

God & Man At Table Are Sat Down

Old Orchard Church

February 6, 2011 – 10:15 to 11:50 am.

See print copy for words and music.

Godliness with contentment is great gain.
For we brought nothing into the world,
and we can take nothing out of it.
But if we have food and clothing,
we will be content with that.

I Timothy 6:6-8

Celebrating Jesus, Incarnate Son of God: Lord of All Wealth

Everything that exists belongs to the Lord.

So he says,

“The cattle on a thousand hills are mine;”

“The silver is mine, and the gold is mine.”

So the psalmist sings,

“The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof!”

All we own is the Lord's;

All we own is to be laid at his feet;

All we own God will take and use for his glory:

for the good of his people,

and for the relief of suffering everywhere.

Praise be to the God of heaven who teaches us
to hold our money, our possessions, our wealth,
with a loose grip;

Blessed be our Lord Christ

Who is himself our chief Treasure.

Alleluia!



— Scripture Readings —

Old Testament Lesson: Malachi 3:6-12

New Testament Lesson: Luke 12:13-21

— Sermon —

“Individual Character, Corporate Responsibility:
Social Justice and the Book of Ruth”

Ruth 1-4

Ron Lutjens, senior pastor, preaching

We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**

Our Piece of the Pie

If I were writing my early books again...I would make one change.

I would continue to emphasize that previously in the Northern European culture (including the United States) the controlling consensus was Christian, and that this is now changed and we live in a post-Christian world. However, in doing this I would point out that previously, when the Christian consensus was the controlling factor, certain things were definitely sub-Christian.

First, Christians of all people should have opposed any form of racism....

The second point, no less wrong and destructive [than racism], is the lack of emphasis on the proper use of accumulated wealth. In a world of fallen, sinful men, the use of wealth has always been a problem that the true Christian should face, but it came to a point of special intensity with the Industrial Revolution and the rise of capitalism. Happily we can look back to some orthodox Christians, especially in England, who as a part of the preaching of the Gospel saw, preached, and stood for the proper use of wealth. But, to our shame, the majority of the Church, when it was providing the consensus, was silent. Christians failed to see that a failure to preach and act upon a compassionate use of accumulated wealth not only caused the Church to lose credibility with the working man but was actually a betrayal of a very important part of the biblical message. This fault was not only a thing of yesterday: it is often still with us in evangelical circles.

The Bible does clearly teach the right of property, but in both the Old Testament and the New Testament it puts a tremendous stress on the compassionate use of that property.

If at each place where the employer was a Bible-believing Christian the world could see that less profit was being taken so that the workers would have appreciably more than the "going rate" of pay, the Gospel would have been better proclaimed throughout the whole world than if the profits were the same as the world took and then large endowments were given to Christian schools, missions, and other projects. This is not to minimize the centrality of preaching the Gospel to the whole world, nor to minimize missions; it is to say that the other is also a way to proclaim the good news.

Unhappily, at our moment of history, in almost each place where true Christians are now speaking in this area, the tendency is to minimize missions and the preaching of the Gospel and/or to move over to some degree to the left. On the left, the solution is thought to be the state's becoming stronger in economic matters. But this is not the answer....

The answer is where it should have been always, and especially since the Industrial Revolution: namely, in calling for a compassionate use of wealth by others, and especially by *the practice of a compassionate use of wealth* wherever true Christians are.

We must say we are sorry for the defectiveness of the preaching and the practice in these two areas, and we must make the proper emphasis concerning these an integral part of our evangelicalism.

—Francis A. Schaeffer (1974)