

Where is your treasure?

Exodus 9:1-7

- I. In the ancient world, wealth was often measured in livestock.
 - A. The wealthier you were, the more livestock you owned.
 1. Examples: Jacob, Solomon, the story of Job.
 - B. The Egyptians' gods were often pictured with heads of various livestock.
 1. They looked to these gods to provide and protect livestock.
 - C. The plague on the livestock is about Egypt's prosperity.
 1. Although they don't acknowledge him, God has allowed them to prosper.
 2. His judgment is in response to the evil done to Israel.
 3. He is also asserting himself as the true and sovereign God.
 - (a) Again, he makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.
 - (b) "All the livestock of the Egyptians died" (may mean all the kinds, not necessarily every one of the animals).
 - (c) None of the Israelite livestock died.
 - (d) Pharaoh sent men to verify that, yet he hardened his heart.
 - II. Throughout history, people have acknowledged God or gods as provider.
 - A. As the giver of all good things God is our provider.
 1. Yet, we can easily fall into false beliefs about this.
 2. Last week, Rick spoke of postures toward God.
 - (a) The right posture: God is the goal and the treasure.
 3. One of the wrong postures: the purpose of relationship with God is to receive blessings.
 - (a) This is not only a false posture. It is a false gospel.
 - B. The Biblical framework
 1. God made us to find "life" in relationship to him.
 - (a) By loving and trusting him as the ultimate thing.
 - (b) When we experience him, he fills us and satisfies us.
 - (c) There is no one or nothing else like him.
 - (d) So, he is the treasure we seek and long for (the ultimate thing).
 - (e) In worship, we acknowledge that.
 2. Sin and the fall alienate people from God.
 - (a) But we are driven to find life.
 - (b) Apart from God, we worship other gods (material wealth, partying, popularity, fame, food, etc., etc., etc.
 - (c) Whatever we pursue to find "life" becomes our god.
 3. Through the Gospel, God invites us back to him.
 - (a) Jesus gave his life to make it possible for us to know God.
 - (b) He gave his life so we could again find "life" in God (John 10:10).
 - (c) That begins with trusting in Jesus!
 - C. The "health and wealth gospel" is a false gospel.
 1. It is a form of idolatry.
 - (a) People may verbally say that God is the treasure.
 - (b) But the focus on "blessings" makes health and wealth the functional treasure.
- III. "There is nothing new under the sun."
 - A. The health and wealth gospel was around in Jesus' day.
 1. God had promised Israel blessings for faithfulness (Deuteronomy 7:11-15).
 2. But Israel repeatedly broke the covenant (unfaithful).
 - (a) This is true for the nation and the individual (Rom. 3:23).
 3. So, although it is still good for us to seek to be moral, God's blessings are by grace, not because we deserve them.
 - (a) Why? Because none of us have met the standard.
 - (b) We have all fallen short of the glory of God.
 - B. However, they still thought those promises applied in Jesus' time.
 1. The disciples: "Who sinned, the blind man or his parents?"
 - (a) Their cultural assumption: sinners are cursed; the righteous are healthy. "Whose sin caused this?"
 2. The young rich ruler: (Luke 18:18-26)
 - (a) His cultural assumption: I am wealthy because I am righteous.
 - (b) He is looking for public affirmation of how good he is.
 - (c) Instead, Jesus tells him to sell what he thinks is the evidence for his righteousness. He is shocked, dismayed.
 - C. What are we to do?
 1. Flee from idolatry! (I Corinthians 10:14)
 2. Be thankful and humble (Deut. 8:10-13, 17-18).
 3. Reject self-righteousness (Deut. 9:4-6).
 4. Be generous! (I Timothy 6:17-19)
 5. Pursue God as the ultimate treasure!