

***Sabbath School Today***  
**With the 1888 Message Dynamic**

***Stewardship: Motives of the Heart***  
**Lesson 13. The Results of Stewardship**

To endure poverty that is thrust upon you unwanted is one thing; you grumble at your lot and wish you had more money. But to be content with poverty, actually to enjoy its discipline and privation, is another. And that immediately makes us think of Jesus—a hard-working peasant who in later life said He had not where to lay His head. And He said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit ...” meaning, they are the truly happy people.

Wealthy people are seldom happy people. It’s not poetic fancy but hard truth that “godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Tim. 6:6). There are people in the world who have very little of this world’s goods; they barely have the “food and raiment” wherewith to be “content,” but they have the sunshine of happiness in their homes, something which the richest people in the world don’t have.

There’s a beautiful hymn by Anna Waring that was in the old hymnal, but it’s been left out of the current church hymnal, probably because its sentiment goes too much against the grain of modern American philosophy. She says:

“I have a heritage of joy,  
That yet I must not see;  
The hand that bled to make it mine  
Is keeping it for me.

“There is a certainty of love  
That sets my heart at rest;  
A calm assurance for today,  
That to be poor is best.”

Wow! Of course! Such an idea must never be promoted among the richest on earth! But it’s Bible teaching. No, not that abject, grinding, painful poverty is good—of course not; let’s be reasonable. “Food and raiment” are necessary; and the One who had not where to lay His head doesn’t want you be like that—He wants you to have a roof over your head, yes, that doesn’t leak, and a bed to sleep in. And He wants you to have the necessities of life which today probably mean a car and a refrigerator. Many folks in the world don’t have those things. But the principle is the thing: “a person’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he/she possesseth” (Luke 12:15). “More abundant life” the good news is not that Jesus merely offers it to you; He gives it to you. Receive it! Don’t resent it!

In olden times men relied on their horses. Alexander the Great had a famous horse named Bucephalis, which he trusted. But David's Psalm 33 proclaimed that "no one can rely on his horse to save him, nor for all its power can it be a means of escape" (vs. 17, *The Revised English Bible*). Bucephalis was not the source of Alexander's military success!

To translate this into modern language, it means that you and I dare not trust the stock market or international economics as our salvation from hunger. Even the best business savvy is "the wisdom of this world; and that is foolishness with God": "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. ... The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain" (1 Cor. 3:18-20). This is not to despise sound business wisdom, but the Lord long ago told the prophet Jeremiah the truth that we all need to grasp:

"Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD" (Jer. 9:23, 24).

Our loving heavenly Father has not promised us the wealth of this world, but He has promised to care for us if we will remember reality: "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? ... He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; ... that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; ... bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure" (Isa. 33:14-16).

That may not be a fancy, gourmet fare; but someday we shall be profoundly thankful for it. It makes the Lord happy when He can see that we appreciate what He provides us. If it's whole grain bread and vitamin rich vegetables and fruits, we shall be more healthy. Wesley said that "cleanliness is next to godliness." If he were with us today he would add that eating whole grain foods is "next to healthful living."

Happiness is trusting the Lord and appreciating all that He does for us!

There is an 1888 message lesson in grateful living we want to learn now: "Godliness with contentment is great gain. ... And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (1 Tim. 6:6-8).

—Paul E. Penno

**Notes:**

Pastor Paul Penno's video of this lesson is on the Internet at:

[https://youtu.be/\\_j9aMPZBc2o](https://youtu.be/_j9aMPZBc2o)

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