



Wealth & Death

VIDEO	AUDIO
<p>“And Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Truly, I say to you, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.’” Matt 19:23-24</p> <p>“When [the rich man] dies he will carry nothing away; his glory will not go down after him.” Psalm 49:16-17</p>	<p>And Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Truly, I say to you, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.</p> <p>When [the rich man] dies he will carry nothing away; his glory will not go down after him.</p>
<p>Mike and Simon in cabin</p>	<p>MIKE: It is humorously said that there are only two certainties in life: death and taxes. The tenacity of the government in collecting taxes is compared to the “tenacity” of death. Everyone who lives will die. From the moment we come into being, it is said, we are already on the way to death.</p> <p>But many people - perhaps most - don’t attend much to death. For most practical intents and purposes, they pretend that it doesn’t exist. It doesn’t shape the way they live their lives, except to give more urgency - or desperation - to their pursuit of the goods and pleasures of life. As it is said, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!”</p>
<p>Mike and Simon in cabin</p>	<p>SIMON: But the fact of death has deeper implications for life. It should force us to ask ourselves what are the most important things. What is the meaning of life? What brings true happiness? Is there a God, and if so, what does God ask of me? Am I my brother’s keeper? These questions and any worthy answers to them should profoundly influence how we approach, among other things, the pursuit and use of wealth and possessions - money, land, houses, tools, gadgets, and luxuries, clothing and food.</p> <p>In this episode of moral compass, we will consider the purpose and the proper use of possessions in the face of the unavoidable fact of death, and according to the Christian worldview... ..Let us pause, and reason together...</p>
<p>bible quote on the worthlessness of possessions</p>	



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Mike in cabin	<p>MIKE: It is a commonplace that the desires to have, hold on to, and enjoy possessions, often gets in the way of the important things in life. Obligations to family, friends, our neighbors, keeping a good conscience, and to God, can be shoved to the sidelines relatively easily, without our even being fully aware of it. On some level, all of us have to deal with it. It's simply part of the human condition.</p> <p>But in the face of death, this common, predictable human weakness becomes an urgent imperative. For in the face of death, trivial things become more trivial, and the important things become more important.</p>
	<p>Think about it this way: In our lives, every one of us is 'surrounded,' so to speak, with the things we have. Some of those things are central to a truly happy life, and others are peripheral. If our lives in this world were eternal, or even a very long time, we could arguably pursue even great amounts of the trivial things, and not miss out on the central things which require more effort and sacrifice.</p>
	<p>But in reality, life is very short. As long as we spend time pursuing and enjoying superfluous wealth, we will miss out on the pursuit and enjoyment of things like wisdom, knowledge, true friendship and love of others, family life, artistic creation, meaningful work, helping the needy, and building a better world. Such things bring deep, abiding joy, while material possessions of themselves are close to worthless.</p> <p>In the face of death, then, to pursue wealth is like choosing the plastic toy ring from a cracker-jack box over a ring of fourteen carat gold. The question is, what do we want out of life? Do we want a cheap thrill, or something of deep and abiding value?</p>



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Mike in cabin	Notwithstanding a choice that seems like a no-brainer, in the face of death, many people actually choose the cheap thrill. This is the hedonist, “let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” reasoning, and it’s not incompatible with a certain concern to avoid hurting others, and with maintaining a certain regard for the more important things. Such an approach to life is often characterized as “harmless.” But there are other grounds why hedonism is anything but harmless.
[BIBLE QUOTE ON THE SUFFERING OF THE POOR]	
Simon hiking	SIMON: But hedonism is not harmless because, among other reasons, poverty is rampant in the world. Men, women, and children in every region of the planet labor under the crushing burden imposed by the lack of material goods. Many people, especially in the developing, third world countries, lack some of the basic necessities of life - food, clean water, shelter. Many more, because of inadequate income, or because of bad work or bad political and economic situations, are unable to provide themselves and their families proper education, healthcare, family life, and the leisure to seek higher, spiritual values.
	It is important to recognize here that for a great majority of these people, no reasonable effort of their own, without the help of others, can possibly give them access to those things that they need for a dignified, fulfilled life. To a great extent, the fulfillment of their needs is dependent upon the goodwill of others lending a helping hand.



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Simon hiking	SIMON: In the face of this poverty, what may seem like a harmless concession to human weakness quickly becomes a grave evil. The consequences of those with material possessions letting the desire for them govern our lives are enormous. Children will die for lack of food, shelter, and healthcare, mothers and fathers will go without the means to educate their children, and the hopeless cycle of poverty will continue. Hedonism and the desire for wealth prevents us from sharing our possessions with our fellow men in need, from loving our neighbor - and with severe consequences.
	No wonder that for Jesus Christ, the stakes are so high: "Truly, I say to you, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." For the Christian, death and judgment places a special urgency on the question of wealth.
THE DUTIES OF JUSTICE AND CHARITY	
"If any one has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?" 1 John 3:17	If any one has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?
Mike in cabin	<p>MIKE: Public authorities exist for the purpose of serving the good of the people, and in this capacity, ought to provide public "safety nets" for those in severe need.</p> <p>But every individual person also has the duty, whenever possible, to help their fellow man in distress. To ignore the basic needs of a fellow human being: food, shelter, clothing, safety, etc., so that he might die or suffer extreme harm without your help, is a great evil. Strictly speaking, to provide for these needs is a demand of justice. The human race is a kind of family. We are bound with one another in solidarity by the bonds of our common nature, and our common source in the Creator. Without fulfilling this basic demand of justice, we quite literally separate ourselves from the human family, and from God.</p>



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<p>Mike in cabin</p>	<p>MIKE: In our world of mass communication and speedy travel, furthermore, we have more opportunity to help the destitute who live in far places of the world, and hence may have more of an obligation to help even them, if possible.</p> <p>But in a world filled with injustice, justice is not enough. With greed and indifference running rampant, Christians and other people of goodwill recognize that our obligations go beyond mere justice. Someone has to make up for the wrong done. Someone has to be selfless. Someone must, so to speak, bear the victims of injustice upon their shoulders. This is what we call the obligation of charity - or of mercy - and the Christian knows that charity is the pattern of the behavior of Christ the Lord, and the greatest virtue encompassing all the rest.</p>
<p>"Do not turn your face away from the poor man, and the face of God will not be turned away from you. If you have many possessions, make your gift from them in proportion; if few, do not be afraid to give according to the little you have." (Tobit 4:7b-8)</p> <p>Man should not consider his material possession his own, but as common to all, so as to share them without hesitation when others are in need. - St. Thomas Aquinas</p>	<p>Do not turn your face away from the poor man, and the face of God will not be turned away from you. If you have many possessions, make your gift from them in proportion; if few, do not be afraid to give according to the little you have.</p> <p>Man should not consider his material possession his own, but as common to all, so as to share them without hesitation when others are in need.</p>
	<p>SIMON: Almsgiving is the (unfortunately neglected) practice of giving money or goods to the poor. It comes from a greek word meaning "mercy" or "pity," and is an important custom in many religions.</p> <p>For the Christian, almsgiving is a command of God. It is a matter of obedience, and of being a true child of our heavenly Father, who Himself shows kindness and mercy to the poor. Almsgiving, together with prayer, fasting, and righteousness, are presented in the Scriptures as atonement for sin, as deeds that bring divine reward.</p>



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Simon hiking	SIMON: In fact, both the Old and New Testaments use the image of “treasure” to refer to almsgiving. Instead of amassing material possessions or earthly treasure, we ought to store up for ourselves treasure in heaven: In the Old Testament, for example, Tobit says, “It is better to give alms than to treasure up gold,” and Sirach, “Store up almsgiving in your treasury, and it will rescue you from all affliction.” With a clear allusion to these texts, Christ himself says, “Sell your possessions, and give alms; provide yourselves with purses that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail.”
THE VANITY OF RICHES	
“The sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.” James 1:11	The sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.
Mike in cabin	MIKE: In comparison with the true treasure of almsgiving and service, of justice and love, material possessions are as nothing and less than nothing.  But the world over, to the detriment of true riches, the powerful and the weak, the rich and the poor alike desire earthly riches. How foolish! Food, shelter, health, education, safety, and the like, are, of course, necessary for man’s very life and dignity. But what are riches but mere wisps of smoke?
	In the face of the great need of the poor, what great vanity is our riches! Do we think that we have earned them? Even if, to a considerable extent, we’ve worked hard for our wealth, did we work for our health, for our gifts, for the situation into which we were born, and upon which our work depends?



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	<p>Even more, we will die, perhaps very soon, and our riches will be of no more use to us. Will it matter that we've accumulated so many things, or will it matter that we did not share them? It is in this spirit that the Lord warned, "Woe to you that are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you that are full now, for you shall hunger. Woe to you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep." (Luke 6:25-26)</p>
<p>THOU SHALT NOT COVET</p>	
<p>"And he said to them, 'Take heed, and beware of all covetousness; for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.'"Lk 12:15</p>	<p>And he said to them, 'Take heed, and beware of all covetousness; for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.'</p>
<p>Simon hiking</p>	<p>SIMON: Basing itself upon the Bible, the Christian tradition identifies three principal, unruly desires, three basic temptations that hinder the progress of the soul. One of these three is the "lust of the eyes," or the desire for possessions. "You cannot serve both God and mammon," as Christ says - And in St. Paul's words, "The love of money is the root of all evils." One of the Ten Commandments also condemns this unruly desire: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods."</p>
	<p>But if indeed, as we've seen, the duty to share our material possessions with those in extreme need is a duty in justice, to desire to keep the goods we should give is not to desire to keep what is ours, but to covet what belongs to another.</p> <p>And again, as we've seen: if the duty to share even more is a duty in Christian charity, then to desire to keep what we should in charity give, is the desire to keep what belongs not to us, but to our Lord, who alone can ask us to give not only more than we're strictly obliged, but to give everything.</p>
<p>SELL ALL YOUR POSSESSIONS, GIVE TO THE POOR, AND FOLLOW ME</p>	



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<p>Mike in cabin</p>	<p>MIKE: As to the rich young man, Christ says to anyone who desires to attain to the Kingdom of God, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."</p> <p>On the one hand, this is a counsel to Gospel poverty - divine advice, so to speak, to give up a normal existence in the world to dedicate oneself more exclusively to the Kingdom of God.</p> <p>On the other hand, however, it can be understood as a demand of every disciple of Christ, for he also declares, "Whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple." (Lk 14:33)</p> <p>All Christians are called and commanded to give to the poor, to be poor in Spirit, and to renounce all desire for riches, because no one can serve both God and mammon.</p> <p>As St. Paul put it, "From now on, let ... those who buy [live] as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the form of this world is passing away." (1 Cor. 7:31)</p>
<p>DEATH AND JUDGEMENT</p>	
<p>"There was a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, full of sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. ... The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. ... Abraham said [to the rich man in Hades], 'Son, remember that you in your lifetime received good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish.'" Luke ...</p>	<p>There was a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, full of sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. ... The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. ... Abraham said [to the rich man in Hades], 'Son, remember that you in your lifetime received good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish.</p>



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Mike and Simon in cabin	SIMON: For the Christian, death brings with it the certainty of divine judgement. Each person will be judged according to their deeds, whether they have done good or evil. On the last day, at the resurrection, Christ will separate the good from the wicked like a shepherd separates sheep from goats. Those will inherit the Kingdom of God to whom Christ says, "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was in prison and you came to me;" while those will inherit eternal fire to whom he says, "I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me."
	MIKE: May our Lord's words lead us to deeper conversion, as well as these words of St. John Chrysostom, "When you are weary of praying and do not receive, consider how often you have heard a poor man calling, and have not listened to him." I am Michael Voris, and this has been, "Moral Compass."
"As for the rich in this world, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on uncertain riches but on God who richly furnishes us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good deeds, liberal and generous, thus laying up for themselves a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life which is life indeed." 1 Timothy 6:17-19	



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<p>“Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.” (Prov 30:8)</p>	