**Jesus on Wealth**

Let us hear the many words Jesus speaks regarding wealth:

Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything--all she had to live on." (Mark 12:41-44)

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6: 19-21)

No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. (Matthew 6:24)

What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? (Matthew 16: 26)

As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good--except God alone. You know the commandments: Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not to fraud, honor your father and mother." "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy." Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." At this the man's face fell. He went away sad because he had great wealth. Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!" (Mark 10: 17-31)

Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."(Luke 12:15)

And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, "What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops." Then he said, “This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.” And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry." But God said to him, “You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?” This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God. (Luke 12:16-21)

There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to be fed from what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, “Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.” But Abraham replied, “Son, remember that in your lifetime you receive your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.” He answered, “Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.” Abraham replied, “They have Moses and the prophets; let them listen to them.” “No, father Abraham,” he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.” He said to them, “If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.” (Luke 16:19-31)

Yes, Jesus says quite a lot when it comes to wealth. Jesus teaches that everyone is a beloved child of God and as such deserves to have enough, not necessarily the same, but enough. I know in one of the above stories, Jesus tells the rich man to sell all his stuff and that freaks out those of us with substantial resources, but the fact of the matter is that for that man, his focus on wealth accumulation was the very thing keeping him from a relationship with God. I’m not about to run out and sell all my possessions, but I certainly can be more generous with what I have. I can certainly be more mindful of the poor and marginalized with our society and approach them with respect, love, compassion, and generosity. This is what Jesus taught and what he modeled. He promises that this is the way to achieve abundant life and joy. As disciples of Jesus are we willing to follow in his footsteps. I should hope we will at least try.