

ACCOUNTING

“MONEY IS THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL”

Actually, the correct wording from 1 Timothy 6:10 is “The love of money is the root of all evil”, which is quite different when you think about it. This error is common today and would not have been made by early Christians in America.

Stop for a minute and think of how western culture operates and compare that to what values it espouses. We (the U.S.) are a country of laws that have a wide range of application. The tax laws are at the very heart of what makes the country run. For the system to work, there has to be a system of accounting where all transactions are posted and kept on file to indicate their existence and impact on the immediate business at hand, whether it is related to the individual, group, corporation, government, etc. Collectively, this accounting affects the entire country and is often used as a gauge to our “health”. It is so preeminent that we often joke that the only sure things are “death and taxes”. Yet, people have different opinions about each of these two areas.

With regards to death, some think it is the final solution, where the problems of earthly life end, and all accounts are balanced with the appropriate financial statements rendered in final form so that all debts are settled. Others dismiss the reality of death without a thought or think that it is so far away in time as to not bear present consideration. They haven’t heard about it from anyone and thus agree with the

bard's reference to it as "that undiscovered country, from whose bourne, no traveler ever returns.

With regards to accounting, we find that most people want accounting and accountability here on earth, particularly from those that they deal with. Yet they often find excuses to exempt themselves from being "held accountable".

People are taken to court to settle accounts, and of course, probate court is there to assure justice is carried out, even when death intervenes. The bible recognizes the nature of justice and advises as a practical matter to "settle your debts on the way to court"... as you will not get out of jail until you have paid "every last penny."

We may not like this idea, as Robert Frost opined "No one was ever meant, to remember or invent, what he did with every cent." And Will Rogers felt that the tax code was so cumbersome, that it made more liars out of people than anything else. But Jesus was clear about rendering unto Caesar what was Caesar's and to God what was God's. And that should concern each one of us when we consider that there is another set of "books" that are important to God, (Hosea and Ephraim) and they contain the record of our actions. God is not a respecter of persons, but He is One who assays the quality of the human heart. Is it not odd then, when people think there will not be a final accounting after death. The Bible clearly states, "It is appointed once for man to die, then the judgment".

It is easy to see man's character reflected in our economy in the shrinking candy bar phenomenon and recount the numerous practices of deceit and fraud that occur in our

country. My favorite is the 10 ounces of coffee sold in a “1 pound” can – that is, the same size can that use to supply a full pound. But what we are talking about goes beyond pointing fingers at those who make the news. The real question is whether you and I are “In the black or in the red?” when it comes to settling our account with God.

I have seen Kirk Cameron on TV as he presents a straightforward assessment of the concept of judgment as it relates to the 10 Commandments. The people he interviews typically agree with the statement “I’ve been a pretty good person.”, however, after some thought and explanation, they also agree that they have broken God’s laws. They also understand that saying “I’m sorry” does not pardon the lawbreaker. Indeed, I have seen people express great sadness when the situation is made clear for they know that even with a change of heart, a penalty must be paid.

We all might join with the disciples and say “Who then can be saved?”

The good news is that the penalty has been paid through the death of Christ on the cross. A gift from God should any desire to receive it. That’s right, this gift has already been paid for. Oswald Chambers remarked how it cost our Lord everything to provide it through His death on the cross and this work was accomplished because of His obedience to His Father’s will.

We should not deceive ourselves and be tardy in becoming accountable in this matter simply because we are all in the same boat where not one person on earth is worthy of God’s

righteousness. Being “as good” or a little better than the next person pays no dividends in God’s economy, for “man is appointed once to die, and then the judgment”. Consider that the light will shine on all our deeds at that time. Will you have the Lord Jesus there to intercede?

APPLICATION POINTS

- ❑ Settle with God now, before the judgment – James 2:10 states “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.” (become reconciled to God by accepting Jesus as your Savior)
- ❑ Render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s – to be honest and forthright in your dealings with others in this life is a minimal injunction. While this includes paying your taxes, do not forget the importance of the:
- ❑ Golden Rule – “Doing unto others as you would have them do unto you”, is reinforced in James 2:8 “If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.”

SONG

Run To Him