

## NEW SERIES: 'CRYPTOFAITH'- -8/10/25

### PASTOR LEE

- To begin this new Series, first understand that we *cannot* work our way to God...we *cannot* do enough good things....we are separated by sin. He- -Jesus- -came- - and solely paid the penalty, and substituted for us and atoned for our sins- -all by His GRACE!
- We are here today to talk about money and GRACE in this context....not in our culture's too often zealously manipulative and self-serving way....which naturally serves to raise suspicions which is often our more normative experience....but in the spiritual sense.
- Pastor Lee points out that, interestingly, Jesus- -Himself- - talked about money more than any other subject...50/60 times...in parables, teachings, etc. Why? Because its a part of living...we all have to deal with this essentiality...to a very extent, you could say its at the center of our life experience.

**PASTOR LEE READS HEBREWS 13:1-21- -(Passage embraces so many Godly, grace-filled principles such as (eg.): Brotherly love; Hospitality; Generosity; Serving the mistreated/less fortunate; Upholding moral/honorable marriages, Maintaining an even/responsible view of money/possessions; Reliance on the Lord; Respect for your spiritual leaders; Jesus Christ as your 'forever' focal point; Esteeming/thanking, fore-mostly, God's Grace; Imitating Christ in suffering and all things- - and more.)**

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*HIGHLIGHT VERSES: Hebrews 13:5-6- - (5) Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for He has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." (6) So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"*

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**COMMANDS: Avoid loving money; be content with what you have.**

**PROMISES: God will never leave you; He's your helper so that you can live without fear.**

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- Notwithstanding the 'wealth' in this County of Chester, many of us still feel the relative pressures associated with cost-of-living, quality of life issues, etc. All this is exacerbated by our association of money with happiness (as surveys bear out)....an inherent "me" focal point and a natural tendency toward 'greed'.....requires honest self-examination.
- **There is one sacred act that will counter that greed temptation- - - GENEROSITY!**
- Christians are, inherently- -far and away - - the most generous people! See Hebrews 13: *Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.* Our ChristFirst Church personifies that generosity.
- Regarding this new Series ("CRYPTOFAITH") many people don't see the compatibility between 'money' and spirituality....but the IS a strong connection.....and is the reason why Jesus addressed it so frequently. Looking at finances thru the lens of Jesus would be the best way to manage them.

- There are three core “Financial Stages” in our midst: 1. “Survival” - - 2. “Stability” - - 3. “Significance” (What stage are each of us in?)
- 1. “SURVIVAL” - -living ‘paycheck to paycheck’ ....just barely surviving...stretching every dollar just to live and support only very little more (if that much) than core expenses.....often resulting in a fair amount of anxiousness and fear (including that associated with ‘giving’, (Note: remember V-6 above”I will not fear”)
- NOTE 1: Irrespective of which ‘financial Stage’ you are in, reject the ‘money trap’ (love of money) by practicing contentment. By human nature and based upon our relative wealth, even our children are led toward the “mine” generation (Pastor Lee recounts his Cambodian trip where he observed the children perfectly happy/content to play catch with a coconut!). *So how do we become at least similarly content in a world that provides us so much? “Needs met leads to more needs”!*
- NOTE 2: GOD’S VIEW OF MONEY- - 1. God is a giver (Mathew 7:11); 2. Everything we have is from and owned by God (Hag 2:8 and 1 Chron 29:14); 3. We are stewards of what God has given us; 4. Generous giving (1 Cor 16:2).
- NOTE 3- -Four levels of generosity: 1. Fulfilling Responsibility; 2. Personally feeling benefitted; 3. Amazing opportunity; 4. Steeped in love
- Pastor Lee encourages all of us, regardless of your “financial stage” to at least respond to the first two levels of generosity and expand from there over time and circumstances.
- 2. “STABILITY” - - starting to find some level of financial stability.....beginning savings accounts, 401K and 529 plans, etc. and spending a bit of ‘discretionary’ money. NOTE: ‘What you love is reflective of what you do with your money’!
- 3. “SIGNIFICANCE” - -a point of material stability where all your core needs are met with plenty of margin, in turn, presenting greater opportunities to be ‘visionary’ and focused on heart-led generosity. At this Stage, there is also the potential downside that you get so comfortable, you begin to feel you can simply trust in yourself.

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*Deut 8:17-18 - -Beware lest you say in your heart, ‘my power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.’(18) You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may confirm His covenant that He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.*

- Instead seize this gratifying and blessed opportunity to make a difference in even major initiatives!

**DO NOT FEAR!**

**BE GENEROUS STEWARDS OF GOD’S GIFTS!**

**TRUST HIM!**

