

Rev. Janet Doyle
Elmer Presbyterian Church
8th Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday, July 31, 2022
Scripture: Colossians 3:1-15

Sermon: Sharing in His Glory

Almost everyone agrees that greed is bad. We are against it. We are quick to judge greed in others, but few of us admit that we also have a problem with greed. We tend to shrug off greed by comparing ourselves with those who are richer than we are and thinking greed is their problem. Yet, we need to realize that Paul wrote Colossians to average Christians. He told them that they must put to death their sinful nature with regard to “greed” which amounts to idolatry. (Col. 3:5)

If greed was a problem for them in that culture, then surely we, who live in this prosperous nation, must come to grips with greed. How can we keep greed from becoming our god?

A few years ago, Money Magazine declared money and possessions were the number one obsession of Americans. It seems that we never have enough and always are wanting more. Greed is more than a cultural problem; it is a spiritual one. One of the most serious spiritual problems in our country is unchecked greed.

What is greed? Greed is the selfish and excessive desire for more of something than is needed. Greed is human desire out of control. Credit card debt in the United States is \$930 billion and people usually owe over \$16,000 on their credit cards. Half of Americans spend more money than they make annually. Many people are more concerned with making money or enjoying life than they are about their eternal destiny. Going to church and worshiping God on Sunday morning is a thing of the past to many, and they don't think it is important to think beyond their own pleasures or to teach their children about the God who created them. Many churches are struggling because making money and enjoying life is more important than being a member of a church and serving the Lord with their whole heart, mind, soul and strength.

At a grave in England, one headstone read, “She died for the want of things.” Next to her was a headstone reading, “He died trying to give it to her!”

Greed can be summed up in a word: “**MORE!**” We want more. John D. Rockefeller put it well when he was asked how much money was enough, and he replied, “Just a little bit more!”

Henry Ford, the founder of the Ford Company, once asked a young auto engineer what his chief desire in life was. The young man replied that he wanted to become very rich—that was his main priority. Sometime later, Mr. Ford gave the employee a small package. He opened the box to find a pair of metal-rimmed eyeglasses, but in place of the lenses was a pair of silver dollars. “Put them on,” Ford instructed, and the young man did. “Now what do you see?” Ford asked. “Nothing,” the engineer replied. “I can’t see anything because the money’s in the way.” “Maybe you should rethink that ambition of yours,” Ford remarked as he walked away.

One of the seven deadly sins is greed. Honestly, how often are we content with what we have? How often do we think we need to have a little bit more? It starts when we are young and what we see on TV, and we think we have to have it, even if it is just cereal or a new toy. As we get older our toys get more expensive and we still want what is the newest thing to have.

Max Lucado in his book, ***Traveling Light***, writes, “Come with me to the most populated prison in the world. Come with me to the world’s most oppressive prison. Just ask the inmates; they will tell you. They are overworked and underfed. Their walls are bare and bunks are hard. No prison is so populated, no prison so permanent. Most inmates never leave. They never escape. They never get released. They serve a life sentence in this over-crowded, under provisioned facility. The name of the prison over the entrance has only four letters: **W A N T**. The prison of want. The prisoners want something. They want something bigger, nicer, faster. They think when they get that ‘one thing’ all will be well until there is another ‘one thing’ they want to have.” (p29-30)

It isn't wrong to want things, but when greed and other desires get out of balance and out of bounds, they become sins. Greed is surrounded by four dark powers: control, conflict, confusion and corruption.

Proverbs 28:25 says, "A greedy person provokes conflict, but whoever trusts in the Lord will prosper."

Matthew 6:19-21 says, "*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*"

"Ask any coroner. Ask any embalmer. Ask any funeral-home director. No one takes anything with him. When one of the wealthiest men in history, John D. Rockefeller, died, his accountant was asked, "How much did John D. leave?" The accountant replied, "All of it." (*Traveling Light*, Max Lucado p. 30)

John Bunyan wrote the book *Pilgrims Progress*. On November 12, 1660, John Bunyan was sent to prison because he was preaching the Gospel without permission from the Church of England. He spent twelve years in prison because he wouldn't stop preaching the Gospel from his cell. He lost a lot as far as the world was concerned. Many thought he was foolish. But according to God, he wasn't the foolish one. While in prison he wrote the most famous Christian allegory in church history that has impacted more people than we can count. While reading the book you learn about Mr. Hold the World, Mr. Save-All, and Mr. Money-love and about the sinful destruction of greed. Bunyan became spiritually rich since the only thing we are taking to Heaven are people who come to know Christ by our witness. If you have never read the book, I would recommend reading it.

Greed is being focused on material possessions and thinking you have security in things other than your Creator God. People expect the things of this world to give them what only God can give them. Jesus died for the greedy in this world to show them there is another way. He wants us to share in his glory by following his ways and walking in his footsteps.

Hebrews 13:5-6 says, *“Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’”*

Are you content with what you have in life? Greed will forever lead us away from being content with what God gives us. Do we view our money and possessions as ours or God’s? God does provide for our needs when we are generous with what we have instead of being greedy, God will continue to bless us. The blessing of giving is that it takes the focus off of ourselves and on to others around us who also have needs.

The Lord wants us to share in his glory by putting on our new nature and to become like him, wearing our new clothes. He wants us to wear tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. He wants us to be forgiving because he forgave us. God wants us to be loving. When we dress in the glory of God everyday, we will have the peace of Christ rule our hearts, and greed will not take hold of us. The love of Christ will surround us and bind us all together in perfect harmony.

The Lord wants us to regard his peace as a treasure and a possession he left for us to enjoy in this world. Jesus did not leave behind any wealth or material possessions for his disciples when he left this world, but he left his glory that we can share in it.

The riches of Christ are more precious to you than all the riches that this world has to offer.

2 Corinthians 8:9 says, *“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.”*

Remember you have a God who knows you and loves you. The Holy Spirit is filling you and overflowing from you, and you have been dressed in new clothes and are now sharing in the glory of your Savior both now and into eternity.