

God Rewards the Faithful

A closer look at Inheritance

Treasure & Stewardship

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God laid it on my heart to write about a few topics, together, in one devotion. I am going to discuss inheritance, treasure, and stewardship, and how the three are closely tied together. Please know, all of my writings come from personal experience, revelation, and things that God is working on in my own personal life, and boy has he been working. If we are faithful to God, the rewards he will bestow on us are immeasurable.

The last three years of my life have been difficult and stressful to say the least. On January 4, 2020, my uncle passed away suddenly, without warning. I found myself having to make the decision to remove him from life support that evening. My uncle was the closest thing I had to a father growing up. He walked me down the aisle on my wedding day, and I had celebrated every holiday with him since I was pretty much born. His death left a huge hole in my heart and an even bigger mess in my lap. My uncle was a very wealthy man. He never married or had children. I found myself taking the lead role in settling his massive estate. You see, my uncle was a millionaire, living in an extravagant home with an indoor pool and an elevator, with a million-dollar view, and more carnival glasses and antiques than any single person should ever own. It was utterly overwhelming. Plus, this was right when Covid first hit, halting everything. It ended up taking 5 separate auctions, many of which were postponed and rescheduled due to Covid, to liquidate all of his possessions. I think what hit me the hardest through this journey was the fact that he spent a lifetime accumulating all these priceless treasures, but in a blink of an eye, he was gone, and all of his material things seemed worthless. Near the end of his life, he became bitter, pushing away those that loved him the most, isolating himself. I believe he was just consumed by his money and possessions. He stored up so many treasures on earth, but were there any treasures in heaven?

Now, fast forward to September 7, 2022, where I find myself in the same boat once again. This time, my mom passed away, and now I am left to settle on yet another estate. It was obvious that God had been preparing me for this. I knew exactly what needed to be done, and in a matter of no time, the auction was scheduled, and the house was sold. There were some major hiccups along the way, but I'll save that for another time. Once again, I found myself overwhelmed with the possessions my mother had accumulated. She was the original queen of QVC. I uncovered so many things I had never even seen before, packed away in closets. Things, so many things. It really hit me hard. What is the purpose of all these material things? As my mom laid on her deathbed, I can assure you she wasn't thinking about her possessions. We all will leave this world, the same as we entered, with nothing. All that we have remains behind for others to sift and sort through. There are some treasured items that we just can't part with. Most have no monetary value, but rather an emotional attachment that we just can't let go of. Many other items end up discarded and tossed

in the trash, without even a second thought. If you have ever had to sort through a loved one's possessions, you know the magnitude of just how overwhelming it can be.

Now, let's talk about inheritance. The word inheritance can be defined as the acquisition of a possession, condition, or trait from past generations. When you hear the word inheritance, what do you think of it? Most people's immediate response would be "money". People dream of a long-lost relative passing away and leaving them an inheritance. Did you know the word inheritance can be found in 200 scriptures throughout the bible? The bible has a very different meaning for the word inheritance. 1 Peter 1:3-4 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you." Our inheritance in Christ is imperishable, it will endure forever. It is reserved for us in heaven. It is unfading. Everything on earth will eventually fade away and die. Flowers will wither, life will decay. Death is imminent. Our inheritance is undefiled; it cannot be made impure by sin. Ephesians 1:13-14 says, "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory." I love this verse! This means on the very day, the very second you believed and accepted Christ into your heart, you were marked with a seal. You received the Holy Spirit, as a deposit by God, that he intends to take you home with him one day. Your inheritance is secure. This inheritance into the kingdom of God is worth more than anything that money could ever buy.

The world tells us having wealth, accumulating money, and possessions is the most important thing. The more money you have, the greater your value. That the more you accumulate, the happier you will be. Many fall into the trap of believing this lie. Money can become all consuming. We have all heard the saying, "money cannot buy happiness", and it is so true. 1 Timothy 6:9-11 states, "But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness."

I want you to think about your personal life. Is money consuming for you? Maybe you always feel you never have enough, always needing more. After having to clean out two houses filled to overflowing with possessions, it has caused me to take a good look at my own home, and all the things we have accumulated over 30 years. Things I had to have. Things I spent a lot of money on at one point. Remember the Longaberger basket craze. Yup, I had to have all those expensive dust collectors. I don't even like them anymore and have donated most to the church yard sale. My closets are overflowing with clothing, most of which I don't even wear. Think about it. We waste so much money on things we think will satisfy us. What happens once you get the thing

you were after? I'm sure you know the answer. There's always something else to take its place. Our attention is turned to the next thing, the next big purchase. It never ends. It's a vicious cycle. I have made so many purchases which were just frivolous. Don't misunderstand me, money is not a bad thing. However, it's the importance we place on it that can get us into trouble. Is it worldly or heavenly? Are we storing up treasure on earth or treasures in heaven? Matthew 6:20-21 says, "**But** store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also". I 100% want my treasure to be stored up in heaven. Material possessions will never satisfy. My new motto is to "simplify" and really pray and think about my purchases before buying. True fulfillment and satisfaction can only be found in our relationship with Christ.

How can we break this cycle of always striving for more, wanting more? Here's where stewardship comes in. Do you understand that everything you have has been given to you by God, and nothing that you have is truly yours? Now, read that again and let it sink in. Everything I am and all that I possess belongs to the Lord. James 1:17 says, "Every good and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change." How are you using the gifts God has given you? Are you being a good steward or are you wasteful? Are you using His gifts to help grow His kingdom? Are you tithing? Tithing means to give the first 10% of everything to the Lord. Are you giving him your best, or is he getting what's left over after you pay all your bills? Is there even anything left over to give to God? Tithing is a hard concept for people to understand. It is biblical, and God wants you to put Him to the test. Malachi 3:10-12 says, "Bring the full tithe to the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the Lord of hosts. Then all the nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the Lord of Hosts." God is saying test him! Take this step of obedience and see what He can do. If you say you love God and you trust Him, but you aren't tithing, then you really don't trust Him. Money can be a stronghold. But when you change your mindset, material things lose their hold on you. Have you prayed for the things you desire? Ask God to help you be a good steward of all that He has given you. 2 Corinthians 9:6-8 says, "Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." I want to be both generous and cheerful when I give to God.

I have learned so much over the past 3 years. God has been working and moving in my life in a mighty way. The biggest thing I learned is to trust in God and that he will reward the faithful. Those aren't empty words on a page. I screamed and cried out to the Lord, begging Him to help me. I remember feeling hurt and angry at all the work I had to do to settle my uncle's estate. It didn't feel fair. I was exhausted and

overwhelmed. In hindsight, these events led up to where I am now. God really shaped and refined me. I learned to fully trust and surrender to him. Not just a small part of me, but all of me. I found my treasure, and my eternal inheritance is secure, the only inheritance that truly matters.

You see, my uncle did leave me an inheritance, but one I wouldn't receive until after my mother passed away. Back then, I didn't know my mom's time on this earth was drawing near. My prayer now is for God to use this gift to further his kingdom, because it's all His anyway. And yes, the devil tried to whisper in my ear, "that's a lot of money to give away, you should keep it for yourself." To which I replied, "get away from me!" There is no way that I would not give tithe to God after all he has done for me. I want to be a good steward of God's gift. Storing up treasures in heaven and the eternal inheritance that is waiting for me is worth far more than anything I could spend that money on.

Don't get me wrong, I still have dreams and desires. My closest friends know my husband and I have talked for many years about retiring one day and having a house at the beach. Is it a lofty dream? Maybe, but God is a big God who can answer big prayers. I pray and ask God for his will, and in His perfect timing to provide the exact place for us to retire to. I'm not sure what our future holds, but whatever it is, I'm trusting and believing in God to provide for it. Proverbs 16:3 says, "Commit your works to the Lord and your plans will be established."

REFLECTION

Do you feel secure in your eternal inheritance? If not, have you asked Jesus into your heart? If you haven't, you can do it right now. A simple heartfelt prayer is all it takes, and in that moment, you will be marked with a seal, guaranteeing your inheritance of eternity in heaven. Are you overwhelmed with the number of possessions you own? Is there a way to simplify? Spend some time decluttering your home. Donate unused items to charity. Give unwanted items away to someone in need. Be conscious of the items you purchase and bring into your home. Is it a true need, or just another want? Are you storing up treasures in heaven? Are you being a good steward with the gifts God has given you? Are you tithing?

APPLICATION

God challenges you to put Him to the test. See for yourself the blessings that He will pour into your life when you give Him the first 10%. Pastor Rick Collins, founding Pastor here at BMCC always said, "God will make the remaining 90% that you have go further and do more than if you kept it all for yourself." I truly believe this and have experienced it firsthand. It's a matter of trust and obedience. Do you trust Him?