

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Psalm 24 & 1 Tim. 1:6-12

EXTRA READINGS: Apostle's Creed & Canons II, art 9 (pg. 104)

SINGING: 227:1-3 – 161:1-7 – 136:1-4 – 248:1-4

Opening observations

- Our culture is filled with toxic ideas floating into our minds
- Consumerism rules over American society and within most churches
- How deeply are we infected by 'the wealth and health Gospel?'

FIVE BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES REGARDING OUR POSSESSIONS

I. They always remain God's property II. They ought never to possess us
III. They are to be obtained honestly IV. They are given to be used or distributed
lovingly and prudently V. They are given to be enjoyed Biblically

I. OUR POSSESSIONS ALWAYS REMAINS GOD'S PROPERTY

A. Opening verse of Bible states bottom line truth: *God owns universe!*

B. God established principle of *stewardship* rather than *ownership* Gen. 1:26

1. What is a steward? (Job 1:21; 1 Tim. 6:7)
2. God established laws to remind His people of His ultimate ownership
a. see Deut. 14:23-29; Deut. 15
3. Stewardship doesn't only apply to *material matters* (lands, money)
a. see Matthew. 12:23-27; 1 Peter 4:10; 1 Cor. 4:1
4. Stewards are to act in line with their master's will: Matt. 25:19, 27

C. God determines the extent of our portion here on earth: Gen. 2:8

1. God 'measures and determines' the extent of our participation in the earthly matters (Prov. 22:2; 1 Sam. 2:7; Deut. 32:8; Matt. 20:15)

D. Though all is ultimately God's possessions, it is Biblical to own things

1. Bible supports private property with 8th commandment (Ex. 20:15)
2. Indirect support in the examples of 'godly rich' in both OT and NT
3. God has attached blessings to diligence (Prov. 10:4)

II. OUR POSSESSIONS OUGHT NEVER TO POSSESS US

A. Greatest problem: not *how to possess it but how it possesses us*

1. Satan's goal: *enslave us to the god of materialism by feeding consumerism*

2. Examine whether 'consumerism or the thirst for stuff' is your idolatry

a. What do you love?

b. In what do you find your security or comfort?

B. How are we to avoid becoming idolatrous with 'stuff' other than God?

1. Consider God's directions from 1 Tim. 6:6-10

a. great gain – lasting joy is *godliness with contentment*

b. wealth and possession have temporal limits

c. having more than necessities: sources of great temptation 8-10

d. desire to be rich is a root of all (kinds of) evil (10a)

Closing Exhortation: The enriching alternative aim of life: 1 Tim. 6:11-12

A. Flee these things

1. What is the meaning of 'flee'?

2. Are you a 'flee-er or a spree-er'?

B. Pursue after 'the other things'

1. What is meant with 'pursue'?

2. Are you a pursuer of those things that truly enrich your life?

Precious Truths to Pursue

We are to be content with what we have but never with what we are in ourselves.

The Christian is called upon to make his material possessions immaterial.

The holy person is the only contented man in the world and the wealthiest man is he who is contented with the least.