

“Ministry Flows from the Heart” – 1 Timothy 6:17-19 – Rev Jeff Childs**What do you love about this church?**

You probably know the saying, “put your money where your mouth is!” But in the words of Paul, we might phrase it, “put your money where your heart is.” Or to put it another way, Jesus said, *where your treasure is, there your heart will be too.* (Luke 12:34) You may think that another old saying is true, “you get what you pay for”... But I would say that is rarely true. Think about it. I look for bargains, don’t you? By definition we get more than what we pay for when we pay less with a bargain or a sale. Last year I bought a new car, and what is the one fear with car shopping? Getting a lemon or a piece of junk for your money. That’s not getting what you paid for, it’s getting less than what you paid for. Now before you tell me that you have never bought a lemon, let me ask you to go on a treasure hunt! Walk through the basement, attic, storage units, and check out all the closets and the drawers. They are probably filled with things at some point you thought you just had to have it and put your hard-earned cash down because it was worth it. How many of your treasures are actually old lemons? Next time you just have to go buy something ask yourself, where can I store this when the novelty wears off. Or do it the other way, go into the closet and look at the empty space on the shelf and go to the store and ask the clerk for something about that size to fill that hole in your closet!

Paul reminds us of another sense that we do not get what we pay for...God’s grace! God richly provides everything, not because we bought it or earned it, but because God is a generous God. From the scripture this morning Paul wrote to Timothy, *As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches but rather on God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.* (1 Timothy 6:17) We should put our hope in God not in our finances. Our treasure, our true riches are not money in the bank or stuff in the closet, our treasure is God! And as people of faith, we should be on a treasure hunt to discover the love of God. Today we are asking you to share what you love about this church. Where do we see value, where do we feel the love of Jesus in this church? These are illustrations of the ways that we do good as a church and of how very rich we are in good deeds. Paul as he writes to Timothy says that there is a difference between just living in our culture and living a Christian life—what Paul calls, *“the life that really is life.”* This is what I would call an abundant life or a full life, a life of meaning and purpose – to receive and share the love of God.

Today let us focus on giving to God. Our stewardship campaign this year was taken from a book by Bishop Robert Schnase – “Extravagant Generosity.” When are you ever extravagant? It might be when we give things to our children or grandchildren, we give gifts at Christmas, birthdays, weddings, etc. Many of us may support various ministries or not-for-profit organizations we treasure. At this time of this year you might be like me and give financial support for candidates we want to be elected in November. For me the largest portion of my giving comes here to this church - supporting the budget, helping to pay off the mortgage, and various special offerings. Because I love this church, and I always get more than I pay for when I give to the Lord. At the end of the month we will

give you each an offer to pledge your support for this church in the coming year and help us finish this year well. And also this month we will have two special offerings. Today we invite you to support Rev. Julie Wilson's work as a missionary and in a couple weeks we will lift up the ministry of Hope4Kids to provide bags of food each weekend for school children in our area. With each one I ask you to be generous in your prayer and financial support.

Did you hear what Paul said the rich people should do? *They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share,* (1 Timothy 6:18) Do you see yourself as rich or poor? Maybe you think, "none of the above" and see yourself as middle class. But today I want to focus on what it means to be rich, and help us see how rich we truly are. In a few moments we will lift up our prayers and I expect we will lift up a dozen or so people from our families or friends that are in "poor" health. But think of all of us and all the other people we know who are not in poor health – we and they are in "rich" health. Let's pray and give thanks that we are so rich in health! And, I believe likewise. we are rich in wealth! Oh, you may not be a billionaire, or even a millionaire. I checked my bank account this week and I share with you that I am a thousandaire! Please know there have been times when I was barely a hundredaire! And even if you are down to your last two pennies you can be rich in your faith and generosity, like the woman Jesus noticed who richly gave her all to God when she slipped those two small coins into the offering.

When I did a spiritual gifts inventory, I discovered one of my gifts is generosity. I give of my time and my talents as well as my income. I hope to continue to grow that gift. On my bucket list is to someday give away at least half of what I receive and live on the other half. My heart is in giving. I believe that is in God's heart, because no matter how much I give, God still gives more. Do your own treasure hunt and find your treasures and find where your money goes. I love this church and am glad to give extravagantly from my heart. I love my family and love to give them gifts. How about you? I invite you to give thanks to a generous God by your extravagant generosity. Alleluia and Amen.

Paul Wrote to Timothy (1 Timothy 6)

Jeffrey B. Childs 8/28/2024

Paul wrote to Timothy,
With advice for the rich,
That they should never be haughty,
But know which way is which.

One way leads one to life,
That's lived abundantly.
The other way is filled with strife,
And with uncertainty.

On God alone rely,
By grace God does provide.
God will always our needs supply,
And with us will abide.

Paul showed us how to give,
Most extravagantly.
That we might learn to fully live,
Through generosity.