

## Should Christians be Rich? by Bill Robinson

Should the members of the Body of Christ be wealthy? Should we have the best houses, cars, and all the latest in clothes and toys? Should we always be in perfect health?

There are many "Christian ministers" today who loudly proclaim "YES" to all of the above. After all, they say, God is the creator of all things and gives them to whomsoever He will. Is it not reasonable then to assume that we but need to ask Him and He will give us whatsoever we ask. They then use the following verses to back up their ideas:

Mt 21:22 And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

Joh 14:13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

Joh 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and [that] your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Joh 16:23 ¶ And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give [it] you.

Joh 16:24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

Jas 4:3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

Isn't this grounds for proclaiming that those Christians who are not prosperous are just not good enough Christians? What about the prayer of Jabez?

1Ch 4:10 And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.

Shouldn't Christians follow Jabez's example, pray the same prayer and receive the same blessings Jabez did?

The problem with those who preach such things is that they only consider verses which seem to confirm their ideas. They carefully overlook the following:

Mt 6:25 ¶ Therefore I say unto you, *Take no thought* for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? (Emphasis added)

Mt 6:31 Therefore *take no thought*, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (Emphasis added)

Lu 12:22 ¶ And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, **Take no thought** for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.(emphasis added)

If God was supposed to be asked for these things, surely the Lord would not have told His disciples to not even think about them. He also told them:

Mt 6:7-13 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: **for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.** After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. (Emphasis added)

Isn't it strange that when Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, He didn't tell them to pray for wealth and prosperity?

While it is most certainly true that God has indeed blessed some Christians with perfect health and great prosperity, should our prayers and efforts be directed toward obtaining these things? I believe Scripture is quite clear on this matter.

Mt 4:8-9 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him **all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;** And saith unto him, **All these things will I give thee,** if thou wilt fall down and worship me. (Emphasis added)

Here Satan is offering the things of this world to the Lord Jesus Christ as a temptation for the Lord to worship him. This clearly demonstrates **an extremely important fact. The things of this world are under the authority of Satan.** If this were not true, Jesus most likely would have said so. Also there would be no temptation if the offer were not valid! Satan will give them to you if you will bow down and worship him.

While it is true that God does override Satan's authority in some cases, it is the exception -- not the rule! The case of Job is a perfect example of this.

The solution to this problem is quite simple. The Bible must be rightly divided.

2Ti 2:15 Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Since the Body of Christ should follow Paul, let's look at some of the things he has to say.

1Co 1:26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh,

not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

1Ti 6:8 And **having food and raiment let us be therewith content.** (Emphasis added)

Col 3:3-4 For **ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.** When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory (Emphasis added)

Phil 4:6-7 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Paul is telling us that we can pray for anything and everything we desire but if all we have is food and clothing, we should be content. Paul's personal example of this is where he prayed three times for the Lord to heal him but the answer to his prayer was "My grace is sufficient for thee." (2 Co. 12:7-9) Shouldn't we also be content with the Lord's grace?

Ro 8:16-18 **The Spirit Himself** beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Emphasis added)

Here Paul tells us that we are the children of God and joint heirs with Christ. Since God, as creator, owns everything and we are His heirs, **we already own it all!** Why then should we ask God for that which He has already told us is ours?

The problem is that our ownership will not be manifested until we appear with the Lord in glory. We must realize and accept the fact that we are dead to this world. The life we live is not our own, it is Christ's. We must therefore patiently wait for the hope of His calling!

In conclusion, it should be quite obvious from the foregoing that we should not be focused on the things of this world. If you are healthy and prosperous, praise God. But if you are not healthy or prosperous, praise God.

Surely we may pray for anything but once we have told God of our concerns, let us rest in the knowledge that God will provide for us what is best for us. This should give us the greatest peace of mind knowing that our most loving and holy father, God Himself, will grant our every prayer by providing what is best for us! Besides, we are already rich beyond our wildest imagination:

1Co 2:9 **But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.** (Emphasis added)

Ro 8:12-25 Therefore, brethren, **we are debtors, not to the flesh,** to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but **ye have**

received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. (Emphasis added)

We are joint heirs with Christ of everything that belongs to God. This pertains only to the Body of Christ. We will not receive this until we appear with Christ in glory however. For now, in this earthly life, we are to be content in the knowledge that we are God's children and look forward to our hope, which is in Heaven. As long as we are on this earth, let us keep the following in mind.

Ro 8:28-39 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

2Co 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

We are called! We are justified! We are glorified! We are made the righteousness of God in Christ! We are joint heirs of everything! What else is there that might be worth having?

Should true Christians, members of the Body of Christ, be rich? We are rich beyond compare!

So then, if we live in a hole in the ground, suffer from all kinds of sickness and have not a penny to call our own, praise God and remember our hope is in Heaven – not on the earth!