

What is Jesus Doing?

BEWARE THE IDOL MAMMON

Jesus words in red in the Gospel of Matthew tell us “**No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon** (Matthew 6:23).” When our Lord Jesus tells us something this specific, we would do well to pay attention. Note: He says **NO ONE** can serve two masters. In other words, you trust Me or you trust what I have given you.

The apostle Paul tells us in 1 Timothy...

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

- 1 Timothy 6:10

While we may be tempted to think that because we don't consider ourselves greedy or money-grubbing, and we might from time to time give to a church, or some televangelist, or some foreign Mission or even give a buck to a needy stranger or a relative needing help, that we are immune from the warning of which both Paul and our Lord Jesus tell us have spiritual consequences. We must not allow ourselves to be lulled into complacency by the enemy. The Idol Mammon is one of his chief lieutenants. It is not a question of degree. It is a matter of trust.

Here is a personal story... Two and a half years ago, my lovely wife Donna took a nasty fall at work which injured her severely. We tried to take care of her injuries through our Health Insurance but the moment that they found out that the injury happened at work, they told her that they could not treat her and that the injuries had to be reported to Workman's Compensation and be taken care of through the Work Comp Insurance carrier for her employer.

What is Jesus Doing?

Two and a half years later this saga is still ongoing and with very few exceptions, my wife has had no meaningful treatment because of the constant denials by the Insurance Company of treatment authorizations requested by the very Doctors who she was referred to BY THE INSURANCE COMPANY.

I have been Donna's advocate and defender throughout this soul-crushing process and so I am intimately aware of the callousness and lack of compassion for the injured worker that is an integral part of this system. Along the way, we have met several kind and well-meaning physicians and others who have shared with us that this is common experience with most work comp patients. The System AKA the Insurance Company and the Utilization Review vendors routinely deny reasonable care as a means of coercing the injured worker to settle to their own and their employer's detriment.

The Employer, the Insurance company's client, also suffers because they do not get their valuable employee back in a timely manner (or in some cases like my wife, ever) because the injuries, easily addressed in the beginning with reasonable proper treatment, eventually become worse and chronic as the denials drag on.

This has been the case for Donna, and to add insult to injury, the Insurance Company has recently paid a Private Investigator to follow her and take surreptitious photographs attempting to "catch" her doing something outside the guidelines of activity for her Medical Disability evaluation. That money would have been much better spent taking care of Donna's injuries early on thereby allowing her to return to work.

Why am I telling you all this in a discussion about the idol Mammon? Here it is. As I was praying in the Spirit for Donna's health the other day, a Word came to me that I should also be praying for those who identify as "Christians" who work for the Insurance Company as well as for those who work for the Utilization Review Company and for the politicians who allow this system to continue. Why?

What is Jesus Doing?

The Lord revealed that these Christians are trading their soul's right standing with God and trust in security in HIM for their trust and security in their paycheck. We have been assured by some who would speak out (mostly treating Doctor's whose recommendations the Insurance Company denies through the Utilization Review company) that all along the line these people KNOW that they are denying reasonable care and they are doing it for their bosses who answer to their stockholders. That said, I am praying for the stockholders too.

What does this have to do with us? When Jesus tells us that NO ONE can serve God and Mammon, we need to hear Him!

Jesus tells this story in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Here is the story in the Gospel of Mark...

Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Do not defraud,' 'Honor your father and your mother.'"

And he answered and said to Him, "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth."

Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

- Mark 10:17-22

What is Jesus Doing?

Now I point to the line... “Jesus, looking at him, loved him”. Jesus knew his heart. He wanted to be worthy to inherit eternal life and he acknowledged Jesus, but he had an Idol in his heart that was going to keep him separated from the Kingdom of Heaven as long as he did not deal with it. What was the idol? Money. Plain and simple. He walked away, sorrowful, because he was going to continue to put his trust in riches, and not in God, the Giver of those riches.

Wealth is a responsibility. It is supposed to be a gift that is given away. It has been said that we all want to be blessed, but some just want more blessing for themselves, while others want more blessing to bless others. God deserves the latter. That is why we have the Golden Rule. God blessed Abraham so that through him the world might be blessed. Jesus left His riches in Glory to become poor and a sacrifice to many. If we say we follow Jesus then we must do as He did.

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

- 2 Corinthians 8:9

The Apostle Paul quotes Exodus 16:14 in 2 Corinthians 8:15 when he was exhorting them to give generously to the poorer churches out of their wealth, which they had in abundance. He tells them “As it is written, “He who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack.” The early church was supposed to live this way.

The original verse was found in Exodus 16 in regards to the manna which fed the Israelites for the 40 years in the desert and which they were told to use for the welfare of ALL of them but NOT save up or hoard.

What is Jesus Doing?

And Moses said to them, “This is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat. This is the thing which the Lord has commanded: ‘Let every man gather it according to each one’s need, one omer for each person, according to the number of persons; let every man take for those who are in his tent.’”

Then the children of Israel did so and gathered, some more, some less. So when they measured it by omers, he who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack. Every man had gathered according to each one’s need. And Moses said, “Let no one leave any of it till morning.”

- Exodus 16:15-16

Certainly “saving for a rainy day” is prudent, if worldly advice. But are some of you reading to this article, putting your trust and faith in your money in the bank or in those that promise to increase your wealth, rather than gratefully depending upon the Lord for your daily bread?

Don’t get me wrong. It is okay to have much. But we must always remember that Jesus said in the Gospel of Luke that “to whom much is given, much will be required. He was referring to the knowledge of the Gospel and the great Commission, but I believe that He was also referring to our gifts and possessions. We who believe must look to the Holy Spirit to reveal what we are to give away, when and to whom.

We live in a society that values personal wealth as well as fame, good looks, desirability and political power. We must realize that these things are worldly pursuits. Our gifts, including money but also our talents and other strengths are mandated by the Lord, to be used for the benefit of others and the Glory of God. When we make our daily decisions based on whether they benefit us financially, or in any other way for our personal benefit, we are serving an idol.

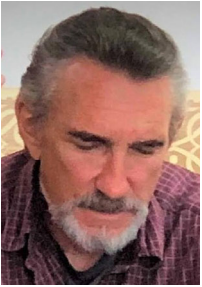
What is Jesus Doing?

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

- Ephesians 2:10

Those good works always involve giving something that you have been given whether it is God's Grace and mercy, some piece of wisdom, or ten thousand dollars. Trust Him. Seek HIS will. Ask for courage to give more than you think you can.

That is what trusting the Lord is all about.



In His grip, with His love,

- John Henry Raskin, Roadhouse Rabbi