

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 7 August 2022. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced, and see the context for yourself. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

What Is Your Strong Tower?

Hebrews 13:5-6

Throughout the book of **Hebrews**, the Apostle Paul has proven, on the authority of a mountain of Old Testament Scripture, that Jesus Christ is the promised **Messiah**; that He is **God**; that He is the one and **only High Priest** between God and Man; and that He is the **Author and Finisher of our Faith**. In light of these truths, Paul warns those who are playing the Christianity game, but who have never truly been saved, to repent and place their faith in Jesus. He has also exhorts true believers to keep their eyes upon Jesus, and to live by faith daily.

In the last chapter of the letter, Paul is now listing several areas of daily living in which Christians must put faith to action. In the **first four verses of Hebrews 13**, we learned about two such areas of our lives. First, Christians should **love their brethren** in Christ. Secondly, Christians should **love, and be faithful to, their spouses**. As we studied these two areas, we saw that the real issue underlying both these areas is our **love of and trust in the Lord**. If a Christian truly love and trust in the Lord, then he will have the right kind of love for the brethren, and for his spouse.

This morning, we shall see yet another area where our faith in Christ should be put to action: namely, **in regard to money and wealth**. What should a Christian's attitude toward money be? Solomon summed it up well in **Proverbs 18:10**. He wrote, "***The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.***" Now, contrast that to the next verse. Solomon goes on to say, "***The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit.***" In other words, the righteous (those who are saved) trust in God: the unsaved, on the other hand, trust in the wealth they have accumulated. (And the more wealth they have, the more confident they are in that wealth.)

Now, I wish I could say that Christians do not struggle with this matter of trusting in God, instead of in wealth. However, if this were the case, Paul wouldn't have had to give this exhortation to Christians. Christians still have a sin nature; and that sin nature has absolutely no inclination or power to trust in God. Just as in every other area of Christian living, the Christian needs to allow God's Word to put to death the old way of thinking (in this case, the tendency to love and trust in wealth), and to trust in the Lord instead. The title of this message is, **What Is Your Strong Tower?**

Read Hebrews 13:5-6.

From these verses, I would like to make two observations about those who make the Lord their "**strong tower**." First of all...

I. Those who make the Lord their Strong Tower have *contentment* (v. 5).

In **verse 5**, Paul exhorts Christians to let their "**conversation** (way of living) **be without covetousness**." Now, what is a good definition of "covetousness"? Covetousness is "a strong desire or lust for something." Covetousness can be a strong desire for *anything*—whether it be

a sinful lust for someone who is not your spouse; or a strong desire for a car, for a television, or for some other electronic toy; for trendy clothes, for a nice career, or fancy jewellery; for a house, or a property; for a position of power or fame; for a certain set of friends, for the purpose of enhancing one's image or popularity; or, for plain old money. There is any number of things after which a person may covet. Even a child can covet a toy, or the tiniest trinket! Whatever the object of one's covetousness may be, though, make no mistake about it: *God hates it*. Let's go back to Exodus, and take a look at God's command concerning covetousness.

Read Exodus 20:17.

Brethren, covetousness is a serious thing. Although "*Thou shalt not covet*" is the tenth commandment, it is directly linked to the first commandment—"*Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*" In **Colossians 3:5**, Paul says that covetousness "*is idolatry*" (worship of idols). Folks, God is not to be trifled with. When you lust after that which is not rightfully yours, or worship something in your heart other than God, God is like a bear robbed of her cubs. He *will* guard that which belongs to Him! Let's look at another Scripture, and get a little more perspective on how God views covetousness.

Read Romans 7:7-10.

What we are reading in these verses is Paul's own personal history. He is recounting the moment in his own life when he first became aware of God's Law. He doesn't say how old he was at the time; but he does tell us that when he first became aware of God's Law, it was the Tenth Commandment—the law against *covetousness*—that smote his heart, and "*slew*" him. In other words, it caused him to be spiritually dead to God.

How old was Paul when he first became aware that covetousness is a sin? Probably four or five. What could Paul, at such a young age, have coveted after? Possibly a toy of some kind, or some other attractive item. Whatever it was, he strongly desired to get it; and for the first time, he had the awareness that this is what God calls *sin*. From that moment onward, he was no longer under the mercy that God extends toward unknowing infants. He was *accountable* for his knowledge of God's law; he was *under God's condemnation*; and he was now in need of personally responding to God's offer of salvation. *That* is how serious covetousness is. Like any other violation of any of God's commands, covetousness is a sin against God.

Covetousness is a strong desire for something you don't have (or shouldn't have). It can be a desire for anything. Here in **Hebrews 13:5**, though, the word "covetousness" is very specific. It doesn't refer to sexual desire, or to the desire for power: it refers specifically to the *desire for money*. Paul says, "Let your conversation be *aphilarguras* (literally, "without love of silver"). Now, please realise what Paul was *not* saying. Paul is *not* saying, "Don't *work to earn money* in order to feed your family." Obviously, we are commanded in Scripture to work with our own hands, and to provide for our families. In fact, in **1 Timothy 5:8**, Paul said that those who do not work to provide for their family are worse than infidels! What we are *not* to do, however, is to *pursue* money. We are not to *love* money, and make it into a god. We are to view it merely as a tool to serve God, and to meet the needs of others.

Now, many people would wonder, “What makes covetousness such a horrible sin? Yes, I can see why it is wrong to covet someone else’s wife (or husband); but what’s wrong with desiring to have nice things in life, as long as you are not stealing or being dishonest in order to get it? And how can you know when you are guilty of covetousness? Where is the line beyond which a desire for something becomes wrong?” These are good questions; but they may be answered with one simple precept. **Deuteronomy 6:5** says, “*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*” Jesus identified this simple command as the summary of the whole Law!

Read Matthew 22:34-40.

Throughout Scripture, we are commanded to **love God supremely**; and, after God, to love our neighbour as we would love our own selves. (Loving *self* does not come into the picture!) The reason why God hates covetousness so much is that **covetousness keeps us from loving and desiring Him**. *This* is what makes covetousness what it is.

If you have any doubt as to whether you are guilty of covetousness in some area of your life, you need only ask yourself these simple questions: “Is my desire for this thing consuming my thoughts, instead of the *Lord* consuming my thoughts?” You might also ask, “Is my pursuit of this thing causing me not to spend as much time with the Lord, or to stop short of serving the Lord in a way that I know I should?” Ouch. That’s a sobering litmus test, isn’t it?

Just as an adulterer turns his back on his spouse, and loves someone else instead, so someone who covets money (or the things that money can buy) loves that money, and those *things*, rather than God. We can easily understand why someone whose spouse commits adultery is so badly hurt. Why, then, is it hard to understand why our Creator—the one who gave us life, health, our natural abilities, sunlight, rain, food, and an incredibly beautiful earth and heavens to enjoy, is hurt when we, His creation, love money or things instead of *Him*? The most stunning Gift He has given us, of course, is the Gift of His Son, who paid the just punishment for our sin on the cross, so that we might be reconciled to God. He has given us literally *everything*. He loves us more than we can comprehend. Is it unreasonable to be expected to love Him in return?

To the lost world out there, this mindset is madness. They cannot even begin to understand it, because they are cut off from God. They have no comprehension of a *relationship* with God, because they do *not* have a relationship with Him. However, to those who have responded to God’s call to salvation, and have placed their trust in Him, this should make perfect sense. We love Him because He first loved us! The Apostle John wrote, “*Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins... We love him, because he first loved us*” (1 John 4:10, 19).

A Christian shouldn’t have to be reminded to love God instead of money. We *have* a relationship with God, and we have experienced His incredible love. Yet, we *do* often have to be reminded. Why is that? Have you ever wondered that about *yourself*, Christian? Have you ever wondered why you are so prone to start skipping church, or to stop reading your Bible, or to stop spending real, quality time with God in prayer, or to stop telling others about what Christ has done for you? Have you ever wondered why material things so easily become more

important to you than the Lord? It's because you still have an old nature: **and that old, fleshly nature within you**, along with the world system around you, and Satan's whisperings, **tell you that you will not be happy and complete unless you have more money and things!**

I am reminded of a television commercial that I once saw when I was in the U.S., around Christmas time. It was an advertisement for a major electronics retailer; and they were advertising a special Christmas deal on certain products. At the end of the commercial, they asked, "How's *that* for 'comfort and joy'?" (This, of course, was a reference to the words of the old Christmas hymn: "God rest ye merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay; remember Christ our Saviour was born upon this day, to save us all from Satan's power when we were gone astray. O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy! O tidings of comfort and joy!") The world doesn't have the slightest understanding that *true* "comfort and joy" comes only through a restored relationship with God through Jesus Christ. That is why they turned the meaning of the song on its head, and asserted that "comfort and joy" comes from *things*.

Christian, have you, to any degree, bought into the world's philosophy that money and things bring contentment? If you are truly saved, you have run into the "**strong tower**" of God Almighty; and in that Strong Tower, there is comfort, joy, and contentment. Everything in this world that you *need* (not that which you *covet*, but that which you truly *need*), your King provides for you within that tower. However, your real joy is in God Himself. Have you forgotten that? Have you forgotten how empty your life was before you knew Him? In **Colossians 2:10**, Paul wrote, "**And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power.**"

The name of the LORD is our strong tower, Christian. Are you still rejoicing to be in that Tower? Do you rejoice every day that you are still "in Him"? Are you "**content with such things as ye have**"? As God's children, we have every reason in the world to be content, even if we have little of this world's wealth; and we should avoid like the plague the love of money. It does *not* bring joy, happiness, or contentment. It leads to great hurt and woe.

Read 1 Timothy 6:6-11.

Those who have "**erred**" from the faith are, most likely, people who were never truly saved to begin with. Nonetheless, they are a sobering example of what love of money leads to in the end. Their frightening example should cause us who are saved to resist the love of money like the plague.

Those who make the Lord their Strong Tower have *contentment*. Secondly,

II. Those who make the Lord their Strong Tower have *confidence* (vv. 5b-6).

(**Read Hebrews 13:5-6.**) At this point, perhaps some of you are thinking, "This is a great message, pastor; but I think you're preaching to the choir. I don't want heaps of money and things. I don't even *have* much money to speak of. How would covetousness be a problem for *me*?" Brother, I am here to warn you that it *can* be a problem for you, even if you *don't* have much money. If you know Christ as Saviour, you are *in* the Tower of Jesus Christ, and you are safe in Him; but the question is, "Are you **content** in Him?" Are you *fully resting* in

the strength and provision of your Strong Tower? Is *He* your Confidence? Is He your Joy? When you are fully trusting in Him, and your heart is filled with love for Him, you will not fear the circumstances around you. This lack of fear is not based upon how well-settled you are financially: rather, it is based upon the Lord's providence and goodness, and upon His promise to take care of you. Like J. Hudson Taylor, who took the Gospel to inland China, you will be able to say, with utmost confidence, "We have 87 cents, and all the promises of God!" Taylor didn't have much money in this world; and it often looked as though he were going to have to "close up shop," and head back to England, for lack of funds. Yet, God always provided what he needed just in time (and sometimes much more than what he had asked), so that he could carry on the work of winning precious Chinese souls to Christ.

Now, before moving on, let's pause and read the two Old Testament passages that Paul is quoting in here in **verses 5 and 6**. First, let's look at **Deuteronomy 31:6**.

Read Deuteronomy 31:6.

Imagine the situation that the children of Israel were in when God gave them this promise. They were a small, fledgling nation, with few arms; and they were about to attack a host of nations, with very strong cities and armies. Many of their enemies were literal giants—demonic hybrids, of enormous stature. Yet, God said, "***I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.***" With this in mind, let's look at the other Scripture that Paul is quoting.

Read Psalm 118:6.

Paul says that we may *boldly* claim this promise--not half-heartedly; not *fairly* confidently; but *boldly*. How boldly do you claim this promise, Christian? Do you even believe that this promise applies to you? Do you believe that it applied to the saints of old, but not to you today? We may never say such a thing with our lips; but in the reality of our daily lives, this is how many Christians actually *live*. Many Christians live as though God were either distant and unconcerned about our problems, or else powerless to help us. Christian, *believe God's promises!* He is your Strong Tower!

Now, in contrast to the Christian's "***strong tower***" is the rich man's "***strong city***." Remember what Solomon said about that? Solomon wrote, "***The rich man's wealth is his strong city.***" The "***strong city***" in which the ungodly rich men of this world trust is *seemingly* impregnable. They laugh at the poor and downtrodden, and gloat that they can manipulate governments, form public opinion, declare devastating wars (all the while financing both sides for their own greedy purposes), and consolidate their wealth and power more and more. Many of the richest people in the world today, because they are thoroughly imbibed in the occult, and are in contact with Satanic forces, are well informed of the coming judgments of the Tribulation period. Many of them are using their tremendous wealth not only to protect themselves when the great Troubles begin, but to tighten their power over humanity even more. Many of the richest are now quietly dumping paper, and converting to gold and silver, and buying up farmland as fast as they possibly can, because they know that the world's economies are about to implode, and that the common man will soon be eating bugs. In fact, many of the most powerful men on earth are *manipulating* this implosion to happen, so that they can declare the need for a one-world digital currency, and a one-world government. Former secretary-general

of the U.N., **Robert Muller**, said, “We must move as quickly as possible to a one-world government; a one-world religion; and a one-world leader.”¹ That is the plan; and they are working overtime to implement it. They *think* that their gold and silver will bring them safely through the coming cataclysms. However, they are terribly mistaken. Besides the fact that there is a horrible, Christless eternity in the Lake of Fire awaiting them after death, they do not even have any security in *this* life. God will smash down their “**strong city**.” There is coming a day when God will demonstrate to the wicked rich men of the earth that their wealth, in which they are so arrogantly confident, has *no* power to save them from His wrath.

Read Zephaniah 1:14-18.

Read James 5:1-6.

Read Revelation 6:12-17.

Rich and poor men alike will be unable to escape God’s wrath, when He pours out His judgments upon this rebellious world. *All* lost men, of every station, will suffer for their rebellion against God during the great Tribulation that is coming.

Is this weighty information? You bet it is. In fact, the coming judgments of the Tribulation are so far beyond our comprehension, that it seems surreal. Even many Christians tend to view these prophecies as a curiosity, rather than as a sober reality. Maybe you’re thinking, “Well, yes, pastor, we know that these things are going to happen; but we’re going to be raptured out of here before the Tribulation starts, right? So why dwell on it?” Well, it is true that we *will* be spared that horrible Day of the LORD. The pre-Trib Rapture is the clear teaching of Scripture. However, it doesn’t mean that things couldn’t get really rough before the Lord comes for us. We know, from **Revelation 6**, that in the early days of the Tribulation, economic collapse will become so horrible, that people will be performing a full day’s work just to pay for a single, small loaf of bread! In order for the global economy to get that bad so early in the Tribulation, it will probably have to take some serious hits in the time *leading up* to the Tribulation. Already, we can see the flashing-red warning signs all around us.

I’m not trying to scare you, folks. I’m just trying to be the overseer of God’s flock, and to give you the full council of God’s Word. As Christians, we are *not* to trust in wealth. We should not be in *debt*: the Bible clearly teaches that. Neither should we be waiting for *handouts*: we should work hard for our bread. **However, we should not trust in wealth.** Rather, we should trust in God.

In times like these, it is crucial that God’s people *know* who their “**strong tower**” is. What if there should come a day when all your accumulated wealth, in which you were steadily reliant to pay your bills, and to keep your family nourished, suddenly loses most of its value? How would you react? I can tell you exactly how *the world* will react: they will panic, and turn violent! They know nothing of trusting God through adversity, because they do not know God. God’s people, however, are different. We are the “light of the world,” and the “salt of the earth.” God *will* provide for us. He provides for the sparrows, and for the lilies of the

¹ Jeff Kinley, message preached at “Understanding the Times” conference, played on Olive Tree Ministries radio broadcast, “The Reset Rising,” July 22, 2022. <https://olivetreeviews.org/radio-archives/>

field; and He can provide for us. If it be God's will to feed us with ravens from the sky, as He did Elijah, He can do it. However, we must trust Him. If we are going to trust Him through future times of adversity, we must be learning to trust Him *now*.

Whether we live in times of great prosperity, or in times of tremendous want and poverty, God expects His people to trust in Him. Ironically, it is far *harder* to trust God during times of prosperity, because it is easy for us to become confident that the money will always be there; and we stop being humbly reliant upon God's goodness. Let us not be like the church of Laodicea, whom God had to rebuke, because they were "***rich, and increased with goods,***" and thinking they had need of nothing.

If you think that these things do not apply to you, I'm here to tell you that they do. You don't have to be rich in order to trust in riches. All you have to do to become foolishly confident in riches is to get your eyes off the Lord. If you are not fully confident in your Strong Tower, the Lord Jesus Christ, then you will fret and worry when things aren't going well. However, if you are fully persuaded that your God will take care of you, then you will boldly say, "***The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.***"

Conclusion: If you are saved, then you have already run into the High Tower of Jesus Christ for salvation; and you are safe in Him. As Paul put it in **Hebrews 5**, we "***have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.***" Jesus Christ *is* the Hope and Refuge to whom we have fled. However, He isn't merely a refuge in the matter of our souls' salvation; He is a refuge in the matters of this life, as well. Are you finding full contentment in Him, instead of in money and things? Are you fully confident in your Strong Tower? Are you persuaded that no matter what happens, He will take care of you?

Perhaps you are not really sure that you are saved. If so, you are in great peril! Before you can trust the Lord with your money, you need to trust Him with your *soul*. Christ died to pay for *all* your sins; but you must receive that wonderful gift *as a gift*. You cannot earn it by your own good works; instead, you must humbly acknowledge your sinfulness, and ask Christ to be your Saviour. If you will run to Christ for salvation, and hide in Him, He will save you completely, and for eternity. If there are any questions in your mind, please ask! I would love to show you how you can know that you have eternal life.