



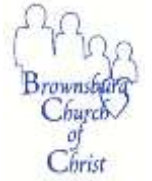
God is More than Enough

Brownsburg Church of Christ

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AM Assembly



Introduction:

“And behold, a man came up to him, saying, “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?”...Jesus said to him, ‘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.’ When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions” (**Matthew 19:16, 21-22**, ESV). If you want to see modern Christians miraculously learn gymnastics, drop this bomb of a passage into the midst of the discussion. Like cockroaches before a piercing light, we scuttle and scurry to get away from what this passage might be asking us. We have become masters of understanding that this passage is not a direct command to all baptized believers to sell everything they have. And indeed it is not. Peter’s response to Ananias and Sapphira in **Acts 5:4** clearly demonstrates that Christ’s disciples are not universally required to sell all their possessions or give away every last bit of money they have. But in our haste to avoid the one extreme have we gone to another? While God is not commanding every believer to sell all He has and thus enter gratefully into a life of self-imposed poverty, clearly He is commanding some to do so. Consider **Luke 12:32-33**: “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where you treasure is, there will your heart be also” (ESV).

Clearly, according to the gospel, some disciples, perhaps many disciples, are going to be poor. Perhaps it will be because so many paths to money (not all, by any means) lead them through sins that they give up. I recently heard of a new Christian who was giving up his high paying job at a casino. Perhaps it will be because persecutors plunder their property (**Hebrews 10:34**). Or perhaps it is self-imposed like Jesus asked of this rich, young ruler. But this is not a gospel we hear preached today. It is not a gospel I have preached very often myself, if at all—this gospel of at least some poverty. We live among a first world Christianity that ignores **Luke 6:20, 24**: “Blessed are you who are poor...but woe to you who are rich...” and quickly jumps to conclude that Luke really just recorded this oddly but only meant exactly what Matthew did in **Matthew 5:3** when he wrote: “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” Surely, Luke didn’t possibly want us to think the financially poor are blessed and the financially rich are cursed. And perhaps he didn’t, but we rarely give it a thought, as we dismiss what Luke says in favor of Matthew’s more financially comfortable version. No doubt, we do not buy into the “Prosperity Gospel” or the “Health and Wealth Gospel.” That is a perversion painfully preached to a usually poor populace by flashy charlatan televangelists. We would never fall prey to such heresy. But have we fallen prey to a softer more subtle version of the same hoax? Have we fallen prey to the Gospel of Upward Mobility in which the gospel not only leads us to eternal riches but, if truly followed, will really give us our best life now? Have we fallen prey to a gospel that at least seems to teach that all of the faithful few who accept it and really live it will have a life of ease, achieving each promotion (unless God is closing a door in order to open an even more financially blessed door somewhere else), filling our retirement accounts, building our businesses and houses, graced with perfect spouses and children, presiding over community organizations, idolized and envied by all our neighbors as God proves that when He really is our God life will be luxurious. Certainly, all this is sanctified and baptized because we will give our 10% (or whatever amount you want to set apart) to the Lord and His church. But in this gospel the best way to evangelize is to be successful and hope the world around us takes notice and wonders what our magic formula is so we can tell them about God.

Have we been subconsciously impacted by the leaven of the Sadducees, a Jewish sect of materialists who didn’t believe in angels or the afterlife (**Acts 23:8**)? To them, whatever reward is coming is coming now, and they want as much of it as they can possibly get. We obviously don’t fall prey to the silly shenanigans of folks like Benny Hinn and Kenneth Copeland who tell us if we will sow a seed of faith in the amount of \$100 to their ministry that God will bless us a hundredfold with \$10,000 for our faith investment. But have we learned to subtly swallow a softer version from the Larry Burketts and Dave Ramseys, who certainly teach great biblical principles about how to manage money (I don’t want to take away from their great and biblical teachings on budgets, plans, debt, etc., which I love and still need to follow better), but subtly underlying their message is the idea that God wants all His children to be rich because with more money comes more ministry. There is the subtle and underlying idea that God can do more with people who have more all the while forgetting that the One with whom God did the most didn’t even have a bed to sleep in (**Matthew 8:20**). And in this way they have sanctified and baptized the desire to get rich and made it seem like that desire is a good thing despite the fact that God has said that “those who desire to be rich fall into temptation,

into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs" (**I Timothy 6:9-10**, ESV).

And then in the midst of this, attacking the first world Christianity with its wealth and waste, if we are not careful, we will make the exact same mistake but in the opposite extreme of saying that what God wants is all His children to be poor. When in fact what God wants for His children is neither poverty or riches. What God wants for His children is holiness. What God wants for His children is enough. But more than that, what God wants for His children is that we see that He is enough. In fact, that He is more than enough. However He may decide to bless us and our working with all our might as we seek to glorify Him, whether with riches or with just enough or even with poverty, we are satisfied because we have Him (cf. **Hebrews 13:5-6**). And that is the message of **Psalm 16:5-6**.

The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance (ESV).

We don't know exactly when David was going through this trouble, but usually when we find him in a tough spot we attribute it either to his time of flight before King Saul or his time of flight before his rebellious son Absalom. Both were times when to the world it looked like David's future was in jeopardy, his possessions were up for grabs, his inheritance was in question. But whether it was during the time when Saul was trying to keep David from becoming king or when Absalom was trying to take away David's kingship, David says, "It doesn't matter what happens here. I've got God. He is my portion. He is my cup. He holds my lot. Whatever He decides for me, whether king on Jerusalem's throne or expatriate in exile, my inheritance will be beautiful because God is there. God is more than enough." And if we can learn that lesson, whether rich or poor, we will be God Filled and bring glory to God.

Discussion:

I. The background of **Psalm 16:5-6**.

- A. The background of **Psalm 16:5-6** is actually the Levites. In fact, there are some who suggest, wrongly I think, that since we don't fully know if the opening line in most of our translations that says "A miktam of David" is original with the text, this psalm may have even been written by a Levite. And this part of the psalm is the reason they think this. This is exactly what the Levites had.
- B. When Israel came into the Promised Land under Joshua, the land was divided among the tribes. These tribal land allocations were passed from father to son and were considered their inheritance from God himself. Notice in **Joshua 14:2** that these were handed out to the tribes "by lot" as God commanded Moses.
- C. But as these land inheritances were being passed out, one tribe was excluded. Instead of getting their own land, they had to settle for cities in the midst of everyone else's land. The tribe of Levi received no land inheritance. Why? Because God said to Aaron in **Numbers 18:20**: "You shall have no inheritance in their land, neither shall you have any portion among them, I am your portion and your inheritance among the people of Israel" (ESV). Again in **Deuteronomy 10:9** it says: "Therefore Levi has no portion or inheritance with his brothers. The LORD is his inheritance, as the LORD your God said to him" (ESV). In **Joshua 13:14** it says: "To the tribe of Levi alone Moses gave no inheritance. The offerings by fire to the LORD God of Israel are their inheritance, as he said to him" (ESV). And then again in **Joshua 13:33**: "But to the tribe of Levi Moses gave no inheritance; the LORD God of Israel is their inheritance, just as he said to them."
- D. Can't you imagine how upset the Levites could have been as they witnessed Judah, Reuben, Gad, and the rest receiving land inheritances? And then when Joseph's family received a double inheritance as both Ephraim and Manasseh, Joseph's two sons, received land. In fact triple, because Manasseh received two separate portions of land, one on the west and one on the east of the Jordan. How upsetting that must have been. In fact, it began as punishment or cursing. In **Genesis 49:5-7**, Levi, along with Simeon, was promised that his descendants would be scattered among Israel because they were violent men who wrongfully took vengeance on Shechem and made their father odious in the sight of the land's natives.
- E. However, despite the negative beginnings of this dispersion and lack of land inheritance, David and God, demonstrate that the Levites actually received the best inheritance. Their portion, their cup, their lot was God. And because of that, whatever they received was beautiful. God is more than enough. David, though of the tribe of Judah, adopts this picture as the grand picture of why he would lean on God for refuge in troubled times and why he refused to pursue idols and other gods. God may or may not provide him with riches and land. He may or may not give him plenty to eat and drink. But whether God was leading him to lie down in green pastures and beside still waters or walking him through the valley of the shadow of death, God was with him. And God is more than enough.

II. God is more than enough.

- A. Having seen the background of these two verses, we come full circle to the heresy of the Gospel of Upward Mobility, a great description coined by Ross Douthat in Bad Religion.¹ The heresy of this gospel is not about whether Christians should be rich or poor. The Bible demonstrates both poverty and wealth among God's people. God blesses different people differently. After all, Jesus's pictures of the saved includes both Zacchaeus, a rich tax collector, and Lazarus, a poor beggar; His apostles included both Matthew, a tax collector wealthy enough to throw a huge reception in Jesus's honor, and Peter and John, fisherman with hardly any education eking out a daily living one catch at a time. The heresy of the Gospel of Upward Mobility is that whether rich or poor we do not recognize that God is enough. Thus, the poor consistently look for a financial leg up from God as if glorifying Him is a business transaction that should grant them riches. The rich fret about losing what they have gained because they are not sure what or who will take care of them if their retirement account craters. And the middle class bounce back and forth between these fears and dreams.
- B. But it is not all about money. What I'm about to say is painful and I certainly don't wish to pour salt in the wounds of anyone who is suffering from a lack of blessing in any of the areas I'm about to mention. But the gospel is not about making sure we have a marital soulmate or children or a job we like or good health. It may not seem on the same page as the Gospel of Upward Mobility but it really is. We have become prey to the idea that good Christians all find good spouses and all have 2.5 kids, with a minivan, a house in the suburbs, with a red door, and a white picket fence. And they should never have ongoing health troubles. And really, they will fit into society, being the cream of the crop because they are such good people. When someone looks around but hasn't found a mate or a Christian couple has tried and tried but can't seem to have children, or they can never make ends meet to live in the nice house, we assume they've done something wrong. Or we wonder why God isn't holding up His end of the bargain. But all of this assumes one big huge problem. It assumes that God is not more than enough. We have to have more than just God. Don't get me wrong. In general, God bestows many blessings like marriage, children, health, job, home, etc. But we often take these things so much for granted that if we don't receive one of these blessings we fall into despair.
- C. What must we learn to face these trials and tribulations? We must learn that God is more than enough. He is our lot, our portion, our cup. Our lines have fallen in good places and our inheritance is beautiful, not because we have learned to be content with the material, familial, and health blessing we have, but because we have learned to be content having God (cf. **Hebrews 13:5-6**).
- D. Oh what mountains we can move when we learn that God is enough. Oh what glory we can bring to God when we learn that God is enough. I don't think I have learned this lesson well. I'm really ashamed to even preach it because I know that I am such a terrible example of it. But look at the myriad examples in Scripture that teach us again and again God is more than enough.
1. Why was Abraham able to leave his home behind to go to a place he didn't even know? (**Hebrews 11:8**). Because God would be there and he knew God is more than enough.
 2. Why was Abraham able to endure childless years merely hanging on to the promise of God about descendants? Because he had God and he knew God is more than enough.
 3. Why was Abraham able to sacrifice his one and only Isaac, the child he had waited for so long, hanging on to the faith that God could raise the dead? (**Hebrews 11:17-19**). Because God had told him to do this and he knew that God is more than enough.
 4. How could Moses abandon having Pharaoh's daughter as a mother, turning his back on the pleasures and treasure of Egypt? (**Hebrews 11:24-26**). Because he knew that God was with His people and God is more than enough.
 5. How could some women watch their husbands and sons put to death? (**Hebrews 11:35**). Because they knew God would resurrect them and they believed that God is more than enough.
 6. How did so many endure torture, even refusing to accept release when it was offered if they would just turn their backs on God? How did so many endure mocking, flogging, chains and imprisonment? How did they endure stoning, being sawn in two, and killed with the sword? (**Hebrews 11:35-37**). Because through all of this they knew God was with them and to them God is more than enough.
 7. How could so many be dressed in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, afflicted, mistreated, when so many of us wrinkle our noses if we have to buy clothes at Wal-Mart or worse, Goodwill? (**Hebrews 11:37**). Because while they weren't well dressed, they were clothed with God and to them God is more than enough.

¹ Ross Douthat, Bad Religion: How We Became a Nation of Heretics, Free Press, New York, 2012, Kindle edition location 3552.

8. How could they dwell in deserts, mountains, dens, and caves when so many of us gripe about not living in a house that has a bed and bath for each person? (**Hebrews 11:38**). Because wherever they dwelt they knew God was dwelling with them and to them God is more than enough.
9. Look at Paul in **II Corinthians 11:23-29**. How could Paul endure hunger, thirst, and sleeplessness? How could he put up with beatings and imprisonments? How could he handle being in constant dangers from the natural world and the worldly men around him? How could he handle shipwreck and being adrift at sea all in the service of God? How? Because his number one goal was gaining God through Jesus Christ (cf. **Philippians 3:8-9**). He knew that no matter what was taken from him, whether sleep, food, clothing, covering, housing, safety, freedom, comfort, no one could take God from him. And God is more than enough!
10. Is God more than enough for you?

Conclusion:

Please, don't misunderstand. The God who is more than enough often blesses His children with even more. I don't want you to think that because you are well-off financially, or you were blessed with a good mate, or your quiver is full of good kids that you have succumbed to heresy. But at the same time, I don't want you to believe that because you have all those things you must truly be living by the gospel like no one else. When we live by His Word, working with all our might, striving to do all to His glory, He often blesses us with spouses and mates, with children, with health, with financial blessings. No doubt the many who turn from His will He often curses by removing those things. But the gospel is not nearly so simplistic as that. It is one thing to work with all your might so that God can be glorified by your work so He decides to bless you with all these other gifts. It is another thing to long to be rich while baptizing the desire because God is a line item on your monthly budget. We live in a hard world, plagued by enemies, and dominated by the enemy. The days are evil and so are the people around us, so don't be surprised if the material and familial blessings you have prayed for don't come to pass. If we do not have some blessing, we are not jealous of those who do because we have God and He is more than enough. If we do have some blessing, we do not fear losing it or mind sharing it with others because even if they waste it, we know we have God and He is more than enough. Jesus didn't die so we could have our best life now. He died so we could be with God for eternity. And God is more than enough. Is He more than enough for you?