

PRIORITIES

“Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you” (Jn. 6:27).

Yes we have to work for our daily bread. If a man does not work, neither should he eat (2 Thess. 3:10). Our priorities, however, should always be eternal things that moth and rust cannot corrupt and thieves cannot break through and steal. Unfortunately, the temporal treasures of earth too often take priority.

- “Black Friday” is the day after Thanksgiving. It marks the start of the Christmas shopping season and is one of the busiest shopping days of the year. It is not unusual for shoppers to come to the store the night before and stay up all night long to be first in line to buy a bargain. The seriousness of this search for earthly treasures made the headlines on Nov. 29, 2008. On that day 34 year old Jdimytai Damour, a maintenance man at a Wal-Mart in Long Island, was trampled to death by shoppers eager to buy the food that perishes. The fact that Damour weighed 270 pounds demonstrates the determination those shoppers had to buy a bargain.
- Kenneth Copeland, Benny Hinn, Creflo Dollar, Joyce Meyer, and Jessie Duplantis, are all preachers who have become multimillionaires. Copeland owns a \$17.5 million jet and a \$6 million lake front mansion. Benny Hinn has accumulated \$42 million. Creflo Dollar has a net worth of \$27 million. Joyce Meyer \$8 million. In May 2018 Jessie Duplantis asked his followers to donate \$54 million so he could purchase his own private jet. All these preachers have at least one thing in common. They promise health and wealth if you will follow them.
- On Oct. 18, 2018 hundreds stood in line for hours at the Primm Valley Lotto store 45 miles west of Las Vegas to buy tickets for a \$970 million Mega Millions jackpot.
- King Ahab traded his soul for Naboth’s vineyard and Judas cashed in his for 30 pieces of silver.
- How sad that the priority for most people is the food that spoils!

Yes! The Ten Commandments tell us to labor six days a week. At the same time, however, Jesus insisted that our priority should still be to **“Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness” (Matt. 6:33)**. If we seek first the kingdom, God promises to help us have an ample supply of the food that spoils. We need to constantly be reminded, however, that the things we see are temporal (2 Cor. 4:18). It is the unseen treasures that last for eternity!

Our text about food that spoils was spoken by Jesus after He fed the 5,000. The multitudes followed Him back to Capernaum, not because they saw miraculous signs, but because they ate the loaves and were filled (Jn. 6:26). When Jesus refused to comply with their temporal goals, many of His disciples turned back and no longer followed Him (Jn. 6:66).

There is something seductive about preachers who arrive in their own private jets. The promise that poor people in their audience can also enjoy such a lavish lifestyle leads many to borrow “seed money”, and put it in the offering so that they too can reap a bountiful harvest. Like the religious leaders Jesus confronted, they devour widow’s houses and for a pretense make long prayers.

Jesus, as you know, did not have a lavish life style. While the birds of the air had nests, and the foxes had holes, Jesus did not have a place to lay His head. As far as we know Jesus owned nothing but the clothes on His back. He even had to borrow a tomb in which to be buried. Instead of promising His followers health and wealth, Jesus demanded that they deny themselves and take up a cross every day. He sent them out like sheep in the midst of wolves and warned that they would be flogged in the synagogues and arrested by the Gentiles (Matt. 10:1-42). He promised them, however, food that endures to eternal life. Paul described the life of an apostle like this: **“For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men, we are fools for Christ . . .” (1 Cor. 4:9,10)**. Because of their priorities, however, they are now reigning in heaven. Praise God! The same promise is also for you and me if we seek what they sought!