

Matthew 6:20: "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven"

YOUTH COUNCIL PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS 2009

In these turbulent financial times many have discovered that their worldly investments are not going to produce what they had expected. Years of planning and investing in the money markets of this world have been lost in the current financial chaos. Futures which were built on their returns overnight now seem uncertain and unsure.

What spiritual lessons there are for us to glean from this present world economic crisis if only we had grace to apply them to our lives?

In his opening public sermon the Lord Jesus Christ gave some eternal investment advice to his listeners. In an age which has witnessed yet again the uncertainty of investing only in the things of time and sense the advice of the Saviour ought to take on added significance.

Matthew 6:20: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven

This was excellent advice from the Saviour not only for his immediate listeners but for all in every generation. The safest place to invest your treasures is in heaven.

The greatest treasure each individual can possess is the salvation of their immortal soul. The Lord Jesus Christ said that one soul was worth more in God's sight than all the riches and wealth of the world combined. (Mark 8:36) How great the value of the soul is can be seen in that it took the death of the Saviour to redeem such from a lost eternity.

Young person your soul's salvation is the greatest treasure you have for time and eternity. It is an amazing thought that God has put this treasure in earthen vessels, and causes us to know the riches of his grace through Christ Jesus. Trust in Christ and his redeeming blood for the salvation of your soul. It is an investment which grows brighter as the days go by!

Souls which have been redeemed are called by Christ to invest their time and talents in His service. Our congregations need young people who are prepared to use their abilities to further Christ's kingdom. What opportunities are presented locally for our Youth in the Free Presbyterian Church to serve the Master? Sunday Schools; Children's Meetings; Youth Fellowships; Evangelistic Outreach to young and old; Summer Holiday Bible Clubs; practical care and concern etc are all dependent upon the voluntary help received from within the local congregations. As a Church we have every reason to rejoice in the involvement of so many of our Youth at every level. This service for God is laying up treasure in heaven.

At denominational level the Youth Council exists to help co-ordinate such endeavours and to harness the abilities, gifts and graces of our Youth in the service of Christ. Open-air Gospel Meetings; Evangelistic Teams being prepared and sent to our churches in England, Scotland, Wales, Republic of Ireland, Isle of Man; Summer camps; missionary projects and teams; United Youth Rallies; are just some of the ways the Youth Council helps our Youth

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invest their talents and lay up treasure in heaven. We need all of our Youth Fellowships to be involved in order to fulfil the enormous investment potential.

It is an investment plan which is safe and produces sure returns. The Saviour urged his listeners to lay up treasures in heaven knowing that there – “neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:” (Matthew 6:20b)

There can be no safer place to entrust your service for the Lord. The very smallest deed which is done for the Lord does not go unnoticed or unrewarded in heaven.

Mark 9:41: For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

Young person there is nothing which you shall invest in Christ's service which shall not produce a return. It is an investment of spiritual treasures in heaven.

I remember hearing one aged missionary speak of the recent death of his dear wife. In loving tones he told of how after she had died he had to go through all her belongings. Her clothes in which she took such great care were in the wardrobe. Her few bits of jewellery which took her a whole life time to collect were in their case. Her family memorabilia which she so prized were all around the house. All of it though loved by his wife had to be left behind – the only things she took with her was what she had sent on before. Hers had been a life of devotion and dedication to the cause of Christ, she had spiritual treasure in heaven which had been sent on before.

With so much talk of current financial crisis and falling revenue from investments in the world let us apply the spiritual lessons to our own lives again. Young person – make sure your eternal investments are those which will yield God's well done at the end of the life's journey.

***Only one life, yes only one, Now let me say, "Thy will be done";
And when at last I'll hear the call, I know I'll say "twas worth it all";
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.***

Rev Ian Harris