

"Investing in the Kingdom" – Matthew 6:19-21 Village Missions Sunday – October 23, 2016

We are a Village Missions church. We're an important part of the Village Missions family. We have been for 41 years now. Kris and I are Village Missionaries. We were recruited, vetted and sent here by Village Missions.

But Village Missions is not a denomination. It is not a governing body. Canyon Community Church is completely independent. Village Missions does not govern us as a typical denomination would, but we are still part of this family of churches for whom Village Missions supplies pastoral leadership.

Now, Canyon Community Church is completely self-supporting. Because of your faithful and generous offerings, our salary and benefits are completely supplied by the church, but that's not the case for about half of the churches served by the mission. Many communities in rural North America cannot afford to pay for a full-time pastor. Village Missions arranges to subsidize the salary and benefits until that church can become self-supporting. **And many communities are so small or so impoverished, that they will always requires some level of financial support.**

That's what Village Missions does. It exists to keep country churches alive by making sure there is a full-time pastor serving in rural communities.

The leadership of Village Missions asks us to take one Sunday each year to remind folks about the ministry of Village Missions. They don't require it. Nobody would yell at me if we didn't celebrate Village Missions Sunday, but I think it is important to do so. I want you to know that I am passionate about Village Missions.

So, in honor of Village Missions Sunday, we're taking a one-week break in our journey through 2 Peter. That being said, I would like to start with 2 Peter this morning, a verse that we'll be looking at in a couple weeks. Peter talks directly about the fact that the universe as we know it will be destroyed and replaced with new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Then he poses this question:

Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? (2 Peter 3:11-12)

That, friends, is a really, important question. We humans have a tendency to get so wrapped up in the here and now. We live our lives as if this is all there is and it doesn't help when so many TV preachers reinforce the misconception. Too many preachers want to be your life coach and the life they want to coach is the one that will come to an end in the not too distant future. Well, I'm not at all interested in helping you live your best life now. I want you to live your best life forever!

The Bible gives us a much different perspective than what comes from the "Word of Faith" prosperity teachers.

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15-17)

If you invest all that you have in this life now, I guarantee that you will lose your investment. All of it. Solomon would ring his hands about the situation:

For there is a man whose labor is with wisdom, knowledge, and skill; yet he must leave his heritage to a man who has not labored for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. (Ecclesiastes 2:21)

You can't take the stuff and junk of this world with you. The one who dies with the most stuff does not win! So, *what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God?*

And that brings us to our text for this morning.

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:19-21)

Jesus is communicating the same truth John gives us ... the same truth Peter gives us. Investment in the goods of this world is incredibly short-lived, *but he who does the will of God abides forever*. Let us see what it means to Invest in the Kingdom of God.

The first point should be really obvious: It is foolishness to become too invested in this world. *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth,"* says Jesus. Why not? Because they are, by definition, transitory. Earthly treasures will only last for a short time. Stuff wears out or gets damaged beyond repair. Moths eat your garments. Metal stuff rusts. If you have anything valuable at all, it makes you vulnerable to theft. I mean, some scuzz-bucket is going to want to rip you off. But even those earthly treasures that last a little longer will be worthless to you after you die. (You know you have an appointment with death, don't you?)

Turn to Luke, Chapter 12.

Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry." ' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (Luke 12:16-21)

Now the purpose of this parable is not to keep people from retiring. It is not to discourage prudent stewardship of the resources God gives you. If you are financially able to retire from your earthly career, then good for you. **But, use your resources and your additional time to make yourself rich toward God.**

If you are a Christian, you can retire from your career, but you are not to retire from ministry. Every Christian has a ministry. Your ministry might change as you get older. A time will come, for example, when the Lord moves me out of this pulpit. I have no idea when that will be, but when He does, I will still have a ministry of some sort.

I remember visiting with Irene Corbett in her room at Brenden house. What a dear saint of God! On several occasions, she told me "I don't know why the Lord is keeping me here. I can't hear; I can't see, I can't even get out of this bed." So I would tell her, "But Irene, you can still pray for me. I need it." And then she'd smile and say, "Yes, I suppose

you do.” At 102 she still had a ministry and by praying for others, she was laying up treasures in heaven. Irene was investing in the kingdom.

Financial advisers are always talking about sound investment strategies, so let’s talk about a sound Kingdom investment strategy. Where should you, as a Christian, be investing your time? Where should you be investing your energy? Where should you be investing your resources?

First and foremost, you need to invest in your faith. You need to believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Without that, there is no kingdom investment strategy has any value because you are a sinner. In your natural state, you are estranged from the kingdom.

... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:23)

And the wages for your sin is eternal death, forever toasting and roasting in the Lake of Fire. (Romans 6:23) Aren’t you glad that God loves you anyway?

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

All you have to do is believe that Jesus died and rose for you and you will be saved. You will be reconciled to God, ushered into His kingdom and you will be given an inheritance that is absolutely out of this world. But first, you have to turn from your sin and turn to the cross. Make Jesus the Lord of your life. Consider yourself His *dulos* ... His bondservant. Seek His will and not your own. Invest in your faith and it will pay eternal dividends!

Village Missions exists to help people invest in faith.

For "WHOEVER CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED." How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? (Romans 10:13-15)

Village Missions exists to send preachers to places where many would not go.

So, to invest in the Kingdom, you first have to invest in your own faith, but you also must add to your investment. Think about this. Suppose you set up a retirement account of some sort and you put \$100 in it. Hopefully, you would realize some return on that investment. An average investment return of 10% compounded annually would almost double your money in 7 years. If you could maintain that return (questionable), in 42 years, you’d end up with \$6,400.

How would you like to retire on 6400 bucks? A single investment of \$100 just wouldn’t get you ready for retirement, would it. It can’t be a one-time thing; you have to add to your investment.

It’s the same principle when you invest in the Kingdom.

But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. (2 Peter 1:5-7)

Village Missions supports this continuing investment not only by sending missionaries who can teach, but also with the Contenders Discipleship Initiative. Village Missions wants churches that are filled with mature, Biblically-literate Christians who can contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. Village Missions wants to prepare you to

give a defense for the hope that lies within you. Village Missions wants to multiply the investment made with individual Village Missionaries.

To invest in the kingdom is to invest in your personal faith. You believe the Gospel. You add to your faith so that you will never be barren or unfruitful. And then, you begin to invest in others. You invest in your family. You invest in your church. You invest in your neighbors. You invest by displaying a lifestyle that honors Jesus Christ. You invest by sharing the good news with others in your sphere of influence. It is the Christian prime directive, the Great Commission:

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. (Matthew 28:19-20)

And let me tell you, Village Missions is passionate about the Great Commission. The charge they give to every one of their missionaries is quite simple: "Preach the Word and love the people."

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who wins souls is wise. (Proverbs 11:30)

Jesus tells us that we are to lay up treasures in heaven. I've tried to present an investment strategy this morning so you can do exactly that. Invest in your faith. Add to your investment by growing your knowledge of the Bible. Invest in your family, your church, your community by sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. I've tried to show you how Village Missions supports us in making that Kingdom Investment.

But can we invest in Village Missions? As members of the Village Missions family, I think that needs to be part of our kingdom investment strategy. We need to develop a vision that transcends our community. We need to recognize that there are communities that desperately need a Bible-based Gospel witness.

As of last month, there were 17 fields in the United States and 6 in Canada who were still waiting for a permanent Village Missionary. More churches are applying to VM all the time. One field in Canada has been waiting for over 6 years. Most of the open fields are being served by Associates – folks like Cloyse and Pat Drake who filled the pulpit here for 5 months before we came. Those are retired pastors, who are limited in what they can do. They are only temporary. How can we help?

First of all, you can invest in prayer. Inside your bulletins, you will find a prayer calendar. There is a simple prayer request for each day of the month. Would you commit to praying for those needs ... one for every day?

The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. (James 5:16)

You can also invest in Village Missions by praying specifically for the Village Missionaries of the Week, those who Tanner tells us about. In fact, if the Lord leads, you might even consider sending a note of encouragement. Let them know you are praying for them and appreciate their faithfulness to the ministry. Kris and I have been the recipients of such notes, and they are incredibly encouraging.

Another really important way you can invest in Village Missions is by investing in Canyon Community Church. Invest your time, your talents and your resources. And you have been doing this. Your faithful giving has allowed us to be self-supporting, so we are not a financial drain on the mission.

Not only that, our church tithes to Village Missions. 10% of our offering goes to help support those churches that are not yet self-supporting. We are keeping church doors open in places like Interior, South Dakota. And rural North America is a critically important mission field. North America is the only continent in the world where Christianity is not growing. In fact, the gospel is losing ground in our countries.

Thank you for your faithfulness in giving. You are an incredible blessing!

Finally, some of you might consider becoming a direct donor to Village Missions. There are envelopes in your bulletins with which you can make a one-time donation. There is also a form attached to the insert that will allow you to become a regular donor if the Lord is so leading.

Don't you just hate it when the preacher sounds like he's got his hand on your wallet? Well just so you know, it makes me a bit uncomfortable too. But I believe in the work of Village Missions and Kris and I are willing to back up our belief by opening our wallet. We're certainly not alone in this.

As I was preparing for this morning, I ran across an interesting comment made by Brian Wechsler, our Executive Director:

Let me tell you one more thing (among many others) that's encouraging to me, this time regarding Village Missionaries. Village Missions does not have many large donors. We only have about 200 people who have given more than \$2,000 in the last two years. **However, a significant percentage of those donors who have given above \$2,000 are Village Missionaries.** How rewarding and encouraging to know that our own missionaries not only serve sacrificially but also give sacrificially to advance the cause of Christ in rural North America! Again, I am humbled to stand with such a dedicated group of men and women.

I am humbled as well. Village Missionaries don't make a ton of money, but Village Missionaries understand that God will supply all our need according to His riches in glory by Jesus Christ. (Philippians 4:19) Village Missionaries are willing to invest in the Kingdom.

I invite you to do likewise. Invest in your faith. Invest in prayer. Invest in your family. Invest in your local church. Invest in witness to your community. Invest in Village Missions.

... lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:20-21)