



“For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.” (1 Timothy 6:10)

At the Wednesday evening service at Falcon College – as some of you will know – we break up into small groups to study a few verses from the Bible. I was considering what I might write in this article when some recently-used verses came to mind. Money, let’s be honest, is at the forefront of many people’s minds, so it is important to know what the Bible has to say about it, if we, as Christians, are to acquire and spend it wisely.

It is very easy to quote verses from the Bible about investing well (eg the parable of the talents) or being generous (Paul’s exhortation to the Corinthians) and plenty of others but it is much harder to put them into practice. When should you spend and when should you save, since the Bible also warns against debt? Should you give to every beggar or appeal that you hear about? Does it matter if the recipient is a Christian or not?

None of those questions are easy and I believe that there is no one answer. What God wants me to do with my money could be completely different from what he wants you to do with yours and both are perfectly Biblical. The Holy Spirit will work through your conscience to prompt you whether to give or not and how much. I know He does with me! I think that is the key : listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, based on sound knowledge of Biblical

principles. I believe that you can be rich without allowing the love of money to lead you into temptation, whilst a hard up person can be guilty of too much love of money. It is not the amount but the attitude of your heart.

Let me just end with a very pertinent saying that I read when I was just a teenager and it has always stuck in my mind as being spot on and not a bad guideline to follow. It doesn't quite follow from the verse in 1 Timothy but it popped into my mind, so maybe the Holy Spirit is nudging me here too. It is not from the Bible but I almost feel that it should have been, if I may say that respectfully : *it is better to give than to lend – and it costs about the same.*

The one about the money, money, money

Most of know the story of Zacchaeus and although we don't get to see the conversation Jesus has with this hated tax-collector, what we do know is that Zacchaeus has an encounter with Jesus over a meal and his life is dramatically changed. He has a complete turnaround and decides to make amends with his money to all those he has robbed and cheated and stolen from [which i think we covered in 'robbed'] and in some cases gives four times as much back to those he stole from.

That is a pretty significant change and surely has ongoing life repercussions for Zacchaeus and everyone he knew or encountered from then on. Have the encounters you have had with Jesus changed you in similarly significant ways?

But what is interesting to me is Jesus' response. Does he respond with: "Well done, my good and faithful servant?" No, he does not. Rather interestingly, it goes like this.

9 Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Jesus calls it a salvation issue. And not because Zacchaeus stuck up his hand and went to the front and said a prayer, but because the following of Jesus had practical implications which included his money.

[Don't get me wrong - using our money well doesn't save us - ONLY what Jesus did on the cross has the power to save us and make us right with God - BUT using our money well is a clear demonstration that we have been saved and put on the right path...]

Jump ahead to Matthew 25 and you have the story of the sheep and the goats which is about manoeuvring what you have [time/money/possessions] for those who don't [hungry, sick, thirsty, naked, imprisoned] and the conclusion looks the same. If you did not maneuver what you had "for the least of these brothers and sister of mine, you did not do it for me and you need to depart."

Once again it appears as if money [possessions/time] is a salvation issue. Which we can see in a different way in the greatest command Jesus speaks in Matthew 22 which includes the line: "Love your neighbour as yourself" which i think we tend to, for the most part, take metaphorically and not literally.

Jesus was not talking about your literal over-the-garden-wall neighbour and He was not talking about hugs and smiles. But rather Jesus was talking about living in such a way that showed active compassionate love for those around you who need what you have [see The Good Samaritan] and not allowing conditions/lifestyle/persecution for others that you would not be happy with accepting for yourself.

If money is a salvation issue, perhaps we need to take it more seriously. We need to talk about it more often in church gatherings [the amount that the Bible talks about money/wealth/using possessions well is very much out of sync with a once a year preach on "Giving your tithe to the church" which is when most church gatherings ever hear anything on money] and in general. We need to invite accountability with people we trust and we need to seriously consider the choices we make with regards to money/time/possession.

Brett Anderson

Coffee and kindness

[A slightly edited transcript of a talk given once in the Falcon College chapel]

Kindness is like coffee. It awakens your spirit and improves your day. Fill your cup with both

What's your coffee?

Over the time that I have spent at Falcon College I have noticed a strong coffee culture especially among seniors. I often smell the aroma of a fresh brew around Oates House when I am on duty. Sometimes this makes me rush home and brew up my own fresh percolation. Yes I even regard myself as a connoisseur of sorts when it comes to fine coffees. You will never catch me drinking any of these instant coffees but only a filter; no milk no sugar, perfect temperatures not to burn the beans, not too weak not too strong. This brings about that perfect coffee flavour that you want – no additives. But let's not forget to mention that bonus feature. That perk we get that wakes us up, sharpens our senses and helps us get on with the day. Have you ever heard someone say that they just have to have a coffee before they can continue with the challenges of the day? For many people of the working world a simple day would not be possible without the boost of caffeine.

There are mountains of research into the benefits of coffee on the internet. Such benefits include alertness, improved performance, and reduced risk of disease, not to mention the loads of vitamins and minerals that comes with a fresh cup of liquid gold. But guess what, everything that has a good side also has a dark side.

Coffee is very acidic. I have found that, with all the cycling and running I do, any joint pain I experience is somewhat linked to my coffee intake as a result of acidity. Also, I am told that, diseases breed on acidic environments. By drinking loads of coffee you create an acidic environment for disease.

I have also found that if I am stressed about something and I have a cup of coffee then that stress becomes magnified. This is because drinking coffee

will promote the release of stress hormones cortisol, epinephrine and norepinephrine. These chemicals increase your body's heart rate, blood pressure and tension levels – the old 'fight or flight' response that we have learn about in biology. How many times have you had a cup of coffee and felt the associated energy boost only to discover that a couple of hours later you are completely exhausted and actually need another cup of coffee? So we have one. And then later on. All of a sudden it becomes almost like an addiction. It is almost like coffee can give us that boost for life that we need to get through the day.

This is why I am asking today, what is your coffee? Is there not something else out there that can give us that boost to accomplish our goals? Is there something out there that makes us feel more alive? This could be different for everyone because we are all different. We often hear people asking the question: What makes you tick?

Let me share some of the things in my life that make me happy to be on earth without having a cup of coffee or feeling the boost of caffeine.

You will agree that I enjoy getting outdoors by running and cycling. Certainly I feel grateful after that. I also enjoy spending time with people and socializing. Last year I remember teaching a certain boy how to bowl a particular variation on his leg spin. This was during cricket practice in the week. That Saturday I remember umpiring and he was bowling from my end. Suddenly that exact ball that we practised smashed into the top of middle stump. That was a fulfilling moment for me. Another thing that makes me feel alive is when I see a guy finishing a mountain bike race and they are totally exhausted and so stoked to have done so. When I mark work and can see that someone has listened in class and taken what they have learned and applied it into a question. This makes me feel like I get a boost of encouragement for the day and I go without that caffeine.

John 10:10 Jesus says that the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may life abundantly.

2 Timothy 1:7 says For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and sound mind.

We can see that God wants us to live to the fullest as he is the power and love inside us.

Next time you have a coffee I want you to think of where your real caffeine boost for life comes from.

So I have shared with you some of the things that make me alive. I encourage you guys to pay attention to those things in life that stimulate you and make you feel alive and simply do more of that!!

Also we should always remember what our real coffee is.

Shall we pray,

Thank you Lord for giving us a life abundant. We pray that you help us to achieve this life to the fullest.

Amen

Patrick Alexander

Knee Polishing

Can we pray this month on issues relating to the topic of money?

Sunday : pray about your contribution and giving to the church and other Christian responsibilities

Monday : pray about how you spend your money

Tuesday : pray that you may receive or earn the money that you need for yourself and anyone who depends on you

Wednesday : pray that you may be able to meet the needs of others

Thursday : pray that your attitude to money might be dispassionate and not inspired by love or greed

Friday : pray for wise spending of national money by the government

Saturday : pray for those you know who are in financial difficulties

Counting the Cost

A vicar planning an Easter pilgrimage to the Holy Land was shaken when he found it would cost him \$100 an hour to rent a boat on the Sea of Galilee. He protested to the travel agent that the cost was ridiculous. "That might be true," replied the travel agent, "but you have to take into account that the Sea of Galilee is water on which our Lord himself walked." "Well," said the vicar, "at \$100 an hour for a boat, I am not surprised!"

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