal possession which is yours in Christ

– **“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Matt 6: 19-21**

– Enjoy giving your things away and watching God replace it “**be rich in good works, generosity, ready to share**”

– Remember that life is short but eternity is forever “**store up treasures of a good foundation for the future**”

Unselfish Tip

Many years ago, a ten-year-old boy walked up to the counter of a soda shop and climbed onto a stool. He caught the eye of the waitress and asked, "How much is an ice cream sundae?"

"Fifty cents," the waitress replied.

The boy reached into his pockets, pulled out a handful of change, and began counting. The waitress frowned impatiently. After all, she had other customers to wait on. The boy squinted up at the waitress. "How much is a dish of *plain* ice cream?" he asked.

The waitress sighed and rolled her eyes. "Thirty-five cents," she said with a note of irritation.

Again, the boy counted his coins. At last, he said, "I'll have the plain ice cream, please." He put a quarter and two nickels on the counter.

The waitress took the coins, brought the ice cream, and walked away. About ten minutes later, she returned and found the ice cream dish empty. The boy was gone. She picked up the empty dish—then swallowed hard. There on the counter next to the wet spot where the dish had been, were two nickels and five pennies. The boy had had enough for a sundae but he had ordered plain ice cream so he could leave a tip.

Who Will Provide

A young woman brings home her fiancé to meet her parents. After dinner, her mother tells her father to find out more about the young man. The father invites the fiancé into his study. "So what are your plans?" the father asks the young man.

"I am a Bible scholar," he replies.

"A Bible scholar. Hmm," the father says. "Admirable, but what will you do to provide a nice house for my daughter to live in as she's accustomed to?"

"I will study," the young man replies, "and God will provide for us."

"And how will you buy her a beautiful engagement ring such as she deserves?" asks the father.

"I will concentrate on my studies," the young man replies, "and God will provide for us."

"And children?" asks the father. "How will you support children?"

"Don't worry, sir, God will provide," replies the fiancé.

The conversation proceeds like this, and each time the father questions, the young idealist insists that God will provide. Later the mother asks, "How did it go, honey?" The father answers, "He has no job and no plans, but the good news is that I think I'm God."

1 Timothy 6: 6-10; 17-19

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9 People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 11 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. 12 Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 13 In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.