

THEME: Giving Up What We Cannot Keep

"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 thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasurer is, there your heart will be also."

Matthew 6:20 (NIV)

Jeff's mother gave him five dollars for his monthly allowance and reminded him that a tenth belonged to God. "How much would a tenth be?" Jeff asked.

"Oh, only fifty cents," his mother replied. "But if a lot of people give their share, we'll have a big amount for the church's missionary program that the preacher told us about yesterday."

Thinking about the church's missionary program, Jeff asked how much his Star War spaceman would cost. When he found out it would be \$4.75 plus tax, he asked his mother, "Could I give five cents to the church's program and let the toy store owner give the other part?"

Scriptural examples lead us to believe that the early Christians supported the first missionaries not only prayerfully but financially. Of course, there were probably those like Jeff who wanted others to give the bulk of the material support while they took care of their own desires. Human nature hasn't changed.

Some folk think that money cannot be used in a spiritual way and that when you talk about money, you are talking about something that is only material. However, our Lord says that we are to lay up for ourselves treasure in heaven. How can we do that? Well, instead of putting it in a bank, put it in heaven by giving it to the Lord's work down here – but make sure it is in the *Lord's* work. If it is used for the propagation of the gospel and to get out the Word of God, it becomes legal tender in heaven, and that is how we gather treasure in heaven.

This is a commendable reason for giving. And our Lord gives the reason: "***For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.***" If you get enough treasure laid up in heaven, you are certainly going to think a lot about heaven. But if money is in the bank you thought will be on the bank.

Prayer Thought: Father God, thank you for the examples of zeal that we glean from the lives of the first disciples. Instill within us that same zeal and willingness to be and do that which you have commanded us to be and do. Help us to look beyond ourselves that we might do your bidding at home and abroad. In so doing remind us that as we "give up that which we can not keep we will gain that which we can not lose. In Jesus' name. Amen.

*Reverend Dr. James E. Russell, Jr.
Presiding Elder*