RAINSVILLE
FIRST FAMILY

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"The Safeguards Against the Idolatry of Covetousness" Part II

Luke 12:13-21

Rainsville First Baptist Church
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Luke 12:13-21

There is an issue Jesus raises in Luke 12 that is more serious than hypocrisy – and there is nothing more distasteful to the spiritual palate than hypocrisy – and that is covetousness.

Jesus said you cannot serve two masters, and he named them in the Gospel of Luke...

Luke 16:13 – "You cannot serve God and mammon (money – ESV and NIV).

Paul said in **Ephesians 5:5** in the NIV – **"For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."**

Then in **Luke 12:15** Jesus adds **"Take heed and beware…."**

The sin of covetousness…greed…

The word is greed – covetousness. It is a very descriptive word. It literally means to thirst for having more – always wanting more, and more and still more. It is as if a man, in order to quench his thirst, takes a drink of salt water, which happens to be the only water that is available. This makes him still more thirsty. So he drinks again and again, until his thirst kills him.

This sin is so grievous that not only does it rise to idolatry, but you need to put up safeguards in your life to prevent you from wrecking your life on the curve of greed.

Guard one's self, but up safety rails...

- the crib, the rails you might put up to keep a toddler from falling out of his first bed
- the guard rails the highway department uses on dangerous roads to provide extra safety measures for the drivers.

Then, there is something more valuable than your personal life or belongings…your soul.

Mark 8:36 – "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?"

So this morning let me give you four safeguards we need in our lives….

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I. A New Heart

Ezekiel 36:26-27 – "And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules."

II. Regularly Fasting from Buying Things and Getting New Things

If fasting from food will help control the flesh and remind the flesh that it does not get fed all the time, that food and flesh is not the Lord over you...

Then how do you let greed and covetousness know it is not Lord in your life?
By not feeding it when it wants something.

III. Creating A Grateful Heart for what God has Given You

Hebrews 13:5-7 – "Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear..."

Remember **Ephesians 5** and the context of Paul speaking about the idolatry of greed.

In **Ephesians 5:4** he adds, **"but rather giving of thanks."**

IV. Be Like Christ, Be A Generous Giver

Being generous with your giving is not about the money, but the heart.

II Corinthians 9:7 – "God loves a cheerful giver."

Why does God love a cheerful giver?
Because God is a cheerful giver.

The first step of being generous is tithing.

It is not law. Abram, in **Genesis 14:20**, gave Melchizedek a tithe of all he had. That was quite an offering. But, Melchizedek was the king of Salem and he was the priest of God Most High.

Yes, later Moses inscribed into the law, and the tithe for Israel was also used like a tax to support the theocracy of Israel; but, the first tithe went to support the priests and the Temple.

The tithe belongs to the local church through whom you support the pastors who shepherd your souls, and you support the work of God where you are in covenant relationship.

The tithe is one-tenth of one's possessions – your increase.

Certainly it is clearly recognized that all of it belongs to God, but His program is for a tenth of it to be given back on a regular basis. This tithe should be on whatever you make an increase – through wages, earning, commissions, money made on the sale of a house, car, garage sale, or monies accrued through savings bonds, investments, interest.

It's not that we need the money. Instead, you must give.

The tithe is the acknowledgement that God owns it all and has given everything to you. So you give it…and you can't control that giving. It goes to the local church. In fact, none of it is for you to control.

But the tithe especially.

You say, *"Preacher, I will use the money I have to tithe and give it to people in need. Especially because the church is not helping them."*

God did not call you to be a spiritual Robin Hood – to steal from God and give to the poor. Give to the poor, but do it beyond the tithe. And maybe, if you would tithe, the church would be able to help more…..

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Now if you want to help others beyond the tithe, that is fine, but the tithe belongs to the Lord. Its not for designated giving.

"Generosity that comes with conditions is leverage, not generosity."
Barnabas Piper

Do it all with joy knowing that, as you do it, you are protecting your heart and soul from the cancer of covetousness and showing forth the glorious truth that God alone is your God.

Additional resources:

I preached a message September 20, 2015 on the issue of tithing.
If you want to study it more, you can find it at:

https://storage.sermon.net/de5bb6416044d28cb87918d229df-f6ee/5e7cb62b-138cec0-1/content/media/48473/20500160_65.pdf

The audio version can be found here:

http://energizingword.sermon.net/Energizing_Word_Rainsville_First_Baptist_Church/main/20500160