

SIN - Sept. 24, 1978 AM
(Jim Kraham) -

IF I HAD A MILLION

Matt. 10:42

If you had a million, and I had a million - we would doubtless do our best to get another million.

How much is a billion dollars? Suppose the Federal Government placed the following ad in the paper -- Wanted, a person to count one billion one dollar bills. The salary will be one million dollars, payable after the job is complete. Would you apply? If you did, you would do wrong. For one simple reason. Working a 40 hour week, count one dollar per second, it would take you 133 years to count one billion dollars.

Yet our Government is going into debt, at the rate of one billion dollars each week.

Last year, (Virginia) tax payers sent 3.4 billion to Washington as their share of supporting the Federal Government, with income taxes. Last year, the (Department of Health, Education, and Welfare) misspent twice the total amount that Virginians sent, in Federal income taxes. In April HEW's own inspector general, misspent between 6.3 and 7.4 billion through waste, mismanagement, and fraud. Despite the huge admitted waste by HEW, and despite that the budget include a 7 billion increase for HEW over the current year, the Senate refused to cut their mushroom budget. Which has gone now in 10 years to the level of (180 billion).

We think that our standard of living, a grade-level of existence for people,

a minimum. And we think about possessions - material things. And we say, if I had a million, I would do thus and so.

An interesting incident took place at the First Baptist Church, at Thackersville, Okla., this summer. The Sunday School offering was carefully counted on June 4 - \$125.81 in cash. \$573.00 in checks. The money and checks were placed in a bank bag as was their custom. The bag was left in the counting room as usual. Just off from the front doors. After the morning service, the bag and contents were missing. They searched, they called the police. A week later, the pastor, L. E. Boley received a plain envelope with all the checks but not the cash. They had been mailed on June 6th. And there was a hand lettered note on a Shrevesport, La. motel stationery. Sorry, I am on the run from the law, and there is no way that I can stop running. Because I have been on the run for two years. I can't work because they will trace me, through the social security department. If there was any way, I would get only 10 years, I'd give myself up tomorrow. When they get me, they'll put me in for life. So I steal money just to stay free. I never use a gun to hurt anyone. Sorry, it had to be you. Don't worry, they'll get me. All I can do is try the cat and mouse game at present. I could cash them, but I didn't. And it was unsigned.

Well, people come into money in various ways. The Bible does not condemn material things. But it condemns when we make an idol of things. When a man places something that is more valuable than his soul. Jesus wore a valuable garment. It had value enough for the soldiers to gamble for it.

Roger Babbson once said, money is danger. Nothing can fool men like money. It feeds pride until a man thinks he has no need of God.

thousands of dollars. At his death, they sold it. One week's time, all of those valuable things to him were distributed around the world. Therefore, if we had a million - it might just be rubble for us. But if you take \$1.00 - what we do with that, is what we'd do with a million. Or if you take one talent, the word of God proves. Though has been faithful over the few things, I will make thee ruler over many things.

But we want the spectacular.

Now all of our service for God is extra-ordinary. Who can say what is great and what is small. Sometimes what we call great, God calls failure. And what we call failure, God calls success. Man judges by the outside but God judges by the inside.

They called Herod a God. But the worms devoured him. Man called Calvary a failure. We today sing - In The Cross Of Christ I Glory. Towering ore the wrecks of time. All the light of sacred story. Gathers round its head sublime."/>

You know, great people who use these things sometimes discourage me. Because I think we would rather be known as God's average man, and woman. Who can say which is the greatest - Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost. Or the prayer of a little child being taught - Now I Lay Me Down To Sleep. What does the greatest church - someone who builds a great shrine. Or who gives loving care to a child. Who is the greater - Herod, in his golden palace. Or Lazarus in his rags.

How much are you worth this morning? If you had a million - I'd like to say that every person here has in his possession, (things) or something that is worth more than a million. Something that is worth more than a million -- to your home, to your church, and to your God. I want you to see how rich you are this morning.

I. TIME

How much would you take for a few years or a few hours of your life. Why, there are people who fight the greatest battle to live. And you know, you'd rather live in poverty than to die in luxury. And yet there are lots of people who are saying - what shall I do with my time. There are lots of people who talk about killing time.

Did you know that time is the greatest gold mine that you have. Every minute is just like a nugget of gold.

God asks two material things. First, one tenth of your money. Second, one seventh of your time. And up to this hour, there are some people who are right here and have been robbing God of both.

Now if we have time for dancing, clubs, bridge, for lodge, and amusements - but no time for prayer or the Bible.

Did you know that many Christians give God less than one hour of worship out of every seven days. For pleasure, society, clubs, politics - many many hours in the week are given. For the world, we Christians, if we would devote just one hour a day to God. We've got a million right here in our time.

Jim Kramer said a poor woman came up to him with a love offering. And she said here is \$5.00 - if I had \$5,000, I could never repay you for what you have done for my family. But what had he done for the family? He called on that home, and he talked with that husband. He prayed with him. He led him to Christ. And the man led sober life after Kramer had given him just 10 minutes of his time.

Time is a gold mine. And it can be wasted. It is more than just this world of a fun house. The other fellow needs you and you need him. And God needs you.

II. INFLUENCE

Isn't influence worth a million dollars. Why of course it is. Everybody here has influence and that is worth a million. Everybody is somebody's hero - somebody has said. What I am today may cause many many people tomorrow to thank God that I ever lived. What I am today may cause many people to curse my name. Sin may send me to Hell, but what about my influence that I have had upon hundreds of people.

Nov 7 - Vote Pari-Mutuel Gambling -
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No other power is comparable to your personal influence. You can stand on the street corner, or whether you go to some club, or the chamber of commerce, many things I might do. But I forbear because of my influence. There are a lot of things that I do not do because of my influence. I do not spend my time playing cards, dancing, gadding about theatres, smoking, and a lot of other things. Not just simply because I think it would damn my soul, but because I want nothing in my life that I have to defend. That is, if you think about your influence, and you have clean habits and live right, then no one can say to you. Well, why don't you

try your own medicine. And in this way, you put God first, the kingdom first, and the church first.

William Jennings Bryant spoke in Spokane, Washington. One Sunday afternoon, people were there, of his party to greet him. They had a banquet, and they said, we want to hear you speak this evening. He said, gentlemen, I am sorry. You did not consult me, and I will not do that. I believe in the Sabbath, and I will worship at the Baptist Church.

Now that is what we mean by influence and by putting God first.

Theodore Roosevelt, the elected President, was a member of the Dutch Reform Church. It was a little frame building where a hand-ful of members met. Four other great churches in Washington said, we'll give you a free pew Mr. President, you just come and worship with us. But every Sunday, that lion-hearted soul made his way to the common neighborhood to worship with his brethren in a little church. Now that was an example of a sermon that even a blind man could read.

A past Governor of Colorado declared it is a great privilege to live in Denver. To be a citizen of this wonderful state. I prize my membership in the Central Presbyterian Church above all.

When Admiral Phillips saw the Spanish ship sinking, he tipped his hat and he said, I call upon all of you in this hour to witness the fact that I believe in God. (If you can't give anything else - give your influence. God can and will

forgive your last sin. But here's the thing about it - a bird with a broken wing will never soar as high again. A thing said, a thing done, your example and your influence is worth a million.

Out of this text also comes --

III. CHILD

Who would sell his child for a million dollars. But a child is worth a million. God says to every parent - train up this child and train it up for me. Now he who has not tried the companionship of a little child, has missed the richest flowers that have ever bloomed in life. If you have never seen the sparkle in a little child's eye - or listened to the sweet voice of a child.

Any child who knows enough to go to school - learns how to read and write. And he can learn about Jesus.

And how marvelous it is - that Jesus was talking about the disciples here giving a cup of cold water. Here is a little child that is worth a million.

Now a few weeks ago, a grandmother brought Samantha here to a Sunday night service. And in church she heard the song, "Count Your Blessings". And it just appealed to the child. And so she said, I'd like to learn that song. And so she

has learned how to sing, the words of that song - Count Your Many Blessings. Name them one by one.) Now that has happened to a four-year-old child - and to me, that is worth a million. If I had a million, we've got a million in our time, in our influence, and in our children.

IV. SERVICE

When I think, if I had a million - I do have a million. In service for Christ and others. Just a cup of cold water. A kind word, a hand shake, a cup of cold water will put the kingdom of God first. Over the door of the church and the home - I am here to serve should be the words. And God appreciates even a small servant. What God wants is a little bit of you. He needs you and yours.

I read about an usher once, he couldn't pray in public and he couldn't make a speech. But he was one of the finest men in a church in Los Angeles. And they had a roll-call meeting one night, and 22 men and 19 women stood up and said, it was the handshake of Robert Roseberry that won me for Central Baptist Church.

Do you remember the day when someone came into your life and you faced a great trial. Maybe there wasn't a word spoken. But that person come and they took your hand, and they made you their friend forever.

One day a student in Louisville Seminary was discouraged. He was at the end

of the way. He was without money and he said, if God Almighty may not want me to preach. I am just humiliated and embarrassed. There must be some money to come. He packed up his grip and he was ready to leave for South Carolina, he walked down the hall, and he met one of the greatest preachers - John A. Brodess. When he passed, he held out his hands and he said, Hello Jim. Now the student didn't have any idea that the professor knew his name. But he said to him, you are having a hard time. It's a hard pull. But you stick to it like a man, I am for you. Did that student stay there. Why, he - there was no way you could get him away. Because he said that after John Brodess said to him, I am for you. Humanity cares not for the promises or the rainbows, but it does want you. And that is what Brodess was giving . . . himself. And that's what this city wants - it wants you.

H. L. Gee has a lovely story There was a boy in a country village. Had a great struggle in becoming a minister. His helper in those days was a village cobbler. Like so many of this trade, was a man who read widely, who had done much for the boy. In due time the lad was licensed to preach. And on the day the cobbler said to him, it was always my desire to be a minister of the Gospel. But the circumstances in my life made it impossible. But your achieving what was close to me. And I want you to promise me one thing - I want you to let me make and cobble your shoes for nothing. I want you to wear them in the pulpit when you preach. And then I'll feel you are preaching the Gospel that I always wanted to preach - (standing in my shoes.)

Beyond a doubt, the cobbler was serving God as the preacher was. And his reward would one day be the same.

After a minister had preached on Heaven, describing its beauty, a rich Deacon,

a wealthy man said, Pastor, you did not tell us where Heaven is. The Pastor walked down the aisle and stood at the front door. He pointed to a hill, and he said Deacon, on the house on the hill is an old widow. She is lonely, and she is hungry. Take her a basket of food. Talk to her, read the Bible to her, and you will find out where Heaven is. Heaven is right next door to the place where we find need. Want, and beauty. Christ said I was hungry and you gave me meat. Thirsty, and you gave me drink. Sick, and you visited me. In as much as you have done it unto the least of these, my brethren, you have done it unto me. Even a cup of cold water in Christ's name, shall not lose it's reward.

Give what you can - a million or a cup of cold water. The greatest gift of all is because love hath done this.